

TVBC Equality Impact Assessment

Guidance

1. What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

When we are considering a new council service, strategy, policy, project or function, or a significant change to an existing one, we need to make sure that we properly think through the potential impacts on residents and staff, seek to eliminate or minimise any negative impacts, and maximise opportunities to promote equality.

The term proposal throughout the remainder of this document will refer to proposed developments to a council service, strategy, policy, project, or function.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) helps us do this. By completing a thorough written assessment, we can be confident that we have systematically assessed and recorded the potential impacts, both positive and negative, on residents and staff. EQIAs should be an integral part of policy development, and usually should be initiated at an early stage in planning for a significant change.

This helps us to fulfil our legal duty under the Equality Act, as well as improve the quality of our work and ensure that we are being responsive to the needs of the communities that we serve. Equality impact assessments can also help us to :

- increase transparency in policy and service development
- take a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality
- prioritise expenditure in an efficient and fair way
- make decisions that are justified, evidenced and relevant
- increase equality of opportunity

2. What is the EQIA process?

- First identify if your proposal requires an EQIA
 - Are you planning a new proposal or significant change?
- Research and collate data to establish the impact of your proposal
- Determine which groups will be impacted by your proposal

- Consult with internal staff and externally with affected groups
- Ascertain any mitigations needed for the identified impacts
- Complete and publish your EQIA
- Measure your impacts once your proposal has been implemented

3. What is our legal duty?

As a public authority, the Equality Act 2010, section 149, states that we have a legal duty, in the exercise of our functions, to have a due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

These aims should be properly considered throughout the EQIA process, and how they relate to any impacts and mitigations identified.

The guidance issued by the UK government on the public sector equality duty explains that public authorities can advance equality of opportunity¹ by:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their relevant protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the different needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic
- encouraging participation in public life or any other activity by underrepresented groups
- taking steps to meet the different needs of disabled persons.

The EQIA is an important part of demonstrating that we have fulfilled our legal duty. The crucial part though is the work done to develop the assessment – an EQIA that does not demonstrate we have taken a suitably rigorous approach will not be sufficient.

4. What are the protected characteristics?

¹ GOV.UK (2023) 'Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities', Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>, Accessed: 9th January 2025.

The Equality Act 2010 established nine protected characteristics. It is against the law to discriminate on the basis of any of these characteristics, either directly or indirectly. Every EQIA should consider the positive or negative impact.

The characteristics are:

- **Age** – a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 18 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds).
- **Disability** – a person has a disability if (s)he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Gender reassignment** – the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – marriage is defined as a legally recognised union between two individuals. Same sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships.' Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity** – pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- **Race** – refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or belief** – religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including a lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live to be included in the definition.
- **Sex** – a man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation** – whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Beyond the legally protected characteristics, EQIAs should also consider impacts across other key areas:

- **Socio-economic** – overall the borough is not deprived, but there are areas where there are high levels of deprivation, economic inactivity, and low education achievement.
- **Rural communities** – Test Valley is a rural area, and this can affect access to services and some people's ability to take advantage of opportunities available.
- **Armed Forces** – Test Valley is home to serving military personnel, reservists, veterans, and Armed Forces Families. The unique obligations of this community can affect their accessibility to services.
- **Staff and council services** - considering the impact proposed policies can have on staff and council services is important as it allows for the wider consideration of policy implications, whether this be negative or positive.
- **Intersectionality** – some individuals will have more than one protected characteristic which can interact to create unique disadvantages. For example, the lived experiences of Black women will not be the same as those of a white woman or a Black man due to the overlapping characteristics of race and gender. Therefore, it is important to consider how a policy can alternatively impact those with overlapping protected characteristics, in comparison to those who hold one.

5. What do we mean by 'impact' and how do we measure it?

The assessment looks at two possible impacts:

- a) **negative, adverse, or unhelpful impact, effect, or limitation** – this is where the impact could disadvantage one or more of the protected groups. The impact may be differential, i.e. the negative impact on one particular group is greater than on another. Negative impacts may be unintentional; they may also be unlawful. If negative impacts are identified relevant mitigations should be put in place.
- b) **positive or helpful impact or effect** – this is where the impact has a positive effect on one or more of the protected groups, and/or where the impact improves relations between groups or improves equal opportunities. The positive impact may also be differential, i.e. the effect on one particular group is greater than on another. Please

bear in mind that we are always allowed to treat disabled people more favourably than other groups.

Assessment of the scale and nature of an impact should be made on the basis of evidence, either already held by the council or gathered specifically to support the assessment.

Data and research:

- Can you confidently identify which people are affected by your proposal?
- Do you know what they think about the subject?
 - If not, look for existing data on the topic (e.g. surveys, consultations). If there is no existing data reach out to these groups (via surveys, focus groups, staff networks). The community and policy teams can help with this.
- Is there data on the demographics of people impacted by your policies or practices? If not, do you know how to get it?
 - Data sources include:
 - Previous EQIAs
 - ONS and Census data
 - Statistics
 - Legislation
 - Surveys and Consultations
 - Audit information
 - Research journals
 - Feedback (employee, customer, experts)
 - Other local authorities
 - [TVBC Equalities and Diversity webpage](#)
 - Please reach out to the policy team if you need support with data, research, and analysis

- Do not forget to assess the equality impact on the people who may have to implement your decision, such as staff or suppliers.

Once your proposed change has been implemented it is important to consider how any identified impacts will be measured. The original EQIA should make clear how potential impacts will be measured after the proposed change is implemented, so that you can be confident the agreed mitigations are working as planned.

Key points to remember:

- Do not do it on your own! Please contact the Policy Team (policyteam@testvalley.gov.uk) at any stage for further advice and support.
- EQIAs are supposed to be challenging but not over-complicated.
- Use common sense and be proportionate to the scale of the change envisaged.
- Look your proposal from the perspective of the person/people affected by it. Challenge underlying assumptions about these groups that may impact your judgement.
- Lack of data is not a reason to halt or not complete the process - find out if research or data already exists or consult directly with representatives of relevant groups or specialist organisations. Collect more data if necessary.
- The process is not a 'last minute check' - develop plans that include time to make changes to the proposal as identified by the EQIA.
- Know your customers, their needs, and the barriers they face.
- Avoid focusing on one issue or protected groups; look at the demographics of your area and your service users.
- Remember to look for the positive as well as the negative.
- EQIA should be part of the development process – do not leave it until the Committee report deadline.

Equality Impact Assessment - Template

Service:	Planning Policy & Economic Development
Officer(s) completing the assessment:	Fay Smiles, Regeneration Planning Manager Michael Gilham, Regeneration Programme Manager
Date:	16 October 2024 (Draft)
Name of service, strategy, policy, project, or function being assessed:	Western Avenue Riverside Park

1.	What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the service, strategy, policy, project, or function that you are assessing?	Project Background: The development of a new riverside park adjacent to Western Avenue and the River Anton is a significant project under the Andover Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan. The aim is to build on the success of the Town Mills Riverside Park, enhancing Andover as a vibrant, attractive, and inviting place for residents, visitors, and investors. This initiative emerged from extensive community engagement, where over 3,000 residents participated, with 97% expressing positive support for the proposed improvements. The Western Avenue Riverside Park project focuses on delivering high-quality public space, ecological enhancements, and habitat restoration. It will also bring crucial highway improvements and promote sustainable transportation, with confirmed support from key partners like Hampshire County Council and Southern Water. This project is positioned as a catalyst for further development aligned with the Masterplan. In November 2023, the Council received £18.3 million from Round 3 of the government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF), with
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		£1.236 million specifically allocated for the Western Avenue Riverside Park, solidifying its role as a core element in the broader regeneration efforts for Andover. Project Objectives: The primary objective of the project is to create a linear park along the River Anton, restoring the river to a more natural alignment to enhance the chalk stream's ecological habitat. This will create an attractive and accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists into Andover town centre. It is hoped that the river enhancement works being undertaken as part of this scheme and also more widely as part of Southern Water's Chalk Stream Resilience Project, will reduce flood risk around Western Avenue, the Former Magistrates Court, and land south of Andover College. The specific objectives include: • Reconfiguration of Traffic Routes: Removing the eastern arm of the gyratory and adjusting junctions at West Street and Waterloo Court to improve traffic flow. The preferred scheme proposes the conversion of West Street to two-way working to provide access and egress to the bus station, Lidl car park, Chantry Centre service areas, and local residents in Portland Grove. This option will enable a longer, uninterrupted route along the River Anton, creating a safer environment with a single path which allows the surrounding spaces to be visible by everyone along the route. • Flood Risk Reduction and Habitat Restoration: In collaboration with Southern Water's Chalk Stream Resilience Project, the scheme aims to alleviate flood risk by returning the River Anton to a more natural state. This
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		includes reintroducing floodplains, wetlands, and natural habitats to the currently modified river channel. • Improvement of Pedestrian and Cycle Pathways: Widening and resurfacing the existing pathway between Bridge Street and the Odeon/Asda complex to enhance the quality and safety of this route. This also involves upgrading the space beneath the flyover by removing non-load-bearing panels and updating the surrounding landscaping. Project Outputs: The following Outputs will be delivered and measured as part of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project: • 3,800m² of new green space created with the retention of an additional 6,500m². • 0.4 kilometres in length of new cycleways • 0.3 kilometres in length of roads converted to pedestrian ways. • Ecological enhancements around the river corridor of the River Anton. • Flood risk alleviation.
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		The scheme will consist of the removal of the A3057 Western Avenue gyratory to enable the creation of the linear park.. This will result in the existing southbound highway between West Street and Waterloo Court will cease to be a highway, with the public rights of way extinguished via a Stopping Up Order (SUO). West Street will be upgraded to accommodate two-way traffic. Other highway changes are required to facilitate this, such as: • The creation of a new signalised junction between Western Avenue and West Street. • The creation of a new priority junction between Western Avenue and Waterloo Court. • Creation of a north-south dedicated and segregated cycle route along Western Avenue to the west of the River Anton. • Re-configuration of the bus station so buses can turn-around in the bus station forecourt. • Conversion of West Street to two-way working to provide access and egress to the bus station, Lidl car park, Chantry Centre service areas and local residents in Portland Grove.
2.	Who implements or delivers the service, strategy, policy, project, or function? State if this is delivered by more than one service or team, including any external partners.	The Western Avenue Riverside Park project is a complex, high-profile project which requires interdisciplinary resource and support from several Council and third-party services to support successful delivery. Internal to TVBC:

		The following key internal stakeholders which must be engaged with as part of successful project delivery have been identified as follows: Regeneration Programme Board (Management Team): • Andy Ferrier, Chief Executive (Sponsor) • Salena Mulhere, Deputy Chief Executive and interim Head of PAM (Sponsor) • James Moody, Head of Strategy & Innovation • Dave Tasker, Head of Community & Leisure • Paul Wykes, Head of Environmental Services • Sam Hall, Head of Housing and Environmental Health Services • Karen Dunn, Head of Legal & Democratic Services • Carl Whatley, Head of Finance & Revenues • Graham Smith, Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development Members: • Cllr. Phil North, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Andover Regeneration • Andover Vision (Members) The Local Planning Authority (LPA):
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		• Simon Finch, Head of Planning and Building External to TVBC: The following external stakeholders who have an interest in the project in some capacity and must be engaged with as part of successful project delivery are as follows: Delivery Partners & Match Funding Providers: • Hampshire County Council: HCC Engineering Consultancy, Hampshire Engineering Services (HES), to lead on the detailed highways design and would procure the main works Contractor to deliver the highways works through their procurement framework. • Southern Water: Southern Water is funding, and procurement must of the specialist survey work along the river corridor and utilising their procurement framework for specialist river construction contractors. • Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG): Awarded the Council £18.3m of LUF Funding as per Round 3 of the LUF Programme. Statutory Organisations: • Natural England • Environmental Agency • MHCLG • The Highways Authority
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		• The Lead Local Flood Authority • The Local Planning Authority
3.	Who will be affected by the service, strategy, policy, project, or function?	The complex and high-profile nature of this project means that there is a multiplicity of groups and individuals who will be impacted by the project, including but not limited to: • General public (including individuals in their capacity as end users of the scheme) • Stagecoach • Residents along West Street (e.g., Portland Grove and Chantry Lodge) • Unity • Private bus operators who utilise the bus stand on Western Avenue • Taxi operators who use the taxi rank on West Street • Businesses who use the loading bay on West Street • TVBC services who will be required to take on the maintenance of the park (e.g., Environmental Services and Communities & Leisure)
4.	What are the likely <u>positive impacts</u> for the protected groups (see above)?	The successful delivery of the Western Avenue Riverside Park will result in the following positive impacts for those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010:

	Are any particular groups more affected and why?	Disability: The Western Avenue Riverside Park project will provide benefits for disabled individuals, particularly those with mobility impairments, visual impairments, and hidden disabilities. A key improvement is the creation of step-free pedestrian routes across the park, which will ensure that wheelchair users and individuals with limited mobility can navigate the space without barriers. The levels are kept as simple as possible, closely matching the existing topography to minimise the need for significant alterations. Additionally, the widening and resurfacing of pedestrian and cycle pathways between Bridge Street and the Odeon/Asda complex will make travel safer and more comfortable for wheelchair users and those with walking aids. Another accessibility enhancement is the improvement of pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian crossings are equipped with tactile paving to enhance safety and accessibility for those with visual impairments. The installation of refuge islands and better-positioned crossings ensures that those with visual impairments or limited mobility can safely navigate the area. These changes contribute to an inclusive public space that is accessible to disabled residents and visitors alike. Beyond physical mobility, the park's tranquil natural spaces will also benefit individuals with hidden disabilities such as anxiety, autism, and sensory processing disorders. The inclusion of quiet seating areas and diverse natural environments provides a low-stimulation setting, which can be beneficial for mental wellbeing and stress reduction. Western Avenue is in the Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) of "Andover Central", which currently
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		is within decile 3 (where 1 equates to “most vulnerable” and 10 equates to “least vulnerable”) of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Index. In addition, Western Avenue is in the Health Deprivation and Disability Decile 4. A 2024 study published within the <i>Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health</i> notes that the “provision of just 1% more green space in the most deprived urban neighbourhoods in 3 out of the 4 UK nations may be linked to around 40% fewer preventable deaths in these areas”. This demonstrates a correlation between an increase in public green space and positive health outcomes. Age (Older Adults & Young People): Older adults and children will experience multiple benefits from the park’s design. Access to green space has been proven to enhance both physical and mental health, particularly for older individuals who may have limited mobility and for children who benefit from outdoor activity. For older adults, the project will introduce accessible seating areas, providing resting points at regular intervals, which is especially beneficial for those who experience fatigue or mobility issues. In addition, shaded seating will be provided, which helps protect elderly visitors from excessive sun exposure. Access to green spaces has been shown to reduce stress, improve cognitive function, and support physical activity among older individuals. The restored natural habitat along the River Anton will provide a peaceful, accessible space for walking, socialising, and engaging with nature, which is particularly beneficial for older people who may experience loneliness or isolation. For young children, the scheme includes the creation of new play areas, such as “The Boathouse” and “The Meadow”, which are
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		designed to encourage imaginative and physical play. These spaces will allow children of different age groups to engage in safe outdoor play, promoting physical health, motor skill development, and social interaction. The introduction of a free to use, accessible park will also provide older children and teenagers with a leisure space and place to gather. Pregnancy & Maternity The Western Avenue Riverside Park will provide several benefits for pregnant individuals and parents with infants. The step-free access routes will make it easier for parents using prams or pushchairs to move through the space without obstacles or steep inclines. The project also includes dedicated seating areas, which will provide resting points for pregnant individuals who may experience fatigue or require frequent breaks. Additionally, the availability of shaded areas ensures comfort on hot days, reducing heat stress for both expectant parents and young children. In addition, natural surveillance through good lighting and open sightlines will make the park feel safer for parents with young children, reducing concerns about isolated or secluded areas. Socio-Economic Considerations: Individuals from low-income backgrounds are more likely to experience barriers to accessing green spaces due to cost and location. The creation of this free-to-access park ensures that all residents, regardless of financial status, can enjoy a high-quality recreational space.
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		Additionally, the scheme supports sustainable and cost-effective transportation. By improving pedestrian and cycling pathways, the project enables residents who rely on active travel to navigate the town more safely and efficiently. This is especially important for those who do not own private vehicles. The regeneration of the town centre through this project has the potential to stimulate economic activity and job creation, which could benefit lower-income residents by providing employment opportunities in the long term. Shifting perceptions of the town centre to that of an attractive place to visit will stimulate additional footfall and encourage dwell time in the town. This will support the viability of businesses in the town centre and attract new investment. The change in perceptions relating to the environment will also have an uplifting effect on property values. Personal Safety and Security Considerations for Women and Vulnerable Individuals Walking After Dark: The Western Avenue Riverside Park project is designed with a comprehensive lighting strategy and enhanced public visibility measures, ensuring that individuals, particularly women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other vulnerable groups, feel safe and secure when walking through the park after sundown. Data (2022) from the Office for National Statistics details that “82% of women reported feeling very or fairly unsafe, compared with 42% of men.” One of the key positive impacts is the strategic placement of lighting throughout the park, which will illuminate all key pedestrian and cycle routes, entrances, and gathering spaces. The lighting has been carefully planned to reduce dark or secluded areas, reducing the risk of anti-social behaviour and
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		improving visibility for park users walking alone at night. The College of Policing has noted that “improved street lighting has been found to reduce crime. On average, violent and property crime reduced by 21% in areas where street lighting was improved, relative to areas where it was not.” In addition, the College of Policing notes that improved street lighting can contribute to the safety of women at night. Beyond lighting, the project incorporates Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, ensuring that the park remains open, visible, and easy to navigate. The removal of visual obstructions, along with wide, well-lit pathways, creates a space where individuals feel safer due to increased visibility and passive surveillance from surrounding streets and public spaces. Another key feature is the uniform lighting approach across high-activity areas, such as seating zones, cycleways, and entry points. This ensures that there are no sudden dark spots, which can often feel intimidating or unsafe, particularly for women walking alone at night. The proximity of the park to active public spaces and roads also enhances natural surveillance, meaning that people using the park at night will be visible to others, further improving security. These measures directly reduce the likelihood of crime or harassment and ensure that individuals can confidently and comfortably use the park at any time of day. This focus on personal safety ensures that the Western Avenue Riverside Park will be an inclusive, welcoming space that provides a secure environment for all users, particularly those who may feel vulnerable in poorly lit or isolated public areas.
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		An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken by Hampshire County Council as part of their work on the project. Corroborating the benefits detailed above, this work indicates that the scheme will give “minor benefits to several protected category groups”, by: • Improving accessibility within the town centre, creating more greenspace for local residents of which a high proportion are elderly. • Enhancing public realm and creating new step free routes which benefit those less able to walk. • Town centre regeneration will result in a greater breadth of services locally, benefitting those on low incomes and without access to a car. New job opportunities will also reduce poverty. • Enhancements to the town centre will better serve the wider rural hinterland reducing the need to travel to urban centres further away.
5.	What are the likely <u>negative impacts</u> for the protected groups (see above)? Are any particular groups affected more and why?	The following negative impacts of the Western Avenue Riverside Park scheme have been identified: Disability: <u>Loss of the Western Avenue Bus Stand and Impact on Public Transport Accessibility:</u> The removal of the bus stand on Western Avenue may create challenges for disabled individuals who rely on public transport. Many disabled residents, particularly those with mobility impairments, visual impairments, and hidden disabilities, may

		find it difficult or physically demanding to walk further distances to alternative bus stops. This could also lead to longer journey times for individuals with limited stamina or those who experience pain while walking. Additionally, those with visual impairments who are familiar with the existing layout and bus stop locations may struggle to adjust to new routes or stops without appropriate communication and wayfinding measures. Unity, a charity who supports vulnerable members of the Test Valley Community, utilises the bus stand on Western Avenue which will be removed to create the park. A new bus bay will need to be found in close proximity to Unity's office which is located in the bus station. At this time, an alternative bus bay for Unity has been accommodated within the design of the bus station forecourt. This new arrangement is acceptable to both Unity and Stagecoach. <u>Increased Traffic, Noise, and Air Pollution Affection Those with Respiratory Conditions:</u> The removal of the eastern arm of the Western Avenue gyratory will increase traffic flow along West Street, which could result in higher levels of air pollution and noise. This is particularly concerning for disabled individuals with respiratory conditions such as asthma or COPD, as they are more vulnerable to poor air quality. Additionally, increased noise levels could negatively impact those with sensory processing disorders. Technical work is underway as of November 2024 to understand the extent of these implications and the mitigation required to ensure that this is acceptable in planning terms and complies with WHO guidance in respect of air quality.
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		Age (Older Adults & Young People): <u>Impact on Older Adults Due to Increased Noise and Air Pollution:</u> Older adults, especially those with pre-existing respiratory conditions or cardiovascular issues, may be adversely affected by the increased traffic emissions caused by the re-routing of vehicles onto West Street. Additionally, older individuals are often more sensitive to noise pollution, which can contribute to stress, anxiety, and disrupted sleep patterns, particularly for those living near the newly increased traffic flow areas. <u>Potential for Longer Bus Journey Times to Affect Older Residents:</u> Many older adults rely on public transport for essential trips, including visits to medical appointments, shopping areas, and social activities. With the removal of the Western Avenue bus stand and the potential for route alterations, bus journey times may increase, making daily travel more challenging for elderly individuals who may experience discomfort during extended journeys. A 2023 survey conducted by Transport Focus of bus users across Great Britain noted that 40% of bus users were over the age of 65. Therefore, any impact of bus provision could disproportionately affect older adults. <u>Impact on Children Due to Loss of School Transport Stop.</u> Private bus operators who provide transport to schools use the bus stand on Western Avenue which will be lost to accommodate the park. The private bus operators will need to find a new pick-up and drop-off location. This may negatively impact on school children through the potential for increased journey times to school.
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		Pregnancy & Maternity: <u>Inconvenience for Pregnant Individuals Due to Public Transport Changes:</u> Pregnant individuals often experience increased fatigue, discomfort, and mobility challenges, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy. The removal of the Western Avenue bus stand may require longer walks to reach alternative stops, increasing the physical strain on pregnant individuals who may struggle with extended walking distances. General Equalities Considerations: <u>Users of the Taxi Rank:</u> The taxi rank on West Street can accommodate three vehicles. This taxi rank will be lost in order to compensate for the loss of bus layover space on Western Avenue. Those without access to a private vehicle (e.g., children and older adults) may rely on taxis and other forms of public transport, and any loss of provision could negatively impact them. Discussions with the Licensing Manager at TVBC have confirmed that this is not a popular taxi rank and considers that it would be acceptable to re-provide an additional taxi space in the taxi rank along Waterloo Court to mitigate for this loss. There will be consultation with the taxi trade as part of the Planning Application and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. <u>Potential Financial Impact on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged People Due to Longer or More Complex Journeys:</u> Low-income individuals who rely on public transport as their primary means of travel may face increased inconvenience and
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		costs if bus services change or become less efficient due to the new road layout. Longer routes or additional transfers could result in higher travel costs, which may disproportionately impact those in financial hardship.
6.	What consultation and engagement has taken place (or is planned) with the affected groups and other interested parties?	The development of a new riverside park adjacent to Western Avenue and the River Anton is a key project in the delivery of the Andover Masterplan and will build upon the success of the Town Mills Riverside Park. The Masterplan sets out a series of proposals for the development and improvement of Andover Town Centre that will ensure it develops as a vibrant place that will be attractive and inviting for users and investors and was developed following extensive community engagement with Andover residents. A survey undertaken as part of this received over 3000 responses with a 97% positive support for the improvement plans. To ensure that regeneration delivers on what matters to local people, the Council has worked with partners to shape a place-brand and set of guiding values for the town. This not only celebrates the positive aspects of the town but will help to influence and guide our actions in Andover from the way we talk about our town, to the events we run and the decisions we make on major projects such as the implementation of the Andover Masterplan. There are three core values that have been developed and are currently being activated: 1. <i>Strength in Connection</i> 2. <i>Everything On Our Doorstep</i> 3. <i>A Breath of Fresh Air</i> The Council remains committed to ensuring that key stakeholders, and the public at large, remain informed as to the

		progress of the project. The Western Avenue Riverside Park Comms Plan was developed and adopted to ensure that: • Key external stakeholders remain abreast of the progression of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project. • Andover residents are kept informed of the changes and improvements that will be made. • Residents understand that the Council and stakeholders have a genuine interest in the town and how the new Western Avenue Riverside Park will benefit them and build civic pride. • The wider public are encouraged into Andover town centre, both visitors and residents, to boost the local economy and create new opportunities. Project communications will be distributed via a blended, multi-medium approach including but not limited to: • Press releases (in-print / online) ○ Social media ○ Gov Delivery emails ○ In-person distribution at stakeholder events / consultations • In-person stakeholder and community engagement events: ○ Andover Vision Stakeholder Meetings
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		○ Survey sessions ○ Focus Groups • Dedicated space for the circulation of recent and relevant project updates via the Think Andover Town Centre website. • Regular release of Regeneration Newsletters. • Media calls / briefings. • Site walk arounds with media and key stakeholders. • Andover Place Brand case studies. • Town centre visuals. • The “Andover in Time” campaign. Robust, targeted engagement with affected groups and other interested parties will take place throughout the lifecycle of the project via the following channels and forums: • Engagement with Andover Vision Stakeholders and Members at predetermined intervals. • Public engagement sessions will take place at predetermined intervals throughout the lifecycle of the project. • Engagement with residents of Chantry Lodge and Portland Grove has taken place to inform them about the
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		preferred scheme and the alterations to West Street on 19 September 2024. • Regular communications releases will take place to ensure the public remained informed of progress of the project. • On 27 and 29 March 2025, two well-attended public engagement sessions were held at Unit 53 of the Chantry Centre, allowing over 400 members of the public to review the Western Avenue Riverside Park design progress in a drop-in format. Attendees provided both written and verbal feedback, which directly informed ongoing design development for RIBA Stage 4 (park design) and Detailed Design (highways works). Detailed display boards, highlighting the park's history and accessibility features, facilitated discussions with the full project team, including key technical specialists who addressed public queries in real time. These sessions were instrumental in refining the design and shaping future project stages. • Additional engagement has been programmed for and will focus on capturing feedback from a broad range of local organisations representing diverse community needs, prioritising accessibility and inclusive design. Key discussion themes include footway and river platform accessibility, material choices, seating and lighting design and placement, planting schemes (including sensory gardens), play facilities, and community event opportunities. Planned sessions include a meeting with Purple Oak (supporting adults and children with learning, physical, and mental health disabilities) on 12 June 2025 and Koala (an autistic-led organisation in Andover supporting autistic, neurodiverse, and learning-disabled individuals). Additional engagement is planned with
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		groups such as Enham Trust, St James' Place, the Young Mums group, the Future Leaders and Decision Makers Project, and the Cultural Exchange Group. This engagement will be iterative, with regular touchpoints throughout design and delivery to ensure ongoing community influence on key project elements.
7.	What plans do you have in place, or are developing, to mitigate the likely negative impacts, i.e. how will you reduce the impact on the protected groups?	The following mitigation measures have been identified in response to the negative impacts identified as part of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project: Ensuring Bus Accessibility for the Disabled and Older People: To mitigate the removal of the Western Avenue bus stand, the Council will: • Create a new bus bay in the bus station forecourt, ensuring continued access to public transport for disabled individuals, older adults, and pregnant people. • Work with transport providers (e.g., Stagecoach) to minimise disruptions and ensure routes remain accessible for individuals with disabilities. • Implement clear wayfinding signage and accessible travel information to support visually impaired passengers and those unfamiliar with the new layout. Managing Noise and Air Pollution Near Residential Areas: To address increased noise and air pollution on West Street, the Council is: • Conducting noise and air quality assessments to ensure that disruption on residential properties is within the

		accepted thresholds and that air quality remains aligned with the WHO guidelines. • Planting additional trees and greenery to act as natural air filters, reducing pollution exposure. • Exploring noise barriers and sound-reducing landscaping, particularly near Portland Grove and Chantry Lodge, to help mitigate the effects of increased traffic noise. Minimising the Impact of Bus Route Adjustments: The Council is taking the following steps to ensure that bus users experience minimal disruption: • Collaborating with Stagecoach and private bus operators to ensure that alternative stops remain as close as possible to existing locations. • Monitoring journey times to assess the impact on users, of which those with protected characteristics form a portion of and working with bus operators to optimise efficiency. • Providing additional seating at bus stops to accommodate those who may need to rest whilst waiting for a bus. Alternative School Bus Drop-Off Locations: To ensure that school children are not negatively affected by the removal of the bus stand, the Council is: • Working to identify safe and convenient alternative pick-up/drop-off points for private bus operators. Creating Provision for Alternative Transport Modes: The Western Avenue Riverside Park project will create additional provision for active travel, with the design prioritising clear, well-
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		marked pedestrian pathways that facilitate easy navigation through the space, connecting key points such as the bus station entrances, adjacent streets, and nearby amenities. The scheme will also include the introduction of a cycle lane along the western edge of the road and the River Anton. To the north of the site, the cycle lane connects to the existing pedestrian underpass. On the central section, the cycle lane will be close to the road, to create the largest green area between the River and the Western Avenue. To the southern section, the cycle lane will connect to the existing routes. Re-Provision of Loss of Taxi Rank on West Street: To mitigate the loss of the taxi rank on West Street, discussions with TVBC Licensing colleagues have determined that this is not a popular taxi rank and considers that it would be acceptable to re-provide an additional taxi space in the taxi rank along Waterloo Court to mitigate for this loss. There will be consultation with the taxi trade as part of the Planning Application and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. The Western Avenue Riverside Park project will, via the means listed above, continue to engage with groups affected by the project as part of its standard practice and commitment to the Council's Corporate Values.
8.	How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured?	The impact of the Western Avenue Riverside Park scheme is subject to a robust and comprehensive Benefits Management auditing regime prescribed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of the requirements for the continued receipt of contributions from Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The project must report bi-annually to MHCLG on progress against the delivery of the Outputs and Outcomes that the

		Western Avenue project committed to within the LUF Round 3 Validation Form. The following Outputs will be delivered and measured as part of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project: • 3,800m² of new green space created with the retention of an additional 6,500m². • 0.4 kilometres in length of new cycleways • 0.3 kilometres in length of roads converted to pedestrian ways. The following Outcomes were committed to within the LUF Round 3 Validation Form: • 10% increase in the baseline proportion of the population satisfied with their local area as a place to live within 3 years of the interventions being completed. • 2% increase in the proportion of people whose usual method of travelling to work is walking by 3 years after the completion of the interventions. • 2% increase in the proportion of people whose usual method to travelling to work is cycling by 3 years after the completion of the interventions.
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		• 20% increase in the average number of pedestrians counted over the equivalent time period by 3 years after the interventions have completed. It is the responsibility of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project to engage and liaise with the relevant services and resources within TVBC and beyond to develop a strategy for the measurement of these outcomes, though a pathway to measurement has been specified within the LUF Round 3 Validation Form.
9.	Please summarise or provide links to the information, data, research used in this assessment	• Test Valley Website • Mental Health & Wellbeing Index 2023 - Hampshire • Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health - Green Space Provision and Reduction in Preventable Deaths • ONS Data (2022) on Perceptions of Personal Safety. • College of Policing: Physical Environment Interventions • College of Policing: Safety of Women at Night • Bus User Survey • Government Equalities Office • Stonewall • Office for Disability Issues

What course of action does this EQIA suggest that you take? (tick one of the following options)	
Outcome 1: No major change required The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EQIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the policy adjustments will remove the barriers identified?	
Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You should ensure that the EQIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with the policy. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EQIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination	

Summary of your proposals – copy and paste into any report for Cabinet, Council or General Purposes Committee

Positive Impacts:

What are the key impacts – positive and negative?

The development of the Western Avenue Riverside Park will have both positive and negative impacts on various protected groups as per the Equalities Act 2010. These impacts span across disability, age, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic status, and personal safety concerns.

Positive Impacts:

1. Disability:

- Improved accessibility through step-free pedestrian routes and widening of pathways, benefiting wheelchair users and individuals with mobility aids.

- Enhanced pedestrian crossings with tactile paving, refuge islands, and better-positioned crossings, increasing safety for people with visual impairments and limited mobility.
- Inclusive design with quiet seating areas and natural spaces that support individuals with hidden disabilities like anxiety, autism, or sensory processing disorders.

2. Age (Older & Younger People):

- **Older Adults:**

- Access to shaded seating areas and regular resting points to support physical activity and reduce fatigue.
- Access to green spaces promotes mental and physical health, alleviating isolation, and supporting cognitive function.

- **Young People:**

- New play areas, such as “The Boathouse” and “The Meadow,” foster physical play, social interaction, and motor skill development.
- The introduction of a free to use, accessible park will also provide older children and teenagers with a leisure space and place to gather.

3. Pregnancy & Maternity:

- Step-free access allows easier mobility for pregnant individuals or parents with prams.
- Seating areas and shaded spots provide rest and comfort, especially for expectant parents.

4. Socio-Economic Considerations:

- Free-to-access park enables all residents, including those from low-income backgrounds, to enjoy recreational spaces.
- Improved public transport routes make active travel safer, especially for those relying on walking or cycling.

- Regeneration of the town centre could stimulate local economic activity and job creation, benefiting lower-income residents and reducing poverty.

5. Personal Safety & Security:

- Improved lighting and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles enhance safety, reducing isolated areas and increasing visibility at night.
- Increased surveillance from surrounding streets ensures a safer environment for women and vulnerable groups walking after dark.

Negative Impacts:

1. Disability:

- Loss of the Western Avenue Bus Stand could create mobility challenges for individuals who rely on public transport, particularly those with limited stamina or visual impairments.
- Increased traffic, noise, and air pollution from the re-routing of vehicles may worsen air quality, especially for individuals with respiratory conditions like asthma.

2. Age (Older Adults & Young People):

- Increased traffic emissions may negatively affect older adults with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.
- Potential disruption in public transport services due to the removal of the bus stand may result in longer journey times, impacting older adults who rely on public transport for essential trips.
- Loss of school transport pick-up location could increase journey times for schoolchildren, causing inconvenience for families.

3. Pregnancy & Maternity:

- Changes to public transport (especially the loss of the Western Avenue bus stand) could lead to longer walking distances, putting additional strain on pregnant individuals.

4. Socio-Economic Considerations:

- Increased complexity of transport routes could disproportionately impact low-income individuals, leading to higher travel costs or longer commute times, which might further exacerbate financial hardship.

5. General Considerations:

- Loss of taxi rank on West Street could affect individuals without access to private vehicles, such as children or older adults, who rely on taxis for transportation. This impact is being mitigated by discussions around re-providing taxi space elsewhere

What course of action are you advising as a result of this EQIA?

Recommended Course of Action:

To address the identified negative impacts of the Western Avenue Riverside Park project, the Council is implementing several mitigation measures:

1. Ensuring Bus Accessibility for Disabled and Older People:

- Creating a new bus bay in the bus station forecourt to maintain public transport access.
- Working with transport providers (e.g., Stagecoach) to minimise disruptions and ensure accessibility.
- Implementing clear wayfinding signage and travel information to support visually impaired users and those unfamiliar with the new layout.

2. Managing Noise and Air Pollution:

- Conducting noise and air quality assessments to ensure compliance with WHO guidelines.
- Planting additional trees and greenery to act as natural air filters.
- Exploring noise barriers and sound-reducing landscaping, particularly near residential areas like Portland Grove and Chantry Lodge.

3. Minimising the Impact of Bus Route Adjustments:

- Collaborating with transport providers to ensure alternative stops are close to existing locations.
- Monitoring journey times to assess the impact on users and optimise efficiency.
- Providing additional seating at bus stops for those who need to rest while waiting.

4. Alternative School Bus Drop-Off Locations:

- Identifying safe and convenient alternative pick-up/drop-off points for school transport services.

5. Enhancing Active Travel Options:

- Improving pedestrian pathways to ensure clear, step-free navigation across key areas.
- Introducing a cycle lane along the western edge of the road and the River Anton, connecting to existing cycling routes.

6. Re-Provision of Lost Taxi Rank:

- Moving the lost taxi rank from West Street to Waterloo Court, as agreed in discussions with TVBC Licensing.
- Consulting the taxi trade as part of the Planning Application and TRO process.

7. Continued Engagement and Monitoring:

- The Council remains committed to ongoing consultation with affected groups to address concerns and refine solutions as needed.

Are there any particular groups affected more than others?

Groups More Affected than Others:

1. Disabled Individuals:

- Loss of the Western Avenue bus stand may create difficulties for those with mobility impairments, visual impairments, and hidden disabilities, as they may struggle with increased walking distances to alternative stops.
- Potential increase in noise and air pollution on West Street could disproportionately affect those with respiratory conditions, such as asthma or COPD.
- Mitigation measures include a new bus bay, improved wayfinding, and air quality assessments.

2. Older Adults:

- Increased walking distances to bus stops may pose mobility challenges.
- Higher exposure to air and noise pollution may negatively impact health, especially for those with pre-existing conditions.
- Mitigation measures include seating at bus stops, potential noise barriers, and tree planting to reduce pollution.

3. Children and Young People:

- Loss of the school transport stop may lead to longer journey times for students.
- Mitigation includes identifying safe and convenient alternative pick-up/drop-off locations.

4. Pregnant Individuals and Parents with Young Children:

- Longer walking distances to bus stops may increase fatigue and discomfort.
- Mitigation includes step-free pathways, resting areas, and shaded seating.

5. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Individuals:

- Changes to public transport routes could lead to longer or more complex journeys, increasing time and potential costs.
- Mitigation includes working with bus operators to ensure efficiency and accessibility.

6. Women and Other Vulnerable Individuals Walking at Night:

- Improved lighting and open sightlines are designed to increase safety, benefiting women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and others vulnerable to harassment or crime.
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles have been integrated to enhance visibility and security.

The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. Equalities issues will be considered through any more detailed consideration of the implementation of actions.

Head of Service sign off (name):

Graham Smith

Date:	
Comments or any action required:	
EDI Network - date:	
Published on the intranet and website – date:	