

P e l l F r i s c h m a n n

BCC Equality Impact Assessments

Key Findings Summary Report

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1 Introduction

Birmingham City Council (BCC) has commissioned Pell Frischmann to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) on a range of Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) schemes and Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) schemes listed in **Table 1.1**. The EATF schemes include a number of pop-up cycle lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods and the RHSSF schemes include measures to support social distancing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 1.1: List of EATF and RHSSF Schemes

EATF Schemes	RHSSF Schemes
A38 Selly Oak to Northfield	Acocks Green
A45 City Centre to Small Heath	Alum Rock
A47 City Centre to Fort Dunlop	Aston
Bradford Street	Bordesley Green
City Centre to City Hospital (via Jewellery Quarter)	Coventry Road
A38-A34 connection	Erdington
Kings Heath Low Traffic Neighbourhood	Harborne
Moseley Low Traffic Neighbourhood	Kings Heath
Lozells Low Traffic Neighbourhood	Longbridge
Bournville Places for People	Northfield
Castle Vale Places for People	Perry Barr
City Centre Segments	Soho Road
Colmore BID footway widening	Stratford Road
Moseley Local Centre	
Stirchley Local Centre	

The EATF schemes are part of a £2 billion package from the Department for Transport to implement interventions to support walking and cycling as part of the Covid-19 recovery. The funding has been split into two tranches, with Tranche 1 schemes delivered between July and September 2020 and outlined in this document. In addition to this, £50m of funding has been provided to councils across England to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. This is part of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF).

Equality Impact Assessments are not required to be completed by law; however, they are an established and credible tool for demonstrating 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty. The assessment helps public sector organisations ensure that their policies and services are fair and do not disadvantage or discriminate against any protected groups. There are nine protected characteristic groups which are outlined in **Table 1.2**. A high level EIA was undertaken in June 2020 covering all of the EATF schemes.

Table 1.2: Protected Characteristic Groups

Age	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Religion or Beliefs
Disability	Pregnancy or Maternity	Sex
Gender Reassignment	Race	Sexual Orientation

The EIA's also form part of a larger review document of the Tranche 1 schemes. There are four elements that make up the summary review and include:

- Data collection;
- Technical review;
- Consultation analysis; and
- **Equality Impact Assessments.**

The approach taken to complete the equality assessments is outlined in the following section.

2 Methodology

In order to assess the effects of the schemes on each protected characteristic group, a qualitative methodology was adopted. The sources used to assess each scheme and its impact on the protected characteristics are as follows:

- Review of scheme drawings;
- Review of Road Safety Audits (RSA);
- Site visits;
- Engagement with key stakeholders; and
- Existing documentation and data e.g. Pave the Way¹.

These sources were analysed in the order that they are presented above and are detailed below.

2.1 Review of scheme drawings

Concept design drawings for each of the schemes was provided by Birmingham City Council. These were reviewed to develop an understanding of the scheme and also to inform a desktop study of potential impacts the scheme design may have on protected characteristics, positive or negative. Potential impacts identified could then be validated on site.

2.2 Review of RSA's

All of the EATF schemes and many of the RHSSF included a stage 1/2 and stage 3 RSA which had been conducted by various consultants, independently of the scheme designers. These were reviewed in order to identify any additional road safety impacts on protected characteristics that had not been addressed.

2.3 Site visits

Site visits were undertaken for each scheme to validate the impacts identified through the scheme drawings and the RSA's and to identify any further impacts of protected characteristic groups that had not been recognised.

There were some instances where the construction did not reflect the scheme drawings, and therefore the site visits were able to validate these findings. The site visits gave the team an opportunity to assess the quality of construction, which a desktop study would not be able to show.

Five site visits were undertaken based on geographical location to assess all of the schemes. These are summarised below:

- Site visit 1 (11th January 2021) – Birmingham City Centre;
- Site visit 2 (12th January 2021) – Kings Heath and Moseley;
- Site visit 3 (15th January 2021) – East Birmingham;
- Site visit 4 (27th January 2021) – North Birmingham; and
- Site visit 5 (27th January 2021) – South and West Birmingham.

Site visits 4 and 5 were undertaken on the same day, by separate Pell Frischmann employees.

¹ Transport for All, 2021. Pave The Way. [online] available at: <<https://www.transportforall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Pave-The-Way-full-report.pdf>> [Accessed 27 January 2021]

2.4 Existing documentation and data

Existing data and documentation were also used to provide an evidence based assessment. This data helped to support statements made and positive and negative impacts that were identified. Key data sources included:

- Census 2011 data by ward boundary – including car ownership (%), age, sex and race. This provided quantitative data to support key findings;
- 'Pave the Way' – this document provided research and analysis undertaken to assess the impacts of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and the future of active travel on people with disabilities; and
- Other documentation – including Bike Life 2017² which focused on the relationship between cycling and protected characteristic groups as well as Government papers outlining the effects of Covid-19 on certain groups, Manual for Streets 2 and West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance.

2.5 Engagement with key stakeholders

A virtual workshop was held on Friday 5th February 2021 with representatives from the Commonwealth Games Accessibility Advisory Forum. The purpose of this workshop was to engage with key stakeholders representing disability groups to present our findings from undertaking these assessments and seek feedback on the schemes, and things that can be done during the next stages to improve the schemes for people with disabilities. It was important to consult with these groups as they provided a first-hand perspective on how the schemes could affect them in ways which may have not been identified by the assessors.

Feedback collected from the discussions during the workshop have been included within the key findings of this report and within the individual scheme assessments. The main comments received during the workshop included:

- The need for an Accessibility Officer at BCC to oversee all projects in regards to equalities;
- Crossing a cycle lane for a person who is blind or partially sighted is always going to be difficult, tactile paving at bus stops is particularly important as the current provision is dangerous; and
- Consistency across all schemes is important, particularly for people who are blind or partially sighted.

² Sustrans, 2017. Bike Life Birmingham. [online] available at: < <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2950/bike-life-birmingham-2017.pdf> > [Accessed 25 January 2021]

3 Key Findings

This section presents the key findings and impacts identified on each of the protected characteristic groups. As a lot of similarities were identified between schemes of the same nature, the key findings have been grouped into three types: Pop-up cycle lanes, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN's)/City Centre Segments and Covid-19 measures.

3.1 Age

3.1.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

Pop-up cycle lanes aim to provide safer spaces for people to cycle by providing, in most cases, light segregation from vehicles. These proposals are likely to have a positive impact on all users, irrespective of age. It is likely that the benefits will be felt more by younger people than older people, as enabling children to cycle at an earlier age and develop their confidence and skills. This is particularly true for children travelling unaccompanied, and this can create a greater sense of independence.

Some potential adverse impacts on certain age groups were identified however, many of these are as a result of the implementation rather than the design. These include:

- Removal of on-street parking – some older people may be more dependent on their private vehicle to travel locally. Removal of on-street parking may result in them parking further away from their destination;
- Lack of signage and wayfinding making it difficult for people of all ages to follow where the cycle route goes, particularly at crossings when the cycle lane switches to the other side of the road;
- Lack of signing provision in shared use areas may result in pedestrians not being aware they are walking within an area where cyclists may be present; and
- Poorly maintained road surfaces which may create trip hazards for cycle users of all age groups.

3.1.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

All ages will experience some positive benefit as a result of LTN's. It is likely that younger people will receive greater benefits as the scheme minimises the risk of conflict with motor vehicles.

It is likely that the implementation of LTNs will help to improve the lung health of all age groups. This will be heightened by more people being encouraged to make shorter trips by walking or cycling due to an increased perception of safety with there being less vehicles on residential roads. Older people who may be reliant on buses would also benefit from the City Centre Segments through the introduction of bus gates and priority to public transport, improving the journey time reliability.

Potential adverse effects on certain age groups as a result of LTNs include:

- Non-prescribed signage on planters says 'Road Open to' followed by symbols of relevant users (i.e. cyclists). This signage could be seen as misleading as it insinuates that user groups can use the carriageway on the other side of the planters. This is not the case as it is an open road with vehicles passing through and could increase the risk of collision with vehicles for both cyclists and pedestrians; and
- Longer journeys – some older people may be more reliant on private vehicles to travel locally and therefore these schemes may result in slightly longer journey times.

3.1.3 Covid-19 measures

The Covid-19 measures affect all age groups by allowing for social distancing. It is likely that the benefits of the schemes will be felt by all users, in particular the elderly.

Elderly users will likely benefit from this scheme the most as scientific evidence has proven that diagnosis rates increase with age for both males and females. When compared to all-cause mortality in previous years, deaths from Covid-19 have a slightly older age distribution.

There were some instances where human intervention, whether it be local residents or businesses, had moved the barriers onto the footway or out of position so that vehicles could park on the road thereby removing any benefits from the widened footways, in turn increasing the risk of potential transmission of Covid-19 as well as the risk of infection for all age groups.

3.2 Disability

3.2.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

The schemes provide cycling improvements for all users including people with disabilities. Providing segregated provision will have positive impacts on people with disabilities by providing them the infrastructure in which to cycle safely, away from vehicles.

People with disabilities could be adversely affected by the implementation of the cycle lane due to increased risk of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. Additional adverse effects include:

- Removal of on-street parking – people with disabilities may be more dependent on their vehicle to get around and may have to park further away from their home/destination;
- Lack of corduroy paving in shared spaces – this can impact on people who are blind or partially sighted who are unaware that they are entering into an area where cyclists may be present;
- Pinchpoints – some pinchpoints at certain locations have been identified providing insufficient width for people using handcycles or trikes; and
- Bus stop boarding/alighting areas – the boarding/alighting area is accessible by crossing the cycle lane, however in most cases the area is extremely narrow and not suitable for a pedestrian, let alone a wheelchair user. In many locations, there is also no tactile paving at the bus stop to warn blind or partially sighted users.

3.2.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

People with disabilities should experience some positive benefit as a result of LTN's through the creation of quieter streets by removing through traffic. More people are likely to be encouraged to make shorter trips by walking and cycling due to an increased perception of safety.

Potential adverse effects on people with disabilities as a result of LTNs include:

- Concrete blocks with signage placed on the footway, obstructing the path for blind and partially sighted users. The use of concrete also presents a problem for partially sighted users as grey on grey provides little colour contrast thereby resulting in potential conflict; and
- Longer journeys – some people with disabilities may be more reliant on private vehicles to travel locally and therefore these schemes may result in slightly longer journey times.

3.2.3 Covid-19 measures

The Covid-19 social distancing measures may provide positive impacts on people with disabilities by creating more space to socially distance. However, there are also some adverse impacts identified including:

- Barriers that had been moved onto the footway or out of position so that vehicles could park on the road thereby removing any benefits from the widened footways, in turn increasing the risk of potential transmission of Covid-19 as well as the risk of infection for all age groups. This also created adverse impacts on people who are blind or partially sighted, or mobility impaired as the barriers caused an obstruction on the footway; and

- It is likely that people who are blind or partially sighted are not aware that these measures are in place as there is no tactile paving to inform them.

3.3 Sex

3.3.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

A study undertaken by Bike Life in 2017 shows women in Birmingham are less represented than men in cycling and a lack of cycle infrastructure disproportionately impacts women, attributable in part to women having a more risk averse attitude to mixing with traffic. Segregated cycle provision, reducing conflict between cyclists and vehicles will therefore empower more women to cycle.

3.3.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

3.3.3 Covid-19 measures

According to Public Health England, working age males who are diagnosed with Covid-19 are twice as likely to die as females. Amongst people with a positive test, when compared with those under 40, those males who were 80 or older were seventy times more likely to die.

The schemes therefore provide a positive impact on males, in particular elderly males to walk safely in the scheme areas during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4 Pregnancy and Maternity

3.4.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

The schemes provide cycling improvements for all users including pregnant women and people with young children by providing segregated facilities reducing conflict between cyclists and vehicles and improving the perception of safety. There may be some adverse impacts on pregnant women and people with young children/pushchairs which include:

- Removal of on-street parking – pregnant women and people with young children may be more reliant on private vehicles to travel locally;
- Bus stop boarding/alighting areas – the boarding/alighting area is accessible by crossing the cycle lane, however in most cases the area is extremely narrow and not suitable for a pushchair; and
- Pinchpoints – some pinchpoints at certain locations have been identified providing insufficient width for people using family bikes/cargo bikes.

3.4.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

Pregnant women and people with children/pushchairs may be adversely affected by the schemes. These include:

- Non-prescribed signage on planters says 'Road Open to' followed by symbols of relevant users (i.e. cyclists). This signage could be seen as misleading by people with pushchairs as it insinuates that user groups can use the carriageway on the other side of the planters; and
- Concrete blocks placed on the footway with 'Except Cycles' and 'Road Closed' signage on approach to the schemes reduces space on the footway which adversely affects people with pushchairs.

3.4.3 Covid-19 measures

The schemes provide enhanced footway capacity for all users including pregnant women and people with young children to allow them to maintain social distancing.

Tarmac ramps between the kerbside and the carriageway are in good condition and are of good quality for pushchairs to use. This allows for people with pushchairs to use the scheme for its purpose.

People with children/pushchairs could be adversely affected by the schemes. These include:

- Plastic barriers have been moved over tarmac ramps or displaced onto footways which impedes upon the step free access to the footway extension and increases users' vulnerability to collisions with motor vehicles; and
- Evidence of blocked drainage and resultant surface water under tarmac ramps was observed which may impede upon pushchair access to the footway extension.

3.5 Gender Reassignment

3.5.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

The schemes offer an additional alternative to public transport for people with gender reassignment who may face or perceive personal security issues or discrimination.

3.5.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

The schemes offer an additional alternative to public transport for people with gender reassignment who may face or perceive personal security issues or discrimination.

3.5.3 Covid-19 measures

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

3.6 Marriage and Civil Partnership

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

3.7 Race

A study undertaken by Bike Life in 2017 shows that black and ethnic minority communities are under-represented when it comes to cycling in Birmingham. Some ethnic minorities are also known to have lower levels of overall physical activity. This may influence certain health conditions linked to obesity and type II diabetes. Providing a segregated cycle facility provides an opportunity to access the health benefits associated with cycling.

3.8 Religion or Beliefs

3.8.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

Places of worship and faith-based schools are major destinations for communities with religious beliefs. Pop-up cycle lanes provide groups accessing these places of worship with more of an opportunity to choose to cycle to these destinations, and to subsequently access the health benefits associated with cycling.

3.8.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

3.8.3 Covid-19 measures

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

3.9 Sexual Orientation

3.9.1 Pop-up cycle lanes

The schemes offer an additional alternative to public transport for this protected group who may face or perceive personal security issues or discrimination.

3.9.2 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/City Centre Segments

The schemes offer an additional alternative to public transport for this protected group who may face or perceive personal security issues or discrimination.

3.9.3 Covid-19 measures

There are no adverse impacts identified on this protected group as a result of these schemes.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

4.1 Conclusion

Overall, the schemes have a positive impact on all protected characteristic groups. There are some implementation issues that have been identified which may have some adverse impacts on protected characteristic groups, in particular people with disabilities. These have been summarised above and in more detail within each individual EIA.

4.2 Next Steps

The EIA's will be incorporated within the Tranche 1 scheme review document outlining the lessons learnt to feed into the decision making for Tranche 2 schemes. An independent review of the Tranche 1 schemes will be undertaken incorporating the outputs identified within the EIA's. A decision will be made as to whether each scheme is made permanent and concept designs will be drawn up. Public consultation will be undertaken for all schemes that are made permanent prior to their delivery before the end of March 2022, in line with the Department for Transport's funding criteria.