

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Purpose of assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty which is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (this includes lack of belief), gender and sexual orientation.

The purpose of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment is to assess the impact of a change to services or policy on people with protected characteristics and to demonstrate that the Council has considered the aims of the Equality Duty. The Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time that a change to services or particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken. A public body cannot satisfy the Equality Duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.

**Note:** Please write in Plain English as this document, once approved, will be published on the Council's website.

<b>Title: BRIDGE STREET, BRIDGE PLACE AND CASTLE STREET, WORKSOP (LINKED TO CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS REPORT PRESENTED TO TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE ON 18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2015)</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>Lead Officer for this assessment</b>	Mike Barnett, Team Manager, Major Projects and Improvements
<b>List of other officers/organisations involved in the assessment</b>	Nick Gibson, Senior Improvements Officer; Karen Moss, Equality Officer

<b>1a</b>	<b>What is being considered and why? Explain rationale behind proposed changes and other options considered, if applicable.</b>
<p>Bridge Street is one of the main shopping streets in Worksop. A section of Bridge Street from Bridge Place through to the Potter Street junctions and parts of Bridge Place and Castle Street currently operate as a pedestrianised zone. General traffic is restricted from entering the street at any time but exemptions exist for loading vehicles, blue badge and special access permit holders. Currently, access and parking arrangements are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bassetlaw District Council has relocated the market to the pedestrianised area. The market operates on a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and it is not proposed to alter this arrangement;</li> <li>• General traffic is restricted from entering the pedestrianised zone at any time;</li> <li>• Loading vehicles are permitted to enter the pedestrianised zone to service businesses before 10 am and after 3.30 pm Monday to Saturday;</li> <li>• Special Access permit holders, ie someone who has severe disability impairment, are permitted to enter the zone at all times though on Market Days this is not practicably possible. (Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays)</li> <li>• Blue Badge holders are permitted to enter the pedestrianised zone before 10 am and after 3.30 pm Monday to Saturday though on Market Days it is not practicably</li> </ul>	

possible (Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays);

- To assist blue badge holders, additional dedicated car parking spaces have been provided in all the Bassetlaw District Council car parks around the town. Additionally holders of disabled blue badges can park for up to three hours on double yellow lines (with no loading restrictions) so long as no obstruction is caused.
- There are no restrictions on access for loading vehicles and permit holders on Sundays but general traffic is not permitted to enter the pedestrian zones.

A high number of cars are parking legally and illegally within the pedestrianised zone causing inconvenience for shoppers and local businesses. Surveys carried out during December 2009 show the following information:

- Saturday: 217 vehicles parked in the pedestrianised zone between 8am-6pm of which 87 were SAP holders
- Tuesday: 282 /110
- Wednesday: 323 /141

Ongoing representations have been made to Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council by local people and traders concerned about the situation.

In response to these concerns, the Council introduced an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) in May 2012 along Bridge Street and lengths of Bridge Place and Castle Street in Worksop. This ETRO restricted access for all vehicular traffic except for loading between the hours of 4 pm and 10 am. An equality impact assessment was carried out at this time and is available to view at

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/equalities/eqia/>.

The Traffic Order was introduced on an experimental basis so that it could be monitored and amended if required. Following its introduction, a number of objections were received particularly from individuals with severe mobility impairments and holders of Special Access permits who stated that they could no longer access the town centre to carry out routine business or shopping and was a serious threat to their independence. This was not the intention of the Traffic Order and consequently it was withdrawn on 4 July 2012 and reverted back to previous access and parking arrangements.

An extensive consultation exercise was launched on 22 August 2012 and all efforts taken to generate as much public interest and response as possible. Special efforts were made to engage with as many disabled people in the town particularly holders of disabled blue badges and special access permits. Further details and findings are outlined in section 3 on Consultation.

Following on-going representations being received that the pedestrian environment was still being compromised by unreasonable levels of vehicular activity, a meeting was held on 11 September 2013 with officers and members from Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. In light of these discussions, it was proposed that amended restrictions are considered for the area which reflects the views expressed in the August 2012 consultation and take account of views expressed during the experimental traffic regulation order period in May 2012. Further details and findings from further consultation undertaken during 2014 are outlined in section 3 on consultation.

**New Proposal:**

A balanced proposal is required for the town centre which meets the needs of all its users including those with varying degrees and types of disability. Therefore it is recommended that a scheme is introduced, following consultation and the necessary statutory procedure undertaken during 2014 to modify the existing traffic regulation orders to include the following:

**Bridge Street Pedestrianised Area (between Newcastle Street and Potter Street):**

- Allow access for special access permit holders (green badge) at all times except market days on this section of Bridge Street (Market Days: Wednesday, Friday and Saturday);
- Allow access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4pm;
- Does not permit access at any time for disabled blue badge holders.

**Bridge Place / Bridge Street Pedestrianised Area – (between Priory Centre car park access and Ryton Street) and Bridge Street Pedestrianised Area (between Ryton Street and Newcastle Street):**

- Does not permit access at any time for special access permit holders (green badge);
- Does not permit access at any time for disabled blue badge holders;
- Allows access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4pm.
- Access to be controlled by physical barrier (for example rising bollards).

**Newcastle Street and Newcastle Avenue:**

- No Waiting At Any Time (double yellow lines) and No Loading 8am to 6pm on the approaches and exits from the Bridge Street / Bridge Place traffic lights junction;
- Installation of Designated Disabled (blue badge) parking only 8am to 6pm, 3 hour waiting limit, no return within 1 hour – (three separate bays providing spaces for a total of approximately 14 vehicles).

**Bridge Street (side of Civic Square):**

- Installation of additional Designated Disabled (Blue Badge) parking only 8am to 6pm, 3 hour waiting limit, no return within 1 hour – (1 additional parking bay providing spaces for approximately 3 vehicles).

**Central Avenue and Ryton Street:**

- No Waiting At Any Time (double yellow lines) and No Loading 8am to 6pm on the approaches and exits from the Bridge Street traffic lights junction;
- Installation of Special Access Permit (Green Badge) parking only 8am to 6pm, 3 hour limit, no return within 1 hour – (4 separate bays providing spaces for approximately 24 vehicles).

This equality impact assessment gives details of how service users have been consulted on these proposals and examines the potential impact on people with protected characteristics.

<b>1b</b>	<b>What is the demographic profile of the community you are serving? What is the profile of your services users by protected characteristics, where information is available?</b>
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Bassetlaw is the second largest district in Nottinghamshire. In May 2010, its population was 111,300 with 60% living in either Worksop or Retford. It has a small Black Minority Ethnic population (3.6% mid 2006). There are currently 20,000 people aged 65 or over in

Bassetlaw. By 2025, this will have risen to over 30,000. 22% of households have at least one person with a limiting long-term illness. Levels of obesity are higher than the national average. Six wards are ranked in the worst 10% for deprivation.

Records show that over 600 special access permits have been issued to people in Worksop and surrounding villages. However, this proposal could affect anyone visiting Worksop who holds a permit as they are issued on a County basis and are not restricted to a specific area. The number of blue badge holders varies as applications are approved and personal circumstances change, but the number with a Worksop address is estimated at over 3,600.

**1c | What will be the effect of the proposals on service users?**

If vehicular traffic is restricted from entering the Bridge Street pedestrian zone, all pedestrians will find it a more pleasant and safer place to access. Blue badge holders will no longer be able to park within the area and Special Access Permit holders will only be allowed access to the steepest section of Bridge Street (between Newcastle Street and Potter) and the section of Castle Street accessed off Bridge Street.

**1d | Even if the proposals apply to everyone equally, could they have a disproportionate/adverse or negative impact on people with the following protected characteristics, if so how?**

**Disability (physical, sensory or learning disabilities including effects on carers):**

The proposals will have a direct impact on disabled people in receipt of special access permits or disabled blue badges who were previously allowed to park in the area.

Currently, with the relocation of the market to Bridge Street on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, special access permit holders are unable to park and access the zone during the market operating hours. Blue badge holders are permitted to enter the zone before 10 am and after 3.30 pm on all days, excluding market days.

The new proposal will mean that special access permit holders will have continued access at all times to the steepest section of the pedestrianized area on 4 days per week (non-market days) but will not be able to park on the bottom section ie Bridge Place and Bridge Street (between Priory Centre car park and Ryton Street) and Bridge Street (between Ryton Street and Newcastle Street).

Blue Badge holders will have no access to the area and will be required to park in the nearby car parks or in designated disabled parking bays (proposed along sections of Newcastle Street, Newcastle Avenue and Bridge Street at side of the Civic Square).

Our records show that there are over 600 holders of special access permit holders and an estimated 3,600 blue badge holders in the Worksop area. On a daily basis, between 80 and 140 park in the zone at different times.

Prior to the introduction of the Experimental Traffic Order, Bassetlaw District Council provided 20 additional disabled parking spaces in the four nearby car parks to lessen the impact of parking restrictions on blue badge and special access permit holders. An assessment of each car park follows:

1. Priory Centre car park has 15 disabled blue badge parking bays. There is a Shop Mobility scheme based in this car park which provides electric scooters for people with disabilities. However, it is recognised that some people with severe disabilities will not be able to use this facility. The parking facilities at this car park would be reasonable for anyone who could walk between 100-300 metres eg the distance to Lloyds Bank is 330

metres and the distance to the nearest Greggs shop is 88 metres. This car park is not managed by Bassetlaw District Council and charges are in place for blue badge holders, although there are designated spaces available.

2. Castle Hill car park has 5 disabled blue badge parking bays. However it is situated on a hill so might have access problems for some people with mobility impairments. The parking facilities at this car park could be reasonable for anyone who could walk between 150 – 400 metres as the distance to Lloyds Bank is 136 metres and the distance to the nearest Greggs is 385 metres.

3. Newgate Street East Central car park has 5 disabled blue badge parking bays and Newgate Street West Central also has 5 disabled spaces. The parking facilities at this car park could be reasonable for anyone who could walk between 300 – 520 metres.

4. Queen Street car park has 6 disabled blue badge parking bays.

5. Memorial Avenue/Library has 15 disabled blue badge parking bays.

Distances are to destinations highlighted from local people through consultation.

Whilst the additional disabled car parking spaces might be suitable for people with less severe mobility impairments (mainly blue badge holders) , who can walk the distance from the car parks to the town's facilities, it is recognised that this might not be a solution for severely disabled people (mainly special access permit holders).

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken from 15 August to 19 September 2012 although replies were still accepted up until 21 September 2012. The consultation sought specific views on whether access should be granted to holders of blue badges and special access permits. It gave the options of allowing access on all non market days or on a limited number of days and gave the respondent the opportunity to express any individual concerns. Further details of the consultation analysis and findings are detailed in section 3 on Consultation.

The current proposals continue to allow 4 full days unlimited access to the pedestrianized area on the steepest section of Bridge Street and reflect the views which were expressed as part of the above consultation exercise and also expressed locally by holders of special access permit holders (SAPs). This will allow holders of SAPs to continue to access essential services within the town by private car and park as close as possible to these destinations on the steepest sections. It will also offer a combination of days throughout the week when the town market can operate with no intrusion from traffic and also offers days when there is no market and as little intrusion as is possible from vehicles.

The current proposals also include provision for approximately 24 vehicles in four additional parking bays for Special Access Permit holders only on Central Avenue and Ryton Street. These will be allocated on the streets near the town centre adjacent to the two restricted areas on Bridge Street to offer greater opportunity for severely disabled people to park and access services where they are no longer able to park. Three of these designated bays (providing approximately space for 14 vehicles) will become available once the new bus station is opened in the summer of 2015, this will allow current bus stops on Ryton Street to be utilised as designated parking bays for SAP holders.

Discussions have taken place with Bassetlaw District Council to improve the shopmobility scheme in the town and an additional facility to collect mobility scooters will be available within the new bus station.

**Age:**

The proposals will have an impact on people who have special access permits or disabled blue badges and are used to parking in the pedestrianized area. As people age, they are more likely to have mobility impairments and more likely to be in receipt of these parking permits, therefore any proposal to restrict access will have a disproportionate impact on the elderly population. Please see section above on 'disability' for a more detailed assessment.

**Gender (Sex):**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to their gender.

**Gender Reassignment:**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to their gender reassignment.

**Pregnancy and Maternity:**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to pregnancy or maternity.

**Race:**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to their race.

**Religion or belief:**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to their religion or belief.

**Sexual orientation:**

The proposals will have no adverse impact on people due to their sexual orientation.

**1e** **Will your proposal have any positive impacts on people with the above protected characteristics to advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations?**

All pedestrian users of the area currently compete with motor vehicles for use of the shared space. The current proposal will remove all vehicular traffic (except for loading before 10 am and after 4 pm) from Bridge Place and Bridge Street (between the access to the Priory Centre and Newcastle Street). This will create a safer environment for pedestrians with mobility, visual or hearing impairments and parents/carers with young children. Although there will still be some parking for special access permit holders on the steepest section of Bridge Street and Castle Street, there will be far less traffic than previously because blue badge holders will not be allowed to park in the area.

**2a** **In terms of any disproportionate/negative/adverse impact that the proposal may have on a protected group, what steps (if any) could be taken to reduce that impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan if necessary.**

The Council has a duty to provide a fair service to all users of the town. However, the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'. Disability is a protected characteristic. Therefore the Council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can continue to use the facilities of the town. Therefore a balanced proposal is required which meets the needs of its severely disabled users, other disabled

users and able bodied users.

The Council has taken account of findings from the extensive consultation exercise carried out in August 2012 in putting forward its new proposals. The latest proposals have also been subject to further consultation with affected users as detailed in section 3.

The Council has included additional on street designated disabled parking bays adjacent to the pedestrianized area so that disabled people can continue to access facilities. In addition three sets of designated bays will become available once the new bus station is opened in the summer of 2015, this will allow current bus stops on Ryton Street to be utilised as designated parking bays for SAP holders.

The Council has also had discussions with Bassetlaw District Council to improve the shopmobility scheme in the town by providing a satellite facility within the new bus station in Worksop to collect mobility scooters.

**2b** **If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.**

Not applicable.

**3** **Evidence Sources**  
**(i) Give details of any data or research that has led to your reasoning above, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users.**  
**(ii) Give details of how you have engaged with service users on the proposals and steps to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group and how you have used any feedback to influence your decision.**

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken from 15 August 2012 to Friday, 21 September 2012. The consultation sought specific views on whether access should be granted to holders of blue badges and special access permits. It gave the options of allowing access on all non market days or on a limited number of days and gave the respondent the opportunity to express any individual concerns.

- Information and consultation response form were available on the Council's public website
- Press releases were printed in the Worksop Guardian
- Wrote directly to 350 holders of special access permits (selected at random from the Worksop postcode area)
- Wrote directly to 100 blue badge holders (selected at random from the Worksop postcode area).
- Distributed leaflets to the local council office, Worksop library and ShopMobility office.
- Handed out leaflets in the town centre and placed leaflets on cars parked displaying a special access permit or blue badge
- Leaflets were distributed to local disability groups/organisations including the Worksop Mobility Centre, Royal Society for the Blind, the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society, Age UK Notts and the Carers Federation.

A total of 997 responses were received, about half in response to an on-line questionnaire and about half in the form of written questionnaires. A large proportion of the respondents (44%) considered themselves to be disabled and of these 84% had a mobility impairment.

## **Overall Conclusion from August 2012 Consultation Exercise:**

The majority of respondents agreed there is a traffic issue in the pedestrianised zone. Many believe this is exacerbated by abuse of the blue badge system and illegal parking by other drivers in the zone and could be relieved by better enforcement and punishment. There is also an issue with cyclists/scooters in the zone.

The majority of respondents, including the majority of disabled respondents, agreed that blue badge holders should not be given access to the zone as there is adequate disabled blue badge parking within the town.

The majority of respondents disagreed with allowing access to Special Access Permit holders. However, the majority of these are not disabled and do not have problems in accessing the facilities of the town.

The majority of disabled respondents would prefer access given to Special Access Permit holders on all non market days although over half would be happy with access on limited days.

Most frequently mentioned other comments included reference to car free zones in other towns (96 responses) and 240 people commented that the pedestrian zones in Worksop should have no cars at all. The need for enforcement of the orders to be more rigorous was also mentioned on 82 occasions.

## **Consultation during 2014**

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 a report was approved at the County Council's Transport and Highway Committee to progress with a consultation and statutory procedure to complete a permanent change to current Traffic Regulation Order as detailed in section 1a. This resulted in an initial consultation undertaken during June 2014 this included letters sent to the following:

- 483 'Special Access Permit' holders in Worksop;
- 101 'Special Access Permit' holders, this represented a random 20% sample of remaining SAP holders in Nottinghamshire with a Sheffield or Doncaster postcode (residents in north of county);
- 24 Disability Groups, the same list has been used from 2012;
- Market Traders;
- Businesses and residential properties on Bridge Place and Bridge Street;
- Bassetlaw District Council;
- County Councillors for Worksop;
- Nottinghamshire County Council press release on 11th June 2014;
- Consultation available on County Council website under current consultations;
- County Council sent out information via social media regarding the consultation providing details of the exhibition dates.

Worksop Guardian and Gainsborough Standard published articles related to the proposals on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014 which included details of the exhibitions. As part of the consultation Nottinghamshire County Council Officers exhibited the proposals at 'The Crossing', Newcastle Street, Worksop, S80 2AT on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2pm – 7pm and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 10am – 2pm. Details of the exhibition were included in letters sent out as detailed above.

Eight people attended the event of Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June with one objecting, three

supporting the proposals and four comments being recorded. On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June six people attended with three objecting and three comments. Given previous levels of interest, these numbers were disappointingly low in spite of the efforts made to encourage attendance.

Findings from the consultation undertaken in June 2014 were presented to Transport and Highways Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as an update. The statutory consultation and public advertisement was carried out between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Document packages were held at Worksop Library, County Hall in Nottingham and Online at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/have-your-say/consultations](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/have-your-say/consultations). Copies of the notice were erected at a number of locations in the area. The notice was published in the Worksop Guardian, Rotherham and South Yorkshire Advertiser and the Retford Times on the 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Copies of the consultation letter, notice and plans were sent to all statutory consultees and respondents from the consultation in June 2014 where contact details had been provided.

Feedback from the consultation in June 2014 indicated ongoing concerns from SAP holders about accessing shops and services along the restricted lengths of Bridge Place and Bridge Street where all access is to be removed. To minimise the disproportionate impact on this group designated SAP holder parking bays were included in the advertised proposals along Central Avenue and Ryton Street. These bays are located on roads that are in between the two sections of the restricted pedestrianised zone providing the closest access possible whilst maintaining traffic flows.

The advertised proposals are also less extensive than restrictions included in the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. Access for SAP holders will be maintained on Bridge Street from Newcastle Street to Potter Street. This will provide additional facilities and spaces for SAP holders to utilise.

<b>4</b>	<b>Decision Log – (detail how Elected Members and Senior Managers have been involved in the decision process (give dates of key meetings and decisions made))</b>
<p><b>Report to Transport and Highways Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015</b>            Bridge Street, Bridge Place and Castle Street Worksop – TRO1175 (One Way and Prohibition of Driving) and TRO1176 (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading)            Consideration of Objections</p> <p><b>Report to Transport and Highways Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014</b>            Bridge Street, Bridge Place and Castle Street Worksop – 2014 Consultation Update</p> <p><b>Report to Transport and Highways Committee on 31 October 2013</b>            Bridge Street, Bridge Place and Castle Street Worksop – Permanent Traffic Regulation Order 2013 Consultation</p> <p><b>Report to Transport and Highways Committee on 12 July 2012</b>            Revocation of Experimental Traffic Regulation Order</p>	

<b>5a</b>	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> 1st April 2016
<b>5b</b>	<b>If review is not required, explain why.</b>

<b>6a</b>	<b>Approved by:</b> Neil Hodgson, Service Director, Highways
<b>6b</b>	<b>Approval date:</b>