



Date: Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Contact: Amanda Holyoak, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01743 257714
Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk

CABINET

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

8 Shrewsbury High Street (Pages 1 - 28)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Charmley – Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Highways and Built Housing

Report of Executive Director of Place **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258919

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<u>Committee and date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet	
21st July 2021	<u>Public</u>

SHREWSBURY HIGH STREET – PEDESTRIANISATION: A PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

Responsible Officer Steve Brown

Email: steven.brown@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743257802

1 Summary

- 1.1 The significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local and national economy is well documented. It is widely accepted that COVID-19 has accelerated change that was already taking place across town centres. This has included a further shift towards online retail, increased working from home, and consequential impacts on public car parking and public transport. These issues combine, underlining the need for town centres to prioritise and transform the visitor experience as part of their recovery.
- 1.2 The High Streets Task Force message reinforces this approach. In its recent publications sets out a challenge of “.... *to support place leaders to make the best decisions on the future of their high streets and how they best serve their communities, and to build long-term capacity for this local transformation. We have a vision for town centres and high streets as the heart of their communities, with a unique sense of place and a strong identity. Whilst expert advice can help to solve some complex and technical problems facing high streets; the vision and capacity for change is generated from local leaders, businesses, people and organisations that care about their location.....*”
- 1.3 In June 2020 social distancing measures were introduced formal guidance to local authorities relating to social distancing (reopening our high streets safely) following central government guidance for Shrewsbury (and other towns across Shropshire). A Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) was introduced via the established process to enable the closure and pedestrianisation of the high street for the purpose of social distancing. To encourage a return to town centres and businesses in a safe and socially distanced manner. Over the past year, through a series of different restrictions and lockdowns, footfall measured in Shrewsbury has shown the town to be performing comparatively well to other town centres. The pavement licence scheme introduced in Summer 2020 has been embraced by local businesses and a café culture has flourished particularly during the summer months and provides an enhanced experience to visitors of the town but also additional trading space to hospitality-based businesses. It is worth noting that Shrewsbury has performed

comparatively less well during periods of lockdown when only essential retail was open in the town centre.

- 1.4 Central Government has indicated that social distancing measures and the associated regulations will be withdrawn, and social distancing measures will be removed on July 19th, 2021. In Shrewsbury the measures have been met with general approval and support for the high street. Indeed, there is a concern that the removal of the current social distancing on High Street – which in effect is pedestrianisation - would impact negatively on the vibrancy and economic bounce back of the town. Surveys and discussions with stakeholder groups have identified views and an indication of support and concern from residential areas, but *no* formal or tailored consultation has been brought forward across all groups, stakeholders and members of the public, and this report seeks approval to consult formally on this issue to determine a way forward.
- 1.5 This report sets out an approach for approval by Cabinet to implement a new Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to adjust from social distancing to an experiment for high street (particularly in allowing buses, taxis, cycles to access to the high street during Monday to Friday to better support access given previously during the closure periods all traffic was prevented). Further, for town walls to ascertain the support for the formalisation of existing measures and/or a Low Traffic Zone. The closure times would remain unchanged, and on weekends all traffic would be prohibited during the closure period. Stakeholders and general public are to be engaged via a consultation exercise and thereafter appropriate approval to be sought for the implementation, or not, of measures as informed by the outcomes of the consultation. The new ETRO will therefore replace previous measures from July 19th. The consultation planned for the late Autumn will consider all impacts of the measures and will assist the Council and its partners to implement the optimum longer-term arrangements for the town centre, its businesses, residents and stakeholders. Shropshire Council would be the lead body as the highway authority, but this is very much a partnership approach as evidenced in this report.
- 1.6 As the Highways Authority, Shropshire Council has the necessary legal powers to implement pedestrianisation via traffic orders, and to facilitate this working with partners to enable changes and interventions generated from wide discussion and engagement including:
 - Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership (BTP)
 - Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce
 - Shrewsbury Town Council
 - Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID)
 - Shropshire Council (Transport, Economic Growth, Passenger Transport, Trading Standards and Licensing)
 - Arriva Buses
 - Town Walls residents and stakeholders including schools.

- 1.7 Transitioning from social distancing to supporting the town's wider economic recovery, aligns with advice, guidance and messages from the High Streets Task Force who are encouraging town centres across the country to consider how to support and provide for sustainability of the high street. Additionally, there are potential positive equality, health and well-being impacts for groups in the community as a result of reduced road traffic as well as from more accessible pedestrian spaces, encouraging certain groupings to venture out, particularly those with caring responsibilities and those who consider themselves to be vulnerable. There are however also concerns, especially in residential areas, that should also be considered.
- 1.8 This measure could contribute towards improving the health and well-being of Shropshire's residents by facilitating social distancing requirements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, improving actual safety by reducing the likelihood of road traffic accidents, improving perceived safety, and by encouraging the increased use of more sustainable and active modes of transport that can help people to become fitter and healthier.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to agree that following the end of social distancing measures on 19 July an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order be confirmed closing Shrewsbury High Street to traffic Monday to Sunday 11-4 but allowing buses and taxis to use the road Monday- Friday and for this arrangement to continue until after the consultation referred to in recommendation 2.2 has been completed and a further report has been considered by Cabinet to longer term arrangements for High Street.**
- 2.2 Cabinet is requested to approve an 8-week public consultation to be initiated in the late Autumn led by Shropshire Council and its key partners to consider proposals for pedestrianisation of the High Street between:**
- Monday to Friday 11am – 4pm for all vehicles except buses, taxis, and cyclists to be prevented from accessing the High Street.**
 - Saturday/Sunday 11am – 4pm all vehicles to be prevented from accessing the High Street**
 - to reduce or restrict through traffic on Town Walls via the formalisation of existing temporary measures on Town Walls and or the implementation of a Low Traffic Zone.**
- 2.3 Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, and Head of Communications / Head of Transport and Environment (working with partners) to finalise the consultation plan with the Council's key partners.**
- 2.4 Cabinet to receive a further detailed report on the outcomes of the public consultation.**

3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

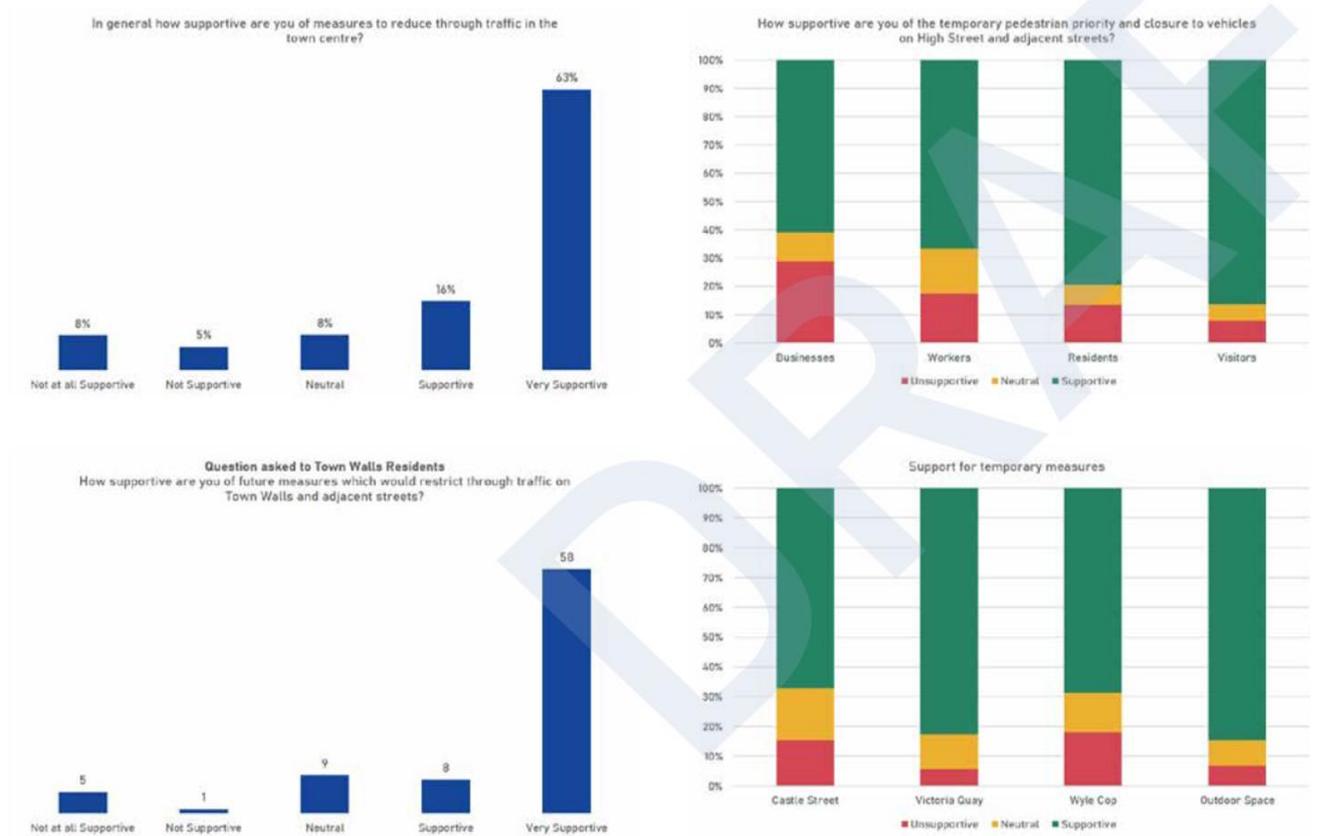
- 3.1 It is recognised that formalising pedestrianisation of High Street would be a significant and material change to how the town operates and functions. Surveys carried out over the past year indicate there is some support from businesses and the public to retain some of the measures introduced through social distancing (see below Figure 1). The recent Big Town Plan consultation further underlined the consensus for reducing through traffic in the town centre. The Town Council and Business Improvement District are supportive of the proposed experimental order and formal consultation in the Autumn.
- 3.2 There are risks with a project such as this, the risk to a degree are mitigated due to:
- A partnership approach as detailed in this report
 - Formal meeting of Shrewsbury Recovery Group (numerous agencies and partners participate).
 - Meetings with representative groups and residents
 - Shrewsbury Bid - will utilise their networks to identify any issues or concerns.
 - Measures have been in place for the previous year.
 - Mitigations for town walls traffic are in place and agreed.
 - There is enough confidence and data to suggest that the initiative would be supported.
- 3.3 There will however, be risks of any challenge, resident or business concern and direct access to the town centre specifically;
- Possible reputational issues - concerns raised in the local media
 - Managing access by vehicles to the town centre Monday - Friday with a mix of pedestrianisation.
 - Not all business may be supportive of the proposal and issues may be raised.
- 3.4 The conclusion from the Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIIA) was that a range of measures to facilitate pedestrianisation, with access for buses and taxis, would support certain users or demographics through improved access and perceptions of safety e.g. for families with young children. The improvements in air quality arising from a traffic free zone would be met with likely support from pedestrians and cyclists, particularly people with caring responsibilities for families and adults with learning disabilities, older people and people with physical disabilities including respiratory illnesses. There would be a loss of some disabled spaces and loss of weekend bus stops. There would also be a need to manage the impacts on Town Walls. It is key to note that the proposals are only until October 2021 and subject to public consultation for review, amendment or withdrawal.

3.5 As there has not been a specifically designed and formal consultation of all stakeholders this report seeks approval to instigate such a consultation to allow engagement with all users, groups and members of the public to collect evidence to inform the Council as the Highways Authority in formalising a proposal.

Figure 1

VISITOR/TRADER/RESIDENT SURVEY -

As part of this review, there has been a comprehensive survey of businesses, residents and visitors which received over 1300 responses. Overall there has been very strong support for the measures that have been put in place and for future interventions to reduce through traffic. Full results of the survey can be found as an appendix.





Visitors and shoppers enjoying a traffic free environment on High Street

4 Climate Change

- 4.1 Energy and fuel consumption can increase where an intervention results in an increase in stationary traffic and there could also be a potential adverse impact on air quality. The extent to which queuing or stationary traffic is generated as a result of these interventions will need to be monitored and the impact assessed, reducing traffic in the town centre and the possibility of a low traffic zone would support this requirement.
- 4.2 Renewable energy generation. The decision arising from this report is not considered to create opportunities to generate renewable energy.
- 4.3 Carbon offsetting or mitigation. These measures are being introduced on a temporary basis for an absolute minimum limited period, no carbon off setting or mitigation has therefore been identified.
- 4.4 Climate Change adaptation. These mitigation measures could contribute towards improving the health and well-being of Shropshire's residents by facilitating pedestrianisation as a result of improving perceived safety. The measures may also increase use of more sustainable and active modes of transport that can help people to become fitter and healthier.

5 Financial Implications

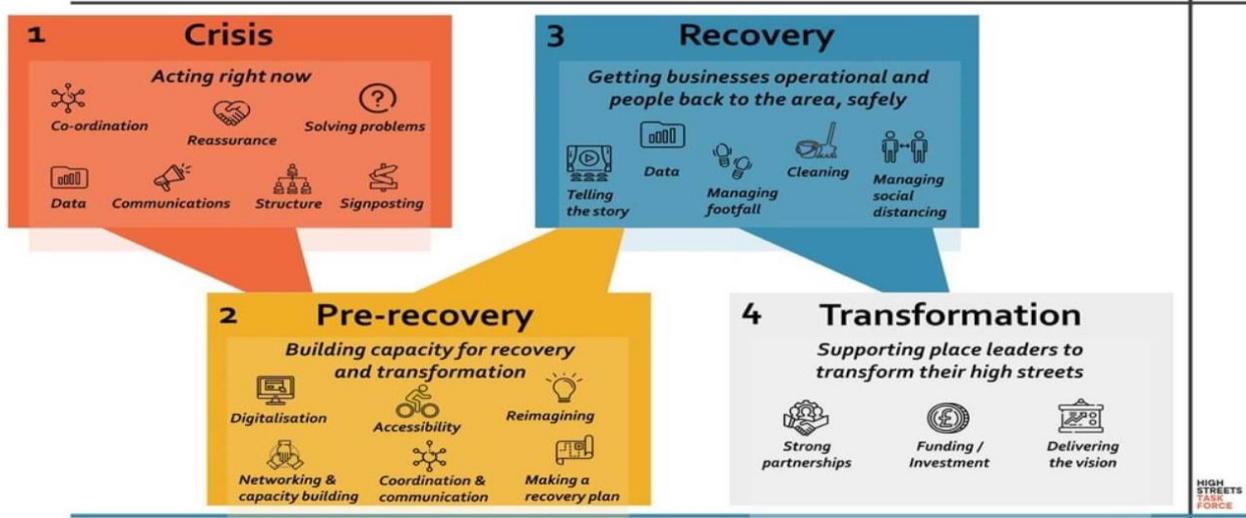
- 5.1 To transition from social distancing (of which other financial provision has met these costs in full) to continuing with closures from the summer as soon as social distancing requirements are withdrawn (which will be confirmed by central Government) until the 31st of October 2021 will incur a revenue cost for ongoing traffic management and provision of signs, and a requirement to retain the measures as required on Town Walls until October 31st October 2021. These revenue pressure costs are set out below and will be an ongoing pressure for service budgets to absorb.

£49,000 (approx.)	For provision of traffic management barriers, traffic cones, signs and measures on town walls reduction assuming late July until October 31 st , 2021.
£8,000	New traffic information signs to provide information and background
£1000	Legal costs for Orders and miscellaneous
£0	Consultation material - posters, leaflets, social media, marketing - Partnership cost - no direct charge
£58,000	total

- 5.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to formally consult on pedestrianisation via the wider town centre and economic recovery with partners (Shrewsbury BID, Big Town Plan Board, Town Council, etc.), town centre users and businesses, organisations and wider members of the public to determine whether permanent interventions would be beneficial or not, and if so the nature and most appropriate locations for any such interventions. Improvements to the public realm may also be considered such as barriers, planters, bollards, changes to layout of key junctions or access points, footways and presentation of our key access points to the town, new signs, resurfacing etc. Subject to approval and the consultation on the principle of pedestrianisation confirming further measures to be beneficial, then the capital costs of designing and implementing measures to a standard suitable for such an historic and heritage environment would require an approximate budget of £850,000.
- 5.3 Interrelated projects such as the Big Town Plan and Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package, and the potential Levelling Up Bid (LUF) could also provide opportunities to bring forward funding for this work and attract external funding to support any final package of interventions rather than a direct capital cost. Provision for this budget has been agreed for the 2022/23 financial year capital programme subject to approval.
- 5.4 Should the recommendations in this report be approved final detailed costs of implementation can be derived, based on a menu of costed options for consideration informed by the consultation. The pace of any proposed intervention and timescales would also be crucial to ensure that works can be coordinated with other key projects and as funding opportunities present.
- 6 Context**
- 6.1 During the pandemic social distancing and supporting our high streets whilst encouraging safe use and maintaining economic sustainability of our towns centres was a key issue. External funds were attracted to support this initiative, specifically Reopening Our High Streets Safely Fund (RoSF) which brought forward pedestrianisation some 18 months ago.
- 6.2 Following implementation of the High Street closure and pedestrianisation by a Temporary Traffic Order (TTRO) it became apparent that there is support for some

- Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Board
- Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce
- Portfolio Holder for Highways
- Shrewsbury BID Board
- Town Clerk
- Town Walls residents' group
- Local Member(s)

6.6 This approach mirrors the advice and guidance as set out the High Streets Task Force publication on supporting High streets, by bringing forward and reinventing and animating a town and its strategic approach to renewal (extract below).



High Street Taskforce Recovery Framework has been used by partners in Shrewsbury

- **Restructuring** – putting in place the capacity, leadership and partnerships to deliver change and considering large-scale spatial change that will be needed to transform your town centre
- **Repositioning** – knowing your town, using relevant data and information to develop a collaborative, inspiring vision that achieves change
- **Rebranding** – establishing an identity and sense of place that can engender pride, commitment and attachment and making sure you communicate this across the whole community
- **Reinventing** – activate and animate your town, diversify its attractions. Multifunctional places offer different things that draw in footfall and spend.

The High Streets Taskforce 4Rs Framework for Place Renewal

6.7 Working together to produce a package that supports the aspirations of the Big Town Plan, encourages further growth of the town and should also addresses some other issues such as: -

- Quality of experience as demonstrated below.
- A safer and welcoming environment

- Provides additional trading spaces for hospitality business via approved pavement licences in the short-term and pavement permits in the longer-term
- Constancy of message - for ease of messaging and continuity of marketing and promotion



Pavement licenses being used by hospitality businesses within the closure zone

- Encourages footfall and dwell time.
- Provides a unique experience and marketing proposal for the town

7 Issues and concerns

7.1 The times and rationale for the current closure mirror those in place for the last 18 months, except for the allowance of buses, taxis and cycles, to allow:

- Deliveries to High Street shops and or maintenance to occur prior to 11am or after 4pm, generally this has become recognised and worked effectively.
- Buses, taxis and cyclists to be allowed into the High Street on Monday to Fridays. The previous closure under social distancing did not allow any traffic at all; however, it was apparent that concerns were being raised from public transport users of a wide demographic and recognition that there are certain sections of the population that access to the town centre via public transport is required, and this report addresses those concerns
- As Cabinet would expect there is not universal support, further recent Shropshire Star articles (21.6.21) demonstrate the concerns which can be summarised as excess traffic, frequency of bus services, impact upon the historic environment, queuing traffic which also must be considered.
<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/shrewsbury/2021/06/21/historic-town-walls-is-suffering-from-the-closure-of-shrewsbury-town-centre/>

8 Town Walls

- 8.1 Over the past year, whilst social distancing measures and closures have been in place on High Street, there has been a significant increase of through traffic using Town Walls. Concerns have been raised by residents and schools about the impact of increased traffic and pollution on this historic and narrow street which is used by large numbers of pedestrians each day.
- 8.2 A package of temporary measures has been introduced on Town Walls following discussion aiming to improve the pedestrian experience and safety implications and to deter the amount of traffic on this route including:
- Safety review report and risk assessment commissioned, and all recommendations implemented by agreement.
 - Diversion signs to the inner ring road placed at all key interchange points to encourage traffic to direct away from town walls.
 - Speed reduction measures across town walls and increased repeater signs
 - Temporary pedestrian segregated routes to support safety
 - Temporary controlled crossing points to support pupils' access to schools and colleges, as agreed with local Head Teacher
 - Working with colleagues at Arriva being restricted uses to minimise buses using Town Walls.
- 8.3 When social distancing measures end, buses will no longer use the Town Walls route from Monday to Friday, but cars and other vehicles will be able to access as normal.
- 8.4 A working group has been meeting regularly including residents, Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council, Shrewsbury High School, Shrewsbury Colleges Group, local Member, Shrewsbury BID and Arriva to look at possible longer-term solutions if pedestrianisation of the High Street is to continue beyond social distancing. The working group has been supported by consultants and funded through the Big Town Plan Partnership.
- 8.5 The working group has concluded that a holistic approach should be taken to preventing through traffic on both High Street and Town Walls route which would prioritise active travel and public transport.
- 8.6 This would mean that general traffic coming across English bridge would either be going to park in the Wyle Cop or St Julian's Friars car park or access/servicing businesses in the river loop but not passing through the town centre. All other traffic would be directed to other parts of the town via Old Potts Way and the Inner Bypass. Traffic modelling carried out in summer 2020 suggested that at least half the traffic currently using Wyle Cop (up) and Town Walls is "through traffic", which is simply aiming to reach the north or west of the town.
- 8.7 As part of the consultation in the Autumn, it is proposed that the Low Traffic Zone is considered as part of the consultation for Town Walls only, to gather views from the public, businesses and key stakeholders on this, or the formalisation of the current temporary measures, subject to finances, design, agreement and other issues being resolved and costed. A proposal will then be included in a future report to Cabinet.

9 Consequences

- 9.1 The only change from the previous 12 months is to allow access to the High Street on Monday to Friday for buses and taxis for the reasons laid out in this report. On balance, for some of our visitors to the town centre and certain demographics (particularly elderly in accessing the town centre or younger families with push chairs etc.) this is a necessary compromise especially given the duty on the Council to consider equality issues. There is no change on weekends to the previous 12 months and no vehicles would enter High Street during the closure times. The consequence of this is that pavement licences held by 10 hospitality businesses on High Street and Shoplatch will not be valid Monday – Friday; however, at weekends this will be unchanged. Shrewsbury BID will provide support with liaison with business concerned and on all wider communications.

10 Preparation

- 10.1 A working group, led by the Head of Transport and Environment, has been preparing with colleagues from Passenger Transport, Trading Standards and Licensing, Traffic and Communications in respect of safety procedures and advice. Formal liaison with all bus providers has been undertaken with assurances provided from bus companies that a speed limit of no more than 15mph will be observed in the closure zone. A similar arrangement has been reached with taxi and private hire representatives. A formal process for any future legal traffic order will consult with all key and statutory providers plus the “chair “of Town Walls residents to shape the final order for approval.

11 Proposed Consultation

- 11.1 The proposed consultation would have the following core principles: -
- The proposed measures as per the recommendations in this report receive support or raise issues or concerns that have not previously been identified or appreciated.
 - Identify any necessary adjustments to the proposal.
 - Should pedestrianisation be permanent, seasonal (spring until Autumn), for the Christmas period or not at all?
 - Identify if the proposal should be fundamentally amended or even withdrawn.
 - How the measures to prevent vehicles accessing the closures should be installed/deployed (e.g. planters, gates, bollards etc).
 - Identify potential additional measures for the Town Walls route to reduce and restrict through traffic.
 - Identify if the implementation of a Low Traffic Zone for town walls is appropriate or not.
 - Identify what improvements in the public realm should be considered to improve the appearance and experience of the town should the proposal go forward.

- Identify and understand if any issues are incurred by certain groups, demographics, business or organisations.
- Identify or not how the proposals would support town centre businesses directly and support marketing of the town at a wider regional level.
- The consultation will last for 8 weeks and be operated via the council's Get Involved portal, and be supported by the Big Town Plan Partnership, Shrewsbury BID and Town Council in respect of commutations, messages, responding to queries and clarifications, and via public meetings either virtual or physical as part of a wider process of engagement.

12 Summary

- 12.1 As a response to the pandemic social distancing measures were introduced into Shrewsbury and other towns. The Shrewsbury measures, although based on anecdotal evidence, have been deemed a success by many but a formal evidence-based solution for permanent measures has been called for. This report aims to resolve a way forward and recognise that our changing town centre will need support and interventions to enable their ongoing vibrancy; indeed, the High Streets Task Force recommend this very approach. This report attempts to recognise this but to also ensure awareness of the issues that the proposed measures create for residents of the town. Hence, implementation of an experiment to identify support or issues and then proceed to a full public consultation with a further detailed report to cabinet with necessary analysis would hope to move this issue forward.
- 12.2 This initiative supports and fully aligns with the Big Town Plan intent and aspirations and should be an enabler of that initiative.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr Steve Charmley Portfolio Holder - Highways and Transport
Local Member Cllr Nat Green
Appendices Appendix 1 - Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Appendix 1

Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) Part One Screening Record 2021

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Covid-19 strategic response activity: Temporary Traffic Regulation Order relating to prohibition of vehicles, waiting and loading on Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION until October 31t 2020 for public consultation.

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Kevin Aitken – Transport Commissioner

Decision, review and monitoring
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Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	✓	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		✓

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations.
<p>A range of temporary highway measures were developed by Shropshire Council to facilitate social distancing in areas with high levels of pedestrian footfall or cycling activity and to promote active travel during the Covid 19 pandemic.</p> <p>The aim of this proposal for a consultation on pedestrianisation measures in Shrewsbury Town Centre is to gain feedback that will build upon evidence arising from the introduction of and extension of a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for the provision of interventions to support social distancing on Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch, Shrewsbury in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was to prohibit vehicular access daily between 11am and 4pm, including the suspension of all necessary waiting and loading provision on Wyle Cop necessary to facilitate the vehicular prohibition.</p> <p>The council now wishes to formally consult with all users and stakeholders on the proposed measures and consider the responses before reaching a final decision for formal adoption and implementation or not.</p> <p>The current temporary arrangement affects all pedestrians in the given area, whether residents or visitors, and thus may have an impact across a range of Protected</p>

Characteristic groupings, particularly those with physical or learning disabilities and their careers, and families with young children. In addition, the lack of vehicular access to disabled parking bays affects blue badge holders wishing to park on High Street and Shoplatch and therefore has a direct impact on those with disabilities and their careers.

It is envisaged that the potential impact in equality terms will continue to be medium positive for the groupings of Age, Pregnancy and Maternity, and Social Inclusion, as there will be safety gains for pedestrians. It is envisaged that the potential impact for the Disability grouping will be low positive as despite potential safety gains, there are direct impacts on potential users within this group.

The temporary arrangements were anticipated to present the following positive impacts:

- Potential for extra space for pedestrians, including Shropshire residents and visitors, to support social distancing requirements in response to Government requirements in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Support for active travel choices that may be made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to accessing work and retail on foot.
- Support for local businesses and town centre regeneration by facilitating safe access to establishments and stalls, and the provision of additional pavement permits.
- Increased safety for users
- Access to the town centre for busses, taxis, and cycles (Mon – Fri only)

Specific actions proposed to enhance these positive impacts focussed upon communication of the measures across a range of potential audiences and the monitoring of any associated impacts.

The temporary arrangements were anticipated to present the following neutral or negative impacts:

- No actual improvement to pedestrian footway widths despite enhanced pedestrian space. Pedestrians will still be required to step off the kerb if using existing footways on Wyle Cop if wishing to allow extra space to facilitate social distancing. On this basis, there will be limited improvements to the existing provision for some disability groups, people with mobility impairments or vulnerable users. This also includes people with temporary mobility difficulties, such people who are pregnant or families with young children.
- Loss of disabled parking facilities on High Street and Shoplatch which will lengthen the distance that blue-badge holders are required to walk in order to access services during the closure period.
- Loss of bus stop and taxi pick up drop off facilities on Wyle cop, High Street and Shoplatch which will lengthen the distance that passengers are required to walk in order to access services during the closure period. (Saturday and Sunday only)
- Loss and reduction of pay and display, service and loading provision on Wyle Cop, impacting on visitors, residents and businesses.
- Increases in traffic flows on Town Walls but also on the outer diversion route. An increase in traffic may have a detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties on these streets in terms of noise and visual intrusion.

- An increase in route and journey times for vehicular traffic. Where increases in traffic flow result, this will have an adverse impact on air quality.
- Increases in traffic flow may lead to increased journey times for some motorists.
- Increases in vehicle flow may pose challenges for all pedestrians in terms of opportunities to cross the road where there are no formal pedestrian crossing facilities.
- The diversion of approximately bus services an hour off the High Street and on to Town Walls on Saturday only

The following actions were proposed to mitigate anticipated negative impacts:

- The negative impacts will need to be mitigated through public consultation, communication and engagement with residents, businesses with close working partnership organisations and key stakeholders whenever possible. Communication will be supported by press releases.
- Disabled parking provision will continue to be provided in nearby town centre car parks.
- Three subsidised bus services and the Meole Brace Park and Ride Service have been diverted along Old Roman Road with access and egress into the town via the Welsh rather than the English Bridge to reduce traffic congestion on Town Walls. This will continue to be the case. This proposal has evolved during the length of the Covid 19 Pandemic period which has already enabled the refinement of traffic management measures in relation to maintaining reasonable access to properties.
- Agreed mitigation measures are in place at town walls, and this area will be included in the consultation for either making those measures permeant, considering an LTZ or withdrawing, subject to wider and Meaningful consultation.
- Ongoing monitoring of the diversion in respect of impacts, volume and air quality.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations.

Communication continues to take account of potential negative response from residents, properties and town centre visitors that may experience deferred impacts from the interventions put in place to date.

In the screening assessment for the initial TTRO scheme, introduced in April 2021, it was noted that there would be limited improvements to the existing provision for some disability groups, people with mobility impairments or vulnerable users. This also includes people with temporary mobility difficulties, such people who are pregnant or families with young children.

Feedback to date has been as follows:

- Public transport is prevented from driving along the Wyle Cop from the English Bridge. People with walking disabilities are very much disadvantaged.
- Shrewsbury Dial a Ride have requested access to all parts of the town centre be retained for drop off and pick up.
- Requests for the park and ride service to be reinstated on High Street to assist access to the town centre for those with disabilities)

The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order prohibited vehicular access daily between 11am and 5pm, including the suspension of all necessary waiting and loading provision on Wyle Cop necessary to facilitate the vehicular prohibition. The hours of operation of the temporary order were subsequently relaxed on 17th May and has since operated on a daily basis between the hours of 11am and 4pm, this relaxation eased traffic congestion on Town walls improving safety for school children and college students as well as easing action restrictions within the town centre.

The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order has been well received overall, providing support to the town centre regeneration as lock down measures are eased. The creation of a daily pedestrianised zone is considered to have much improved the town centre environment for visitors and there is a desire for these arrangements to continue. However, whilst recognising the positive impact the creation of a traffic free environment in the town centre is having there is no longer a requirement to promote social distancing and the need to reinstate direct access to the town for public transport is now recognised.

It is therefore proposed to introduce a new Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) that will prohibit weekday traffic on Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch except for buses, taxis and cyclists between 11am and 4pm. But on Saturdays and Sundays all vehicles will be prohibited, and the pedestrian zone will remain. In addition, all motor vehicles will also be prohibited from using Milk Street and the southeast section of the square designated as highway.

The Council is also keeping abreast of other approaches across the country, particularly those undertaken because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as we emerge collectively from it, in order to maximise shared learning for all such approaches.

The town centre regeneration group meets on a regular basis with external representation from key stakeholders including town centre residents, schools and colleges.

A public consultation in the autumn will enable further feedback to be accounted for, and further evidence to be collated about both positive and negative impacts in equality and health and well-being terms.

Associated ESIIAs

Generic ESIIA covering 15 Covid-19 response temporary highway schemes across the county.
ESIIAs in relation to measures implemented for Shrewsbury under temporary Traffic regulation Order April 2021.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and well-being considerations.

Making the proposed trial permanent

There are many advantages to undertaking the trials using a temporary traffic regulation order, in having the ability to cease or modify the interventions if required. Public consultation to determine all stakeholders' views is intended to be undertaken.

Energy and fuel consumption (buildings and / or travel)

Where an intervention results in an increase or stationary traffic, there will be an adverse impact on air quality and fuel consumption. The extent to which queuing or stationary traffic is generated as a result of these interventions will need to be monitored and its impact assessed.

Renewable energy generation

The decision arising from this report is not considered to create opportunities to generate renewable energy.

Carbon offsetting or mitigation

These measures are being introduced on a temporary basis for an absolute minimum limited period, no carbon off setting or mitigation has therefore been identified.

Climate Change adaptation

These mitigation measures could contribute towards improving the health and well-being of Shropshire's residents by facilitating pedestrianisation, in response to the improving perceived safety, and by facilitating the increased use of more sustainable and active modes of transport that can help people to become fitter and healthier.

Health Impacts

Cabinet has given approval to the use of health impact assessments, presenting an opportunity for utilising the template that has been developed for use in this regard, and for seeking to optimise linkages with the equality impact assessment approach.

In this instance, the positive health impacts that are likely to accrue for all pedestrians are around decreased exposure to vehicle emissions. The improvements to perceived safety are likely to lead to positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging certain groupings to venture out. These are particularly those with caring responsibilities such as parents with babies and small children, those who have physical and/or learning disabilities and their careers, and those who consider themselves to be vulnerable. There are also potential health and well-being impacts in terms of road safety for schoolchildren and college students, building on feedback to date.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage.

People involved.	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening.</i>		13.7.21
<i>Any internal support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist		30 th June 2021

*This refers to other officers within the service area

*****This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, e.g., from a peer authority***

Sign off at Part One screening stage.

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>	Kevin Atkin	13.7.21
<i>Accountable officer's name</i> Steve Brown	Steve Brown	13.7.21

****This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer***

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
<p>The initial aim was to introduce a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for the provision of interventions to support social distancing on Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch, Shrewsbury in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposal prohibited vehicular access daily between 11am and 5pm, including the suspension of all necessary waiting and loading provision on Wyle Cop necessary to facilitate the vehicular prohibition.</p> <p>It was anticipated that the implementation of these measures would also assist in the determination of the associated impacts to residents, businesses and visitors on the street in question and on nearby streets in relation to development of measures associated with the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan in relation to similar permanent measures that could provide more space for pedestrians both in terms of moving around and in accessing shops and premises on Wyle cop, High Street and Shoplatch.</p> <p>Any long-term scheme could support long term healthier travel choices for Shropshire residents by encouraging more journeys by foot and provide an improved public realm through a less car dominated environment.</p> <p>The associated ESIIA was updated following the carrying out of the original screening assessment in March 2021.</p> <p>The service change may affect the overall likely impact in equality terms, as the proposal is now to extend these measures into the longer term, including the possibility that they may become permanent subject to feedback from the proposed autumn consultation.</p> <p><u>Other practical details are as follows:</u></p> <p>Following the first national lock down over the summer period a closure of Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch to vehicular traffic by means of emergency and temporary traffic regulation orders was implemented daily between 11am and 6pm. Following the second national lockdown a closure on Wyle Cop was implemented daily between 11am and 4pm. Vehicular access to the pedestrian zone on Pride Hill is only possible off Shoplatch hence the time of operation of the Wyle cop closure was reduced to 4pm during the second period of operation. The measures applied assisted with the</p>

mitigation of social distancing issues, facilitated the issue of several pavements permit and assisted with the return of outdoor hospitality.

There are challenges on Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch, Shrewsbury in terms of facilitating social distancing, in some areas there is limited footway width to accommodate pedestrian through traffic and queuing outside shops. The footpaths on Wyle Cop serve as a pedestrian route into the town and the daily road closure assists with the provision of additional road space to enable pedestrians to pass whilst adhering to social distancing, the road closure also assists with promoting cycle provision into the town.

The intention was that the proposed temporary traffic regulation order would better facilitate social distancing, pedestrian flows and cyclist access to the town from the English Bridge with more robust traffic regulation orders and traffic management to further deter conflict with vehicles.

The part time closure of Wyle Cop to vehicular traffic west bound facilitates the provision of additional space for cyclist and pedestrians on the southwest side of Wyle Cop and currently promotes social distancing measures. High Street and Shoplatch will be free of vehicular traffic during the hours of the closure.

The measures proposed have been designed to best retain servicing on Wyle Cop both during and outside the closure period.

The prohibition of vehicles on Wyle Cop requires all bus services entering the town from English Bridge to be diverted along Town Walls. Arrangements have been made for 3 subsidised bus services and the Meole Brace Park and Ride Service to be diverted along Old Roman Road with access and egress into the town via the Welsh rather than the English Bridge to reduce traffic congestion on Town Walls. However, the loss of direct access to High Street and Shoplatch for vehicular traffic does significantly impact public transport and taxi services.

A wider diversion route diverting traffic from English Bridge around old Roman road is also in place, however traffic flows along Town Walls was anticipated to increase, impacting on Town Walls properties and residents.

The national background to this is as follows:

On February 22nd, 2021, the government announced its Covid 19 Spring 2021 road map out of lock down. Step 2 of the road map, which will be no earlier than 12 April, will see the opening of non-essential retail; personal care premises such as hairdressers and nail salons; and public buildings, including libraries and community centres. Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms will also reopen (but only for use by people on their own or in household groups); as will most outdoor attractions and settings including outdoor hospitality venues. Hospitality venues will be allowed to serve people outdoors at Step 2 and there will be no need for customers to order a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks and no curfew, although customers must order, eat and drink while seated ('table service'). Wider social contact rules will apply in all these settings to prevent indoor mixing different households.

As part of Step 3, no earlier than 17 May, the Government stated that it would look to continue easing limits on seeing friends and family wherever possible, allowing people to decide on the appropriate level of risk for their circumstances.

This means that most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors are now lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal. Indoors, the Rule of 6 or 2 households will apply. Most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors will be able to reopen. In all sectors, COVID-Secure guidance will remain in place and businesses may not cater for groups bigger than the legal limits. Indoor hospitality will reopen - and as in Step 2, venues will not have to serve a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks; nor will there be a curfew. Customers will, however, must order, eat and drink while seated.

The Government had hoped to be able to remove all legal limits on social contact, reopen remaining premises, including nightclubs.

The last step out of lock down was scheduled for June 21st, however the government has since extended this deadline until 19th July 2021 due to the Delta variant of the pandemic continuing to escalate. If all legal restrictions on the Covid pandemic are lifted the proposed ETRO trial will be a trial based on measures moving forward relating to town centre regeneration and the BTP.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change.

The intended target groups for the service change are pedestrians, cyclists and businesses in Shrewsbury town centre, those visiting shops or other premises, or those making active travel choices for journeys that use Wyle Cop, High Street and Shoplatch and Milk Street.

These measures affect residents, businesses and visitors to the town centre but may also have associated impacts to these groups on neighbouring or nearby streets as a result of any displacement of traffic.

These measures affect any motorists and public transport operators using the town centre.

These measures affect all pedestrians in the given area, whether residents or visitors, and thus may have an impact across a range of Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly those with physical or learning disabilities and their careers, and families with young children, older people, and those who consider themselves to be vulnerable in a crowd situation.

These measures affect people with disabilities through the suspension of disabled parking bays on High Street and Shoplatch.

The town council, local businesses, taxi drivers and the local MP are also intended audiences for the service change.

Evidence used for screening of the service change.

The Covid-19 pandemic has strongly influenced the need for these measures by providing the national policy imperative for people to maintain recommended social

distance guidelines in public spaces and to consider alternative travel options at the local level that may remain embedded once restrictions are lifted.

Government guidance around active modes of travel in the light of the pandemic may be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities?utm_source=a2ab7a37-2310-4d8d-966b-2237212fd79f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

There is currently no highways and transport data available to indicate demand for this proposal, however where possible any 'before' traffic data will be identified and post-monitoring activities to determine any change in behaviour will be carried out.

A pre-scheme principal stakeholder consultation has been undertaken; the responses received to date are summarised in associated reporting to Cabinet (appendix 2 to the Experimental Traffic Regulation decision report 10 June 2021.)

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Specific prior engagement was not carried out with the groupings directly identified, i.e., residents, cyclists, pedestrians, public transport users and motorists, as these decisions are being made in the light of national public health policy imperatives.

There have been regular direct officer communications with the residents of Town Walls and with town centre businesses through the medium of the Shrewsbury BID.

Communications on these measures will need to be available to all members of the public, through press releases and use of local media, ideally including involvement of local elected members and portfolio holder, and the relevant town council. Consultation will remain open throughout the duration of the trial through the Shropshire Council consultation portal at: shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/.

Drivers and proprietors of taxis and private hire vehicles, together with private hire operators, may usefully be advised of the changes through communication channels utilised by the Council's Licensing Service.

Consultation with public transport operators, and facilitation of any necessary alterations to public transport routes and services will continue to be co-ordinated through communication channels utilised by the Council's Passenger Transport Team.

Ongoing consultation will be maintained with local mobility and disability groups.

There will be formal noticing on site to activate the traffic regulation order. The Local Member will be encouraged to seek feedback from residents and users and act as a first point of contact post activation for any unforeseen issues arising.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire.	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required.</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required.</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required.</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required.</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., child for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., older person with disability)			✓ Potential perceived safety is improved for all users.	
Disability (please include mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				✓ The scheme includes the loss of all disabled parking bays on High Street and Shoplatch which will mean that may have further to travel to access the town centre. Whilst the temporary scheme will offer increased space for pedestrians, there is no proposal to offer actual widened footways at this stage, so users are still required to negotiate the kerb.
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓

Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			✓ Whilst the temporary scheme will offer increased space for pedestrians, there is no proposal to offer additional footway provision, so users are still required to negotiate the kerb.	
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				✓
Religion and belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				✓
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)			✓ Rebalance of space in favour of non-motorised modes of transport may make it more attractive for people to use Shrewsbury town centre facilities or to consider walking and	

			cycling as an active mode of travel.	
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<p>Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being</p> <p>This section is intended to link to the commentary on the actions to mitigate and enhance the impacts of the proposals.</p> <p>Renewable energy generation The decision arising from this report is not considered to create opportunities to generate renewable energy.</p> <p>Carbon offsetting or mitigation These measures could be latterly formalised in conjunction with wider Big Town plan initiatives to promote carbon reduction such as campaigns to promote active travel. Any such initiative would require dedicated resource and funding from Shropshire Council.</p> <p>Health Impacts This measure could contribute towards improving the health and well-being of Shropshire’s residents by facilitating social distancing requirements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, improving actual safety by reducing the likelihood of road traffic accidents, improving perceived safety, and by encouraging the increased use of more sustainable and active modes of transport that can help people to become fitter and healthier.</p>
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Guidance Notes

Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and

- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a standalone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behavior, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager must make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESIIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximize positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave about equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behavior, we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language regarding these groupings.

Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision-making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743