

Appendix A

Shropshire Council Part 1 ESIIA: initial screening and assessment



Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) Part One Screening Record 2020

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Shifnal Town Centre and Highways Improvement Scheme.

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Steve Brown, Head of Transport and Environment

Decision, review and monitoring
--

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

The proposals will affect all pedestrians in the given area, whether residents or visitors, as well as road users, 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.

This initial ESIIA screening, for positive, neutral or negative impacts of this project for people in Protected Characteristic groupings as set out by the Equality Act 2010, and about social inclusion, has indicated the following.

- As per the planned physical improvements to the public realm, there is an anticipated positive impact, once complete, for people with physical and sensory disabilities, for older people, and for people with caring responsibilities such as families with small children. These are primarily people in the groupings of Age, Disability, Pregnancy and Maternity, Sex, and Social Inclusion.
- There is an anticipated negative impact for the same groupings whilst the work is ongoing, and it will be important to ensure that signage is as clear as

possible, that there is wide enough access to shop premises etc for people in wheelchairs, and people with buggies, and that both temporary and permanent pavement surfaces do not pose slip risks for people with walking sticks etc

- The impact of Covid-19 in terms of current and projected social distancing requirements will also need to be factored in but could enhance impacts from an equality perspective through contractors ensuring there is wide enough physical access for pedestrians, mitigating against the noise, smell, and air quality health and wellbeing impacts for pedestrians whilst work is ongoing.
- Overall equality impacts are anticipated to be low to medium positive across all groupings once the work has been completed.

Further screenings for equality and health and wellbeing impacts may be advisable at timely stages during the work.

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

The Council is mindful that there will be negative equality impacts during the actual works, as well as positive impacts to be gained upon completion of the works.

Both formal noticing ahead of work and on site, and information sent to residents and properties will need to provide contact details for making comment. Local Members will be encouraged to seek feedback from residents and users and act as a first point of contact during and post scheme development for any unforeseen issues arising. This is the approach also being used for Highways schemes in place or proposed due to Covid-19 considerations.

Communication will also need to take account of potential negative response from residents and other properties that may experience deferred or possibly unforeseen impacts.

As the work is anticipated to begin post elections in May 2021, and last for the entire year, it will cause significant disruption to the town centre, and local members and the town council have been advised of this. A working group of town councillors, the town clerk and Shropshire Highways and transport staff is to be developed to form the engagement and information plan to support the town whilst this project is developed and delivered, to plan and communicate the works effectively and deal with the undoubtable operational issues that arise.

The Council will also keep abreast of other approaches across the country, particularly those undertaken because of the Covid-19 pandemic, to maximise shared learning for all such approaches.

Associated ESIIAs

- ESIIA re Local Economic Growth Strategies
- Suite of ESIIAs re Local Plan Partial Review

- Suite of ESIIAs re highways management including Winter Service Policy, Risk Based Approach to Highways Management, and changes to highways and traffic management arrangements due to Covid-19

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 wellbeing considerations

Climate change


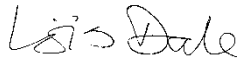
- The existing layout of the town centre has not developed in alignment with its current housing growth, issues of extensive queuing at highway junctions, time awaiting ant junctions and journey reliability times are all an issue. This project will improve the junction issues and allow traffic to flow freely and prevent slowing, speeding of vehicles and necessary emissions.
- An improved town centre design, with landscaping and realigned layout will encourage more local pedestrian use, coupled with an improved public realm furniture, materials.

Health and well being

Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, to more fully capture the health and well-being benefits anticipated

The 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.


Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		13/11/2020
<i>Any internal support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist		13/11/2020

**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>		13/11/2020
<i>Accountable officer's name</i>		

****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 improvements planned to Shifnal town centre and public realm will enhance the existing infrastructure, by improving and in some areas reducing traffic flow and creating a more pedestrian friendly area, that can be utilised for community events and support local businesses. The work scheduled is: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realigning and improving capacity at key town centre road junctions • Highways resurfacing • Improving levels of footway surfaces • Hard and soft landscaping • Tree planting • Improved town centre materials and colour palette • Public Realm furniture <p>Background</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The geographical area of Shifnal has been subject to extensive housing development over previous years, circa 1100 dwellings have been built to date with a further 400 planned. The town's location in Shropshire in relation to Shrewsbury, Telford and Wrekin and the West Midlands provides an attractive mix for developers and house buyers. b. The growth in development has created local concern in respect of the ability of the current infrastructure to support town growth. c. The project has been in development for several years, in response to the development opportunities allocated to Shifnal through Shropshire

Council's Site Allocation and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan for construction between 2006 and 2026. Shropshire Council developed a Transport Strategy for Shifnal that considers cumulative impact and effect of all the proposed developments in Shifnal on the local highway network and determines a range of proposals for further investigation and development that will serve to manage the growth of vehicular and sustainable travel within the town.

- d. In 2014, several traffic mitigation options that were agreed with the Shropshire Council Local Members for Shifnal were tested using a traffic growth simulation model and put forward for public consultation. No clear local support for any of the options was demonstrated.
- e. In 2015, Shifnal Forward conveyed to Shropshire Council that there was notable support in Shifnal to investigate the potential for a street improvement scheme in the town that would create a pedestrian friendly and low-speed traffic environment. Shropshire Council agreed to support this proposal in principle and proceeded to commission investigation and design work in relation to a potential enhancement scheme for Shifnal town centre.
- f. A local working group consisting of representatives from Shifnal Town Council was set up and has been used to test and steer the design throughout its progression. The scheme involves the reconfiguration of junctions, the reallocation of space to pedestrians, and improvements to the aesthetics of the street using high-quality materials, street furniture and additional tree planting.
- g. This design work culminated in a public consultation event over two days in December 2015. The feedback provided by the public at this exhibition demonstrated significant local support for the enhancement scheme as presented. In summary, 241 people responded to the questionnaires and 84 percent of respondents supported the overall proposal to enhance Shifnal town centre. In response to a request by Shropshire Council, Shifnal Town Council subsequently confirmed their support for the scheme in October 2020.
- h. Since 2015, Shropshire Council have attended various stakeholder meetings with Shropshire Council Local Members, Shifnal Town Council and wider community groups. The scheme was subject to Public consultation in December 2015, was within the region of £3.5 - £4 million. It became apparent that due to other constraints, the amount of CIL expected would not cover the cost of the scheme.
- i. Shropshire Council Officers were invited to attend an extraordinary meeting of Shifnal Town Council on 14th January 2020 to present two value engineered options for the Shifnal Town Centre Improvement Scheme, with budget estimates of £2.0 million and £2.5 million which were intended to work within the current financial constraints.

- j. Following the meeting, Shifnal Town Council agreed to provide formal feedback once they had an opportunity to consult with the wider community. Due to the coronavirus restrictions, Shifnal Town Council were not able to provide any formal feedback about the two options put forward. Whilst no formal feedback has been received, during the meeting held on 14th January 2020, several issues were raised by members of the Town Council. To progress the design, Shropshire Council commissioned WSP to make minor amendments to the proposed scheme that incorporated some of the informal feedback received in January 2020, and subsequently developed 'Option 3', the approved design.
- k. The final design and cost were then approved by Shifnal Town Council at their 15th October 2020 full council meeting and by Shifnal local Members. Hence, there is now opportunity to deliver the project to support and improve the town.
- l. Subject to approval, the project will be prepared for tender with an intent to begin work in late May 2021. This will allow all the necessary preparations to be considered and implemented and allow additional CIL funding to become available. .

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

In the short term the intended target groups for the service change are pedestrians in Shifnal town centre, those visiting shops, the market or other premises, or those making active travel choices for journeys that use the area or traverse the area.

This scheme will affect residents and businesses but may also have associated impacts to these groups on neighbouring or nearby streets because of any displacement of traffic.

The scheme will affect any motorists and public transport operators using the area for local journeys, as well as people passing through, not least as Shifnal is a town that since the Middle Ages has been a staging post for longer journeys.

The scheme will 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.

Stakeholders include the Town Council, public transport operators, taxi drivers, and local businesses, as well as the local Shropshire Council councillors and the local MP and neighbouring local authorities.

Contractors are also a key stakeholder, as considerations around access for the vulnerable groupings identified, and timings of work schedules to mitigate negative impacts at certain times of the day, etc, will need to be written into contracts and monitored for adherence.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Extensive local consultations and engagement with the town council and subsequent public meetings, as detailed in the Cabinet report, indicate support for the scheme itself, whilst the evidence base draws upon the Local Plan Partial Review evidence base and work carried out to progress local economic growth strategies and place planning approaches.

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



Within the wider community, the scheme will have impacts for older people, people with disabilities, and families with young children, and they therefore form key target groups for engagement ahead of and during the works, and afterwards to assess equality impacts.

As the work is anticipated to begin post elections in May 2021, and last for the entire year, it will cause significant disruption to the town centre, and local members and the town council have been advised of this. A working group of town councillors, the town clerk and Shropshire Highways and transport staff is to be developed to form the engagement and information plan to support the town whilst this project is developed and delivered, to plan and communicate the works effectively and deal with the undoubtable operational issues that arise

The Council's Communications Team and incoming portfolio holder will need to be involved in corporate press releases etc at timely junctures. It will also be important to continue to engage with officers and councillors from neighbouring authorities.

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 eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			 Positive following completion of works	 Negative during the works period

<p>Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)</p>			 Positive following completion of works	 Negative during the works period
<p>Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				
<p>Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>			 Positive following completion of works	 Negative during the works period
<p>Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)</p>				
<p>Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non-conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)</p>				
<p>Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>			 Positive following completion of works	 Negative during the works period
<p>Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				
<p>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)</p>			 Positive following completion of works	 Negative during the works period

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being

Climate Change adaptation

This scheme 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 encouraging the increased use of more sustainable and active modes of transport including walking, which can then help people to become fitter and healthier.

Health and well being

The impact of Covid-19 in terms of current and projected social distancing requirements will need to be factored in, particularly in ensuring there is wide enough physical access for pedestrians whilst the work is ongoing. There will be anticipated noise, smell, and air quality health impacts for pedestrians, due to the necessary use of machinery, and dust arising, which could exacerbate existing physical health conditions

Social distancing measures could in themselves reassure older people. People may otherwise be less confident of going out and about, much as we see with pavement parking issues, bringing potential issues of loneliness to the fore.

The use of tree planting to enhance the public realm will also provide opportunity to promote mental well being impacts through the greening of public spaces.

The improvements to the town centre and public realm will enhance the existing infrastructure, by improving and in some areas reducing traffic flow and by creating a more pedestrian friendly area, that can be utilised for community events and support local businesses