

Worcestershire County Council

Evesham High Street Enhancement Scheme

Equality Impact Assessment

February 2009

Halcrow Group Limited

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1 Introduction

1.1 *Introduction*

1.1.1 In 2008, Worcestershire County Council commissioned Halcrow to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the Evesham High Street Enhancement Project. This assessment is now a legal obligation under which local authorities and public bodies must consider, and identify the potential adverse impacts of major developments, strategies and policies.

1.1.2 Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA) local authorities are required to identify all functions and policies which have a race equality dimension and to carry out an impact assessment against these functions and policies.

1.1.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a valuable tool for assessing expected outcomes of proposed policies and services. Guidance at national and regional level states that an EqIA is a technique to identify whether the scheme, project, function, service, policy or procedure has a potentially adverse impact on equality of opportunity. It should also seek to identify any unmet needs, on the basis of a person's race, gender (sexuality or gender identity), disability, age or faith or in terms of relations between or within those groups, and how these can subsequently be addressed. This practice has been underway in places such as Northern Ireland since 1998, with the intention of tackling institutional racism through direct mechanisms. Councils have a statutory duty to promote equality on the grounds of:

- Race, ethnicity, equality / discrimination;
- Gender and transgender equality / discrimination;
- Disability equality/ discrimination;
- Age equality/ discrimination;
- Religion and belief equality/discrimination, including religious intolerance;
- Sexual orientation based equality / discrimination;
- Social inclusion;
- Community cohesion; and
- Health inequalities where the policy, service, function, or the proposals being made, may have implications for the health and well-being of customers, communities, or employees.

1.1.4 The overarching objectives of such duties are to create cohesive communities. The Local Government Association has defined cohesive communities using the following factors;

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;

- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and in neighbourhoods.

It is of critical importance to successful communities that a sense of cohesion exists. This report has been prepared in line with relevant guidance.

1.2

Overview of the Evesham High Street Enhancement Scheme

1.2.1

The main objective of the project is to enhance the pedestrian environment within Vine and High Streets. They are currently dominated by traffic, parked vehicles, narrow pavements and guard railings which all restrict pedestrian movement. The proposed scheme will retain two-way traffic flow but introduce traffic calming measures, minimise the loss of on-street parking, provide servicing opportunities for local businesses and enhance the provision for cyclists, buses and taxis.

1.2.2

The scheme area includes all of Vine Street and much of the High Street, from Merstow Green at the southern end of the area to St Egwin's Road at the northern end. The proposed scheme has been prepared by Worcestershire County Council in collaboration with Wychavon District Council and in consultation with Evesham Town Council and many other local organisations and individuals. Implementation is planned for later in 2009. The proposed scheme layout (known as Option 4) is contained as **Appendix A** of this report.

1.2.3

This report sets out the context of the proposed scheme in **Chapter 2** and highlights the consultation process in **Chapter 3**. A detailed assessment of the elements of the scheme which may impact unequally on equality groups is undertaken in **Chapter 4**, with proposed mitigation measures set out in **Chapter 5**. Finally any conclusions and recommendations are summarised in **Chapter 6**.

1.3

Scope and purpose of initial screening

1.3.1

Assessments are commonly undertaken in two stages. The initial screening exercise looked at three key areas;

- Whether the scheme will result in any adverse impacts on the equality groups?
- Whether there is sufficient evidence to assess the impact of this scheme on equality groups?
- Does this scheme offer opportunities for the promotion of equality of and social inclusion?

A summary of the initial screening is provided overleaf in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Initial assessment of impact on equality groups

| Development proposal | Impact: Positive [+], Negative [-] or Neutral | | | | | | Reasons | Can the development promote equality? If yes - how (please indicate duty and element)? |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------|---------------|---|---|
| | Race | Gender | Disability | Sexual Orientation | Faith | Age | | |
| Decluttering highway of street furniture | Neutral | + | + | Neutral | Neutral | + | benefits to all, but particularly to those with poorer eyesight, in wheelchairs or pushing buggies | Design already promotes equality in this respect |
| Bus stop relocation | Potentially - | Potentially - | Potentially - | Neutral | Neutral | Potentially - | Women, disabled groups, the young and old and some race groups use buses more than the average. Depending on the location, relocating bus stops may increase walk distances for these groups or make prospective bus passengers feel more insecure | Ensure bus stops provided in places which make equality groups who use buses feel secure and where walk distances to facilities are minimised |
| Additional bus stops close to rail station | Potentially + | Potentially + | Potentially + | Neutral | Neutral | Potentially + | Bus stops close to the station will assist those groups who use PT more than the population at large | Design already promotes equality in this respect |
| Bus stop enhancement | Neutral | Potentially + | Potentially + | Neutral | Neutral | Potentially + | Upgrades in existing central location may improve accessibility for disabled groups and older people and help other groups who use buses more than the population at large | Design already promotes equality in this respect |
| Seating / Lighting | Neutral | + | + | Neutral | Neutral | + | Seating and lighting may be of particular benefit to less mobile / those with poorer eyesight. It may reduce the fear of crime, particularly for women and older people | Design already promotes equality in this respect |
| Cycle parking | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | + | Assists those without a car. Cycling undertaken more by men than women. Potentially positive impact on young people | Design already promotes equality in this respect |
| Relocation / change in provision of taxi rank spaces | Neutral | + or - | + or - | Neutral | Neutral | + or - | Above average use of taxis by women, disabled people and older people. Relocating ranks may, depending on scheme, improve or reduce accessibility to taxis by lengthening or shortening walk distances or by spreading the availability of taxis at different points along the High Street | More information needs to be sought to make a categorical answer |
| Relocation / change in provision of parking spaces, esp disabled spaces | Neutral | Neutral | Potentially - | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | Men have greater access to cars than women. Cars are a particularly important means to certain sectors of disabled people. Cars are used less than average by young people (teenagers) and older people, particularly lone female households. The provision of less general parking provision will not impact negatively or positively on most of these groups. However, the impacts on disabled people may be negative depending on the location and quantity of disabled spaces | More information needs to be sought to make a categorical answer |
| Additional crossing points for pedestrians | Neutral | Neutral | + | Neutral | Neutral | + | The population at large can if they choose to cross the road at any point. However, the young, old and disabled groups often benefit from designated points to cross the road. Additional points will (per se) benefit these groups | More information needs to be sought to make a categorical answer |
| Different crossing locations for pedestrians | Neutral | + or - | + or - | Neutral | Neutral | + or - | The population at large can if they choose to cross the road at any point. However, the young, old and disabled groups often benefit from designated points to cross the road. Depending on desire lines and divergence from the existing locations, new locations may impact positively or negatively on those groups who make an above average proportion of walk trips | More information needs to be sought to make a categorical answer |
| Changes to pedestrian crossings | Neutral | Neutral | + and - | Neutral | Neutral | + | Some junctions will be narrowed, reducing the distance of carriageway to be crossed. This particularly assists slower, less mobile pedestrians. Proposals for crossings on High Street itself have been altered through the scheme design. Uncontrolled crossings allow a greater frequency of opportunities to cross the road, although there have been concerns about the ways in which certain disabled groups respond to such designs. Pelican crossings have now been reinstated into the design which may be favoured by certain equality groups (disability and age) | More information needs to be sought to make a categorical answer |

2 The Study Area in Context

2.1 *The Role of Evesham's Town Centre Streets*

2.1.1 The study area streets have multiple roles. They are places for shopping, visiting the cafes, restaurants and pubs, meeting people and enjoying the events that take place in the Market Place. In addition, and just as importantly, the streets are places for movement of people and goods, by a range of different travel modes. All of these uses of the study area must be accommodated and a balance found between the competing uses of the land.

2.1.2 The study area streets can, in transport terms, be defined as a '*mixed priority route*' insofar as this defines streets which carry high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, have a mixture of residential and commercial frontages, and caters for buses, deliveries and parking. Such streets are not just transport routes, and whilst dealing with transport and safety are key elements, other concerns associated with the local economy and local communities are important, requiring measures that contribute towards economic regeneration and environmental improvements.

2.1.3 Mixed Priority High Streets present a unique combination of road safety and accessibility problems. These problems were acknowledged by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2000 who established the Mixed Priority Routes Demonstration Project to facilitate the delivery of number of trial projects so they could monitor the effects and provide good practice for practitioners in the future.

2.1.4 The main focus of the demonstration projects was to develop and implement schemes that would reduce casualty numbers whilst providing wider sustainable benefits and enhancing the general streetscape. This was achieved by reallocation or better use of road space whilst maintaining access and traffic capacity through careful consideration of the needs of all road users.

2.1.5 The DfT published Local Transport Note 3/08 – entitled *Mixed Priority Routes* – in October 2008 to share the experiences and lessons learnt from the ten schemes involved in the demonstration project.

2.1.6 LTN 3/08 states that the early indications are that the ten demonstration projects all met their objectives; enhanced road safety, improved environment/quality of life, improved accessibility and improvements to the local economy. All of these required compromises between the different road user groups, some including the relocation of on street parking facilities.

2.2

Equality Groups in Evesham

2.2.1

Information on the equality groups in Evesham is contained in **Appendix B**.

3 Consultation

3.1

Process

3.1.1

The scheme proposals have been developed through a process of consultation, which included the *Living Streets* community consultation in 2003 and a user group design workshop. The original scheme was based on the key needs identified through this widespread consultation process and scheme proposals were presented to the public at key stages of development. As a result of public responses the scheme has been significantly adapted. The scheme has also been approved by local Councillors.

3.2

Sample

3.2.1

The consultation process was completed several years prior to the EqIA and it is therefore not possible to comment on the representative nature of the sample. However, it is believed on the basis of the documentation reviewed that consultation was comprehensive.

3.3

Findings

3.3.1

Many of the issues discussed and features requested as part of these activities carried forward to the design brief and are main features of the final scheme.

3.3.2

As part of the EqIA the Consultation Summary (Halcrow March 2008) and formal consultation responses have been examined. The key issues raised are included in **Table 3.1** below, which presents an overview of the key issues for each equality group by development proposal.

Table 3.1: Summary of Key Consultation Responses

| Development proposal : De-cluttering highway of street furniture | |
|---|--|
| General Issues | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green space is seen as an asset for the high street and should be maintained and enhanced - There are concerns regarding loss of trees or potential damage | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender | No issues identified |
| Disabled | De-cluttering will benefit the general public, but particularly to those with poorer eyesight, in wheelchairs or pushing buggies |

| Development proposal: Bus Stop Relocation | |
|--|--|
| General Issues | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some concerns raised over location of bus stops - Concern at reliance on private company for bus turning facilities and lay over - Concern expressed at length of time buses would lay over on the High Street | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender, Disabled | Women, disabled groups, the young and old and some race groups use buses more than the average. Depending on the location, relocating bus stops may increase walk distances for these groups or make prospective bus passengers feel more insecure |

| Development proposal: Additional bus stops close to rail station | |
|---|--|
| General Issues | |
| No issues identified | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender, Disabled | Bus stops close to the station will assist those groups who use public transport more than the population at large |

| Development proposal: Bus stop enhancement | |
|--|--|
| General Issues | |
| A suggestion is to have a bus shelter with sides so that no smoking notices can be posted and to ensure protection from extreme weather. | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender | Bus stops close to the station will assist those groups who use PT more than the population at large |
| Disabled | Lack of facilities at Evesham train station for disabled Upgrades in existing central location may improve accessibility for disabled groups and older people and help other groups who use buses more than the population at large |

| Development proposal: Seating / Lighting | |
|--|--|
| General Issues | |
| Good to have seating on the High Street | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People | No issues identified |
| Older People, Gender | It may reduce the fear of crime, particularly for women and older people |
| Disabled | Particular benefit to less mobile / those with poorer eyesight. |

| Development proposal: Cycle parking | |
|--|---|
| General Issues | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of provision for cyclists; and - Cycle parking assists those without a car | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Older People, Disabled | No issues identified |
| Young People | Potentially positive impact on young people |
| Gender | Cycling undertaken more by men than women |

| Development proposal: Relocation / change in provision of taxi rank spaces | |
|--|---|
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taxis should not be allowed to become too visible - Queries have arisen about the position of the northbound taxi-rank and whether there will be sufficient room for taxis to safely pull off and return to the carriageway - Splitting the taxi rank to both sides will lead to biased distribution of business - Queens Road residents requested residents parking - Relocating ranks may, depending on scheme, improve or reduce accessibility to taxis by lengthening or shortening walk distances or by spreading the availability of taxis at different points along the High Street | |
| Specific Issues | |
| Race, Young People | No issues identified |
| Older People, Gender, Disabled | Above average use of taxis by women, disabled people and older people |

Development proposal: Relocation / change in provision of parking spaces, including disabled spaces

General Issues

- Reduce the number of general car parking in favour of re-citing the bus station and disabled parking bays to create open space
- Parking arrangement highlighted as a negative element in the conservation area
- Reservations have been expressed about how safe the proposed chevron parking in Vine Street will be
- Concerns about loss on on-street parking in certain part of the High Street
- Queries raised as to why the proposed Car Park at Swan Lane could not be used for this purpose
- Parking needs to be well spaced
- Lack of support for “reversing in of vehicles” off the West side of Vine Street at bays 1-4 & 10-12. This would slow down the traffic as vehicles reversed and created queues.
- Fears that the relocation of disabled parking will disadvantage the severely disabled.

Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups

| | |
|--|---|
| Race | No issues identified |
| Young People, Older People | Cars are used less than average by young people (teenagers) and older people, particularly lone elderly female households. |
| Gender | Men have greater access to cars than women. |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender (General) | The provision of less general parking provision will not impact negatively or positively on most of these groups |
| Disabled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - siting of disabled parking viewed as an undesirable arrangement due to accompanying traffic/parking order - Disabled parking would preclude the area being used as an open space - It was proposed that all the Town Centre Disabled Parking should be situated in East side of Vine Street in bays 5-9 and 13-16 - Taking away taxi ranks and disabled parking will reduce available parking making it difficult for the less able to access the area; repositioning spaces will have negative impact on disabled people being able to access the Bridge St shops -possible breach of DDA - Prefer disabled parking to be in one area - Cars particularly important means to certain sectors of disabled people - Impacts on disabled people may be negative depending on the location and quantity of disabled spaces - Repositioning of disabled spaces my provide more flexible access to facilities on the high street for disabled people - Proposed car parking spaces are bigger and may make parking more accessible for disabled drivers. |

Development proposal: Additional crossing points for pedestrians

General Issues

- Need an additional crossing
- The population at large can if they choose to cross the road at any point, regardless of

| | |
|--|--|
| whether dedicated crossing facilities exist (whereas certain equality groups may not be able to) | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Gender, Race | No issues identified |
| Young People, Older People, Disabled | Young, old and disabled groups often benefit from designated points to cross the road. Additional crossing points will (per se) benefit these groups |

| | |
|--|--|
| Development proposal: Different crossing locations for pedestrians | |
| General Issues | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of controlled crossing on Vine Street considered unwise; - Traffic flow through the High Street has to be controlled but not curtailed-raised tables in the carriageway with a lower speed limit and a different surface would allow the elimination of pedestrian crossings and raise status of pedestrians; and - Taking out the existing controlled crossing in Vine Street and replacing it with two controlled crossings - Vine Street and Merstow Green will result in two main problems: 1) There will be a long gap between the two crossings leading to jaywalking and 2) the crossing by the roundabout is likely to cause traffic problems | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Gender | No issues identified |
| Young People, Older People, Disabled | The young, old and disabled groups often benefit from designated points to cross the road. Depending on pedestrian desire lines and how much these new locations diverge from the existing crossing locations, new crossings may either impact positively or negatively on those equality groups who make an above average proportion of walk trips. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Development proposal: Changes to pedestrian crossings | |
| General Issues | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong support for Evesham High Street to be re-designed as a pedestrian and traffic shared zone; and - Area north of Allée de Dreux has good pedestrian links to the Market Square | |
| Specific Issues Relating To Equality Groups | |
| Race, Young People, Older People, Gender, Disabled | Some junctions will be narrowed, reducing the distance of carriageway to be crossed. This particularly assists slower, less mobile pedestrians. Proposals for crossings on High Street itself have been altered through the scheme design. Uncontrolled crossings allow a greater frequency of opportunities to cross the road, although there have been concerns about the ways in which certain disabled groups respond to such designs. Pelican crossings have now been reinstated into the design which may be favoured by certain equality groups (disability and age) |

4 Detailed Assessment

4.1

Introduction

4.1.1

Following the initial assessment of the proposed scheme’s potential impacts on equality groups, any elements of the scheme with potential negative or unknown impacts on equality groups were investigated in detail. These topics were:

- Bus stop relocation;
- Relocation / change in provision of taxi rank spaces;
- Relocation / change in provision of parking spaces, especially disabled spaces;
- Additional crossing points for pedestrians;
- Different crossing locations for pedestrians; and
- Changes to (existing) pedestrian crossings.

These will be discussed in turn below.

4.2

Bus stop relocation

4.2.1

Bus passengers currently have to wait on a small island surrounded on all sides by vehicles. High Street traffic passes on the western side, whilst buses and vehicles unloading goods pass to the east along the service road. The bus passenger waiting environment is poor, with low-quality shelters, no raised kerbs for level bus boarding and only perch seating available (within the shelters).

4.2.2

The current and proposed future bus stopping arrangements within the scheme area as a whole are set out in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1: Current and future proposed bus stop locations in scheme area (South to North)

| Street | Side of Street | Location | Current bus stops | Proposed future bus stops |
|-------------|----------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| Vine Street | West | o/s Royal Oak | 1 stop | 1 stop |
| High Street | West | o/s nos. 47 to 59 | None | 2 stops |
| | East | Between no. 52 (Taylors) and The Old Swanne Inne | 5 stops 2 of which accessed from service road parallel to High Street | 3 stops. Service road closed |
| | West | o/s no. 85 | None | 1 stop |
| | East | o/s Somerfield | 1 stop | Stop removed |

- 4.2.3 The Passenger Transport team at Worcestershire County Council have calculated that three bus stops should be provided in either direction to give sufficient space for all scheduled services to pull off the main carriageway and for passengers to alight and board.
- 4.2.4 The main bus interchange is proposed to remain in the section of the High Street between Oat Street and Swan Lane. However, unlike the current arrangements, whereby all stops are located on the east side of the street, it is proposed that bus stops will be constructed on both sides of the street. The proposed new stop outside the County Court will enable three bus stops to be provided for northbound bus services (the other two being south of the Swan Lane traffic signals).
- 4.2.5 The stop proposed for removal outside Somerfield is a rarely used layover bay for southbound buses waiting for one of the three main bus stops South of Swan Lane. Its removal is unlikely to significantly inconvenience bus passengers as the alternative alighting location approximately 50m to the south.
- 4.2.6 All the bus stops in the proposed scheme will have good quality shelters and lighting and benches will be provided nearby (see information in **section 4.5** below), all of which will improve the waiting environment. The difficulty in boarding buses (either due to a lack of low-floor buses or due to the step from the normal height kerb up to the bus) can be an important barrier to using public transport to some equality groups. Raised kerbs will be constructed at all proposed stops, which will particularly assist the mobility impaired to alight from or board buses.
- 4.2.7 Those passengers whose bus services continue to depart from the east side of the High Street south of Swan Lane will no longer have to wait in a location surrounded on all sides by traffic and roadspace, which will enhance the waiting environment and remove the need to cross the a service road to reach the bus stops. This is likely to enhance pedestrian safety.
- 4.2.8 In summary, the bus stops which constitute the main bus interchange remain in a central location in relation to facilities, which maintains accessibility. The bus stops remain in a prominent location, which aids passengers' perception of safety. These benefits may have been compromised or eroded if plans to move the stops to an alternative, non-High Street location (such as Merstow Green or Swan Lane car park) had been progressed.
- 4.3 ***Taxi Rank Spaces***
- 4.3.1 The current and proposed future number and location of taxi rank spaces are set out in **Table 4.2** below.

Table 4.2: Current and proposed future taxi rank space in scheme area, south to north

| Street | Side of Street | Location | Current | Proposed future |
|-----------------|----------------|---|---------|-----------------|
| High Street | West | o/s nos. 7 - 11 (Evesham Furnishers to Seconds Ahead) | None | 15m |
| High Street o/s | East | nos. 34 - 50 (Iceland to Barclays Bank) | 39m | None |
| High Street o/s | East | nos. 24 - 28 (Cargo to Sense) | None | 20m |
| High Street | West | o/s County Court | 10m | None |

4.3.2

In the current arrangements, a short taxi rank is provided outside the County Court and a longer rank provided to the south of the main existing bus stops. Whilst the number of taxi ranks stays the same (i.e. two locations currently and in the proposed future arrangements), their locations alter. None are proposed north of Swan Lane. South of Swan Lane, both proposed taxi ranks are closer to the Market Place and Bridge Street than previous arrangements. Unlike at present, a rank is proposed on the west side of the High Street. The proposed arrangements appear to provide a suitable location for taxis close to potential users' origins and do not appear to impact on other equality groups.

4.4

Parking Spaces, Including Disabled Parking

4.4.1

The current and proposed future location of on-street disabled parking bays in the scheme area are set out in **Table 4.3** below, along with the number of spaces at each location.

Table 4.3 Current and proposed future disabled parking bays in scheme area, South to North

| Street | Side of Street | Location | Current | Proposed future |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | | | | |
| Vine Street | West | o/s nos. 6 - 12 | - | 6 |
| Market Place | | South side of Town Hall | 3 | 3 |
| High Street | East | o/s nos. 23 - 32 | 12 | - |
| | East | o/s nos. 36 - 50 | - | 5 |
| | East | o/s Somerfield | - | 2 |
| | West | o/s Post Office | 2 | 3 |
| Totals | | | 17 | 19 |
| Note: Whilst the scheme does not include any works in the Market Place, the three on-street disabled parking spaces south of the Town Hall are included on the scheme plan and are in this table for information | | | | |

4.4.2 Reasonable steps appear to have been taken to provide disabled spaces at various points throughout the length of the scheme area. The proposed future arrangements provide disabled bays in a greater number of locations (and in slightly greater numbers). This ensures a wider variety of destinations have disabled parking spaces nearby.

Access to Facilities and Shops

4.4.3 Parking spaces are only a means to an end to enable access to particular shops and facilities. Government guidance documents state that parking spaces for disabled people should be '*conveniently located*' and that, as pedestrians, many disabled people will have a limited mobility range and will require specially designated parking bays closer to the places they wish to visit than other groups in general [DoT 1995:2]. The guidance goes on to suggest that the recommended walk distances without rest stops may vary from 150 metres for wheelchair users to 50 metres for mobility impaired people using a stick [DfT 2001: 11]. Guidance states that distances from disabled parking spaces to major destinations (which are said to include banks, post offices, large stores and supermarkets) should not exceed these distances.

4.4.4 An assessment was undertaken of distances to major destinations in Evesham town centre from disabled parking spaces. This compared the current arrangements to those in the proposed scheme.

4.4.5 It is important to note that, as well as the disabled parking spaces in the scheme area, many of Evesham's off-street car parks also have spaces reserved for disabled people. The spaces relevant to the study area are set out in **Table 4.4** below.

Table 4.4 Other disabled parking spaces close to the study area in off-street car parks

| Location | Number of Disabled Parking Spaces | Notes |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Old Brewery CP | 7 | 2 of these are at the western side of the car park. 5 are at the eastern side, adjacent to Vine Court for access to Vine Street |
| Bewdley Street | 2 | 2 spaces closest to Market Place, in SE corner of site |
| Riverside Shopping Centre | 10 | On Level 6 of the multi-storey car park, for level access to the shops |
| Library | 1 | Library users only |
| Oat Street | 5 | At Aldi end of car park |
| Somerfield Customer Car Park | 7 | Somerfield Customers Only, close to rear pedestrian access to store |
| Chapel Street | 4 | 4 closest to the vehicular entrance |

4.4.6 The disabled spaces in the Riverside Shopping Centre car park are adjacent to the town’s shopmobility scheme, which enables less mobile shoppers or visitors to park and transfer onto powered wheelchairs to undertake their town centre trip. DfT 2001 notes that schemes benefit town centre prosperity as a whole, as well as disabled shoppers in particular.

4.4.7 The spaces noted in **Table 4.4** above are, in many cases, closer to key town centre destinations than either the existing or proposed future disabled parking arrangements for the scheme area. These alternative spaces will therefore continue to provide useful parking locations for disabled users to access key facilities and shops.

4.4.8 **Table 4.5** sets out the distances to a range of 12 major destinations in Evesham town centre from disabled parking spaces, both those within the scheme area (from **Table 4.3**) and, if applicable, the spaces elsewhere (identified in **Table 4.4**). Where the origin disabled spaces are not within the scheme area, information is given *in italics*.

Table 4.5: Distances from current and proposed future disabled parking spaces to selected town centre facilities

| Facility / Destination | | Distances (approximate) from nearest disabled parking spaces | | |
|---|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | | Current | Proposed future | Change |
| Library (Oat Street) | | 6m (Library CP) 41m (Oat Street CP) 125m (High Street) | 6m (Library CP) 41m (Oat Street CP) 77m (High Street) | No change No change Nearer |
| Post Office (89 High Street) | | 8m (High Street) | 8m (High Street) | No change |
| Banks | Barclays Bank (High Street) | 51m (High Street) | 13m (High Street) | Nearer |
| | Lloyds TSB (15-19 High Street) | 32m (High Street) | 42m (High Street) | Further |
| | HSBC (32 Bridge Street) | 119m (High Street) 123m (Market Place) 162m (Riverside CP) | 161m (High Street) 123m (Market Place) 162m (Riverside CP) | Further No change No change |
| | NatWest (2 Bridge Street) | 43m (Market Place) 70m (High Street) | 43m (Market Place) 109m (High Street) | No change Further |
| Selected Major Stores and Supermarkets | Marks & Spencer (Riverside Shopping Centre) | 62m (Riverside CP) 155m (Market Place) | 62m (Riverside CP) 155m (Market Place) | No change No change |
| | Iceland (34 High Street) | 16m (High Street) | 14m (High Street) | Nearer |
| | Aldi (Swan Lane) | 19m (Oat Street CP) 232m (High Street) | 19m (Oat Street CP) 155m (High Street) | No change Nearer |
| | Somerfield (72 High Street) | 54m Somerfield Customer Car Park 103m (High Street outside Post Office) | 54m Somerfield Customer Car Park 4m (High Street outside Somerfield) | No change Nearer |
| | WHSmith (4 Bridge Street) | 63m (High Street) 67m Market Place | 102m (High Street) 67m Market Place | Further No change |
| | Boots (19-21 Bridge Street) | 104m (High Street) 109m (Market Place) 178m (Riverside CP) | 143m (High Street) 109m (Market Place) 178m (Riverside CP) | Further No change No change |

4.4.9 In both the proposed scheme and in the other relevant car parks the location of disabled spaces are prioritised and provided closer to destinations than other, general, parking spaces. When trips to the 12 selected town centre destinations are assessed, the majority of distances from disabled parking spaces either remain the same (5 destinations) or reduce in length (3 destinations).

4.4.10 The four other destinations in which distances would increase are limited in terms of the increased distance from the nearest disabled parking bays (an average of 6 metres), which is considered to represent a slight negative impact on this equality group. All of the destinations assessed however continue to have disabled car

parking spaces within 150m, although, as indicated above, the nearest spaces may not be those within the scheme area (either currently or in the proposed future arrangements). The lower part of Bridge Street (approximately between Costa Coffee and Mill Street) remains within 150m of the Riverside Shopping Centre spaces, whilst the upper part is within 150m of the spaces in Market Place.

4.5

Benches

4.5.1

Certain members of the disability equality group value the presence of benches to enable them to rest during their trips and thus extend the distances which they can travel on foot. This includes from parked cars to town centre destinations.

4.5.2

The current and future locations of benches are set out in **Table 4.6** below, both in the scheme area on routes between disabled car parking spaces situated in off-street car parks and the town centre destinations set out in **Table 4.4** above.

Table 4.6 Location of town centre benches

| Location | | In Scheme Area? | Crossing arrangements | | Notes on Proposed Future Arrangements |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | Current | Proposed future | |
| Vine Street | East side outside Abbey Gardens | Yes | 0 | 3 | n/a |
| Market Place | Several locations | No | 9 | 9 | n/a |
| Bridge Street | o/s Cheltenham & Gloucester | Yes | 1 | 1 | n/a |
| | o/s Thomas Cook | No | 1 | 1 | n/a |
| | o/s Riverside Shopping Centre | No | 2 | 2 | n/a |
| Riverside Shopping Centre | o/s Marks & Spencer & Pilot | No | 2 | 2 | n/a |
| High Street | o/s nos. 28 to 32 | Yes | 0 | 3 | n/a |
| | o/s nos 56 to 64 | Yes | 0 | 4 | Close to bus stops |
| | o/s nos. 59 to 61 | Yes | 0 | 2 | Close to new bus stops |
| | o/s Post Office | Yes | 2 | 2 | n/a |
| Totals | | | 17 | 29 | - |
| Of which within scheme area | | | 1 | 13 | - |

4.5.3

One bench is currently present in the scheme area; 12 benches feature within the proposed scheme, at the following locations:

- Vine Street, east side, close to Abbey Gardens (3)
- High Street, east side, outside nos. 28 to 32 (3)
- High Street, east side, outside nos. 56 to 64 (4) – close to the bus stops
- High Street, west side, outside nos. 59 – 61 (2)

The proposed benches at intervals along Vine and High Streets are beneficial changes which will in particular assist members of the disability equality group.

4.6

Changes to pedestrian crossing points

4.6.1

The current and proposed future pedestrian crossing locations are set out in **Table 4.7** along with notes relating to any proposed design changes.

Table 4.7: Current and future proposed pedestrian crossing locations in scheme area, south to north

| Location | | Crossing arrangements | | Notes on Proposed Future Arrangements |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | Current | Proposed future | |
| Vine Street | o/s no. 13 (Laughing Buddha) | Pelican | Pelican | n/a |
| Vine / High / Bridge / Bewdley Street junction | | - | Raised table | Tactile paving installed and crossing distance reduced |
| High Street | o/s no. 23 (Halifax) | Pelican | Pelican | Crossing distance reduced |
| | o/s no. 41 - 43 (Argos) | - | Uncontrolled | Crossing distance reduced, tactile paving and central refuge installed |
| | Traffic signal junction with Avon Street / Swan Lane | Pedestrian stages across north, west and east approaches | Pedestrian stages across north, west and east approaches | n/a |
| | o/s no. 97 | Uncontrolled | Uncontrolled | Central refuge removed and crossing distance reduced |
| | o/s St. Mary & St. Egwin's Church | Uncontrolled | Uncontrolled | Central refuge removed and crossing distance reduced |

4.6.2

All the current controlled (i.e. traffic signal control) pedestrian crossings remain in the proposed scheme. In some cases, the distance required to be traversed by pedestrians is reduced, which has particular benefits for slower pedestrians, who would otherwise be intimidated by long road crossings. Slower pedestrians may include above average proportions of older or disabled people, as well as young child pedestrians. In line with Worcestershire County Council policy, these will remain as pelican crossings, rather than puffin crossings, with far sided aspect signals (i.e. the green man indicator is visible on the far side of the crossing, rather than on the nearside pole). Pelican crossings have been favoured by some disability groups.

4.6.3 On the High Street south of Swan Lane, the controlled crossings are augmented by new uncontrolled crossing points. This includes a location outside Argos where a pedestrian refuge is proposed for the centre of the carriageway and the overall crossing distance is reduced. This will again assist slower pedestrians, or those who less able to judge the speed and location of oncoming vehicles in both directions at one time. Central refuges assist them in crossing the road in two manageable stages at locations in the town centre where there are key destinations on both sides of the road and where crossing away from formalised crossing points already occurs.

4.6.4 A raised table with an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point is proposed at the crossroads of High / Vine / Bewdley and Bridge Streets, with an accentuation of the bend in the road at this point. Many pedestrians currently choose to cross at this location, despite there being no facility to do so easily (indeed, the guard railing attempts to prevent people crossing here). There are three points to note about this proposal:

- Firstly, it is anticipated that the raised table and accentuation of the bend will slow vehicular traffic down, assisting pedestrians who wish to cross on this desire line;
- Secondly, the provision of tactile paving, the reduction in width of the crossing distance and the raised table (meaning footway and road surface are at the same height) will either help pedestrians identify the location as a suitable crossing point or encourage them to use it as such; and
- Thirdly, if some members of equality groups (e.g. some disabled people) perceive the location as unsuitable for crossing the street at the point, alternative (controlled) crossing locations remain in place approximately 100m to the south or 80m to the north. Pedestrian crossing facilities in this section of the scheme area are, therefore, no worse than before, and for at least some equality groups, better than before.

4.6.5 On the High Street north of Swan Lane there are currently two uncontrolled pedestrian crossings. Whilst these have central refuges, they are narrow and are not flush with road surface, presenting difficulties to wheelchair users or people with pushchairs. The width of road to be crossed is also greater than usual.

4.6.6 The proposed scheme intends to both reduce the width of road pedestrians must cross and, at the same time, remove the central refuges. The proposed changes are considered to represent an acceptable way of creating suitable crossing facilities at these locations.

5 Mitigation

5.1.1 No specific changes to the proposed scheme design are recommended as a result of this EqIA. It is suggested that the information on car parking spaces in general and disabled spaces in particular is improved to highlight the location and quantity of available spaces and the existence of the shopmobility scheme. This should include a more detailed map of parking locations, to be made available on Wychavon District Council's website and in paper form.

5.1.2 Measures should continue be taken to ensure that town centre signage is unambiguous, clear and consistent. This applies both to traffic direction and information signs relating to which users may use which parking spaces within the scheme area (and at which times). A set of pedestrian wayfinding maps (similar to those used in the Bristol Legible City initiative) are also suggested to complement the existing pedestrian wayfinding signs in the town centre, many of which are fairly recent. This can ensure pedestrians are aware of the location and distance to various facilities.

5.1.3 Although the problems of uneven or broken footway paving within the scheme area will be overcome with the proposed scheme, there are other routes from car parks to town centre destinations where changes in levels could be eliminated. This would be particularly help the members of the disability equality group. Locations include:

- The direct route from Riverside Shopping Centre Car Park to Bridge Street; and
- The route from Old Brewery Car Park to Vine Street through Vine Court.

It is however recognised that this may involve routes across land which is neither controlled by the County or District Councils and thus any works will rely upon agreement with other landowners.

5.1.4 A monitoring programme is also recommended to better understand the duration of stay and frequency of use of spaces in the High Street.

5.1.5 These recommendations should be taken forward in an Equality Action Plan.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Initial equality impact screening highlighted a number of issues;

- De-cluttering the High Street of unnecessary street furniture and providing enhanced seating, lighting and paving could have a positive impact;
- Moving the bus stops away from the High Street could have a negative impact but the proposed enhancements to the shelters and footways could have a positive impact; and
- The changes in parking space provision could have a potentially negative impact.

6.1.2 Consultation responses have been examined by group. The alterations to the bus stops and car parking raised the most issues. It was noted that it is not possible from the consultation data how representative comments received were.

6.1.3 Research published by the DfT (2008) provided evidence of similar road space reallocation schemes providing benefits in road safety, environmental enhancement, improved accessibility and local economy.

6.1.4 Detailed equality impact assessment was undertaken of the key topics of concern, namely;

- i) Bus stop relocation;
- ii) Relocation / change in provision of taxi rank spaces;
- iii) Relocation / change in provision of parking spaces, especially disabled spaces;
- iv) Additional, relocated or different types of pedestrian crossings.

6.1.5 None of these scheme elements were found to be significantly impacting in a detrimental way to equality groups. The changes to bus stops – and enhancement of bus waiting facilities – brings benefits to those equality groups who make above average use of buses and does not negatively impact on other equality groups. The bulk of taxi rank space remains in a central location and appears unlikely to significantly affect any equality group.

6.1.6 Disabled parking spaces continue to be provided in the scheme area, in slightly greater numbers and in a greater variety of locations. ‘Before and after’ analysis of distances from disabled parking spaces to a set of 12 town centre destinations indicates that in the majority of cases distances remain the same or reduce in length. Where the distances lengthen, these tend to be small increases and all of the

assessed destinations remain within 150 metres of the nearest disabled parking spaces.

6.1.7 The existing controlled pedestrian crossings remain and additional uncontrolled crossing locations are introduced, which benefit those equality groups who undertake an above average proportion of journeys on foot. Some equality groups have members who are not confident users of uncontrolled (non-signalised) crossings. Where this is the case, the scheme does not negatively impact upon these people as the existing signal crossings remain.

6.2 ***Recommendations***

6.2.1 In line with the above, no changes are recommended to the proposed scheme. Instead, better quality and more detailed information is advocated on the location and number of parking spaces available in Evesham town centre as a whole, in both on- and off-street location. This should be allied to continued improvement of the signage and the introduction of pedestrian wayfinding maps to aid vehicle and pedestrian movement around the town centre.

6.2.2 Consideration should be given to ensuring pedestrian routes from disabled parking spaces to key destinations are obstacle and step-free. Finally, a programme of monitoring should be undertaken to ensure that the implemented scheme meets its objectives and to ensure suitable modifications can be made where necessary.

References

DfT 2001 *Older people – their transport needs and requirements*

DfT 2005 *Inclusive mobility*

DfT 2008 *Local Transport Note 3/08: Mixed priority routes*

Appendix A
Proposed Scheme Layout

Key

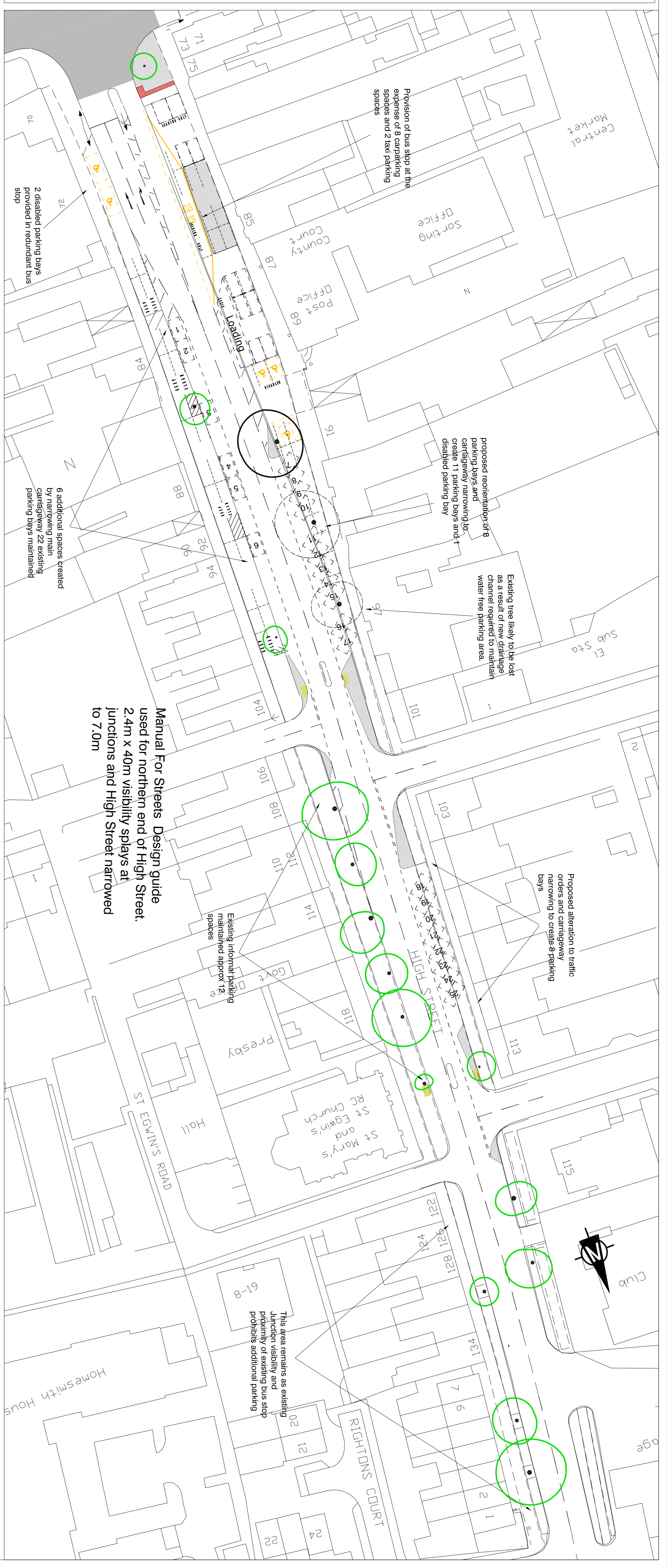
- Pedestrian areas
- Loading Lane
- Carriageway re-surfacing
- New telephone boxes
- Bus Shelters
- Existing trees
- Existing tree to be removed
- Proposed trees
- New cycle stands
- Parking spaces
- New benches
- Possible location for covered cycle stand

Summary of Highway space changes south of Swan Lane

| Existing | Proposed | Proposed |
|----------|----------|------------------------|
| 15 | 14 | Disabled parking (No.) |
| 37 | 18 | Parking (No.) |
| 39 | 35 | Taxis (lin m.) |
| 29 | 29 | Loading (lin m) |
| 118 | 92 | Buses (lin m) |

Summary of Highway space changes north of Swan Lane

| Existing | Proposed | Proposed |
|----------|----------|------------------------|
| 2 | 3 | Disabled parking (No.) |
| 56 | 63 | Parking (No.) |
| 10 | 0 | Taxis (lin m.) |
| 20 | 25 | Loading (lin m) |
| 20 | 20 | Buses (lin m) |



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Survey OS/KW
Designed JHW
Date 09/08

Drawn: JHW
Date 09/08

No. Revision
By Date By Date

Evesham High Street Enhancement

If you need help understanding this project or require any further information, please contact Evesham High Street Enhancement Project Officer, Tel: 01905 251211. Email: ehse@worcestershire.gov.uk

Worcestershire County Council
High Street Enhancement Project Officer
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Overall Scheme Layout Option 4

worcestershire highways
Drg No. TKMMCC250132A

Appendix B
Evesham's Socio-Demographic Profile

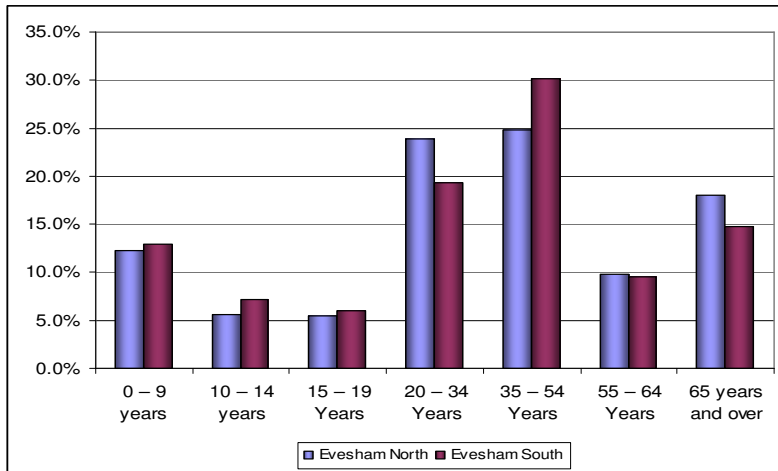
Introduction

Information on the socio-demographic profile of Evesham is set out below. The key variables assessed are Age, Gender, Race, Faith, Income, Disability and Deprivation. The data analysis will focus on the two wards that make up Evesham (Evesham North and Evesham South). When analysing deprivation in the area, the Lower Super Output Area (the smallest geographical area for which data is collected) is used to highlight the differences within Evesham.

Age

The data recorded in Table 1 below is taken from the 2001 Census. It shows Evesham South overall had a larger population than Evesham North. Most people were aged between 35 – 54 years old in both wards. Evesham North had a relatively older population in comparison to Evesham South.

Figure 1: Age band, Evesham North and Evesham South



Source: Census 2001, Nomis

Gender

The gender split in the two wards was similar, 51% of the population are Males and 49% are Female. The gender breakdown was approximately the same across the age bands. The table below shows the gender breakdown in absolute numbers and proportions for the two wards.

Table 1: Gender breakdown, Evesham North and South

| | Evesham North | Proportion | Evesham South | Proportion |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Males | 2,367 | 51% | 2,448 | 51% |
| Females | 2,513 | 49% | 2,564 | 49% |
| Total | 4,880 | 100% | 5,012 | 100% |

Source: Census 2001, Nomis

Race

Table 3 below shows the ethnic breakdown in the two wards. The biggest proportion of the population was white in both wards with this group accounting for 99% of the population in the two wards. People from mixed race backgrounds accounted for 0.4% and 0.5% of the population in Evesham South and Evesham North respectively.

Table 2: Ethnic breakdown, Evesham North and South

| Ethnicity | Evesham North | Evesham South |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| White | 99.0% | 98.7% |
| Mixed Race | 0.4% | 0.5% |
| Asian | 0.1% | 0.2% |
| Black | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| Chinese | 0.3% | 0.5% |

Source: Census 2001, Nomis

Faith

Table 4 below is a breakdown of faith in Evesham North and Evesham South. Christianity is the largest faith accounting for 78% and 82% in the North and the South respectively. Approximately 14% and 11% of people in Evesham North and South respectively were not religious. In Evesham North, 7% did not state their religion compared to 6% in Evesham South.

Table 4: Faith composition, Evesham

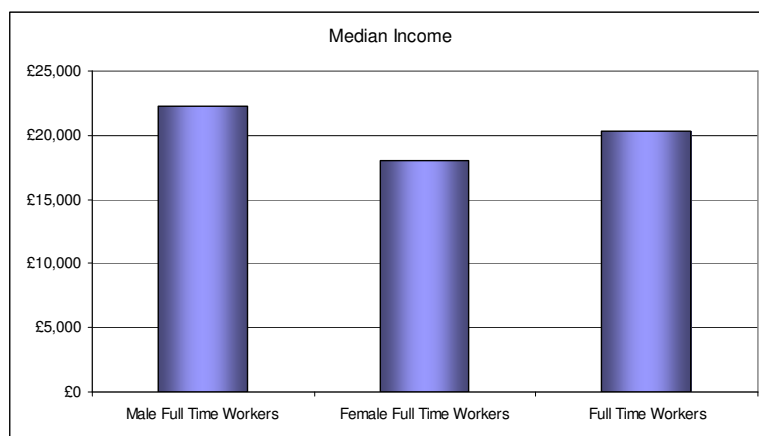
| Religion | Evesham North | Evesham South |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Christian | 78.25% | 82.21% |
| Buddhist | 0.14% | 0.06% |
| Hindu | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Jewish | 0.12% | 0.00% |
| Muslim | 0.21% | 0.24% |
| Sikh | 0.06% | 0.00% |
| Any other religion | 0.12% | 0.26% |
| No religion | 13.99% | 10.90% |
| Religion not stated | 7.10% | 6.33% |

Source: Census 2001, Nomis

Income

Data for the annual survey of hours and earnings is only produced at local authority level. Data for Wychavon is used to proxy conditions for Evesham. Figure 2 below shows that fulltime male workers earn a higher income than their female counterparts in Wychavon, on average an additional £4,325 per annum.

Figure 2: Median Annual Gross Pay in Wychavon District



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Nomis

Deprivation

This section uses the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to compare deprivation in the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Evesham to the rest of the country. The IMD combines seven indicators (Income, Employment, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Crime and Living Environment) chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues into a single deprivation score for each LSOA in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. A rank of 1 is given to the most deprived LSOA and 32,482 for the least deprived.

Overall LSOAs in Evesham are ranked among the least deprived in the country. Only one LSOA (E01032377) is ranked among the 25% most deprived LSOAs in the country. Table 5 below shows the overall IMD rank for the pertinent LSOAs.

Table 5, Deprivation, IMD Rank

| Evesham LSOAs | Overall IMD rank |
|---------------|------------------|
| E01032376 | 30446 |
| E01032377 | 9513 |
| E01032378 | 14645 |
| E01032379 | 28279 |
| E01032380 | 27970 |
| E01032381 | 12601 |

Source: IMD, Department for Communities and Local Government 2007

Health and Disability

On the health deprivation and disability index, the majority of LSOAs in Evesham are also ranked among the 25% least deprived. Only E01032377 with a rank of 7,697 is ranked among the 25% most deprived LSOAs in the country

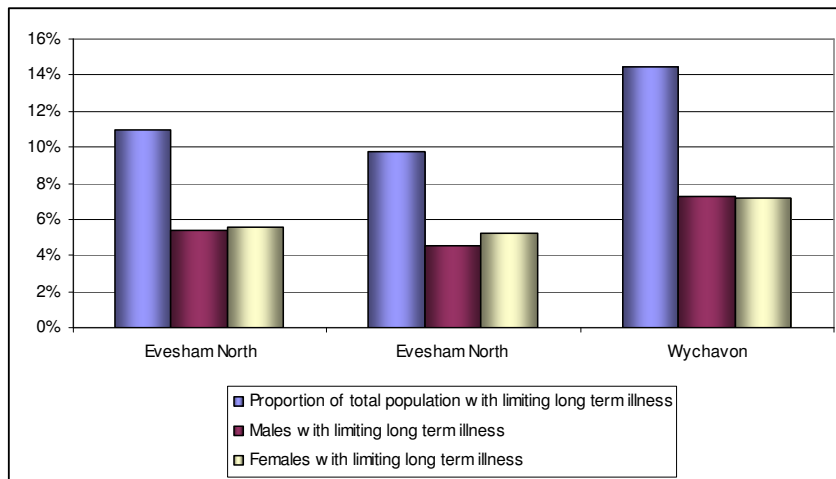
Table 6 Health Deprivation and disability rank

| Evesham LSOAs | Health Deprivation and Disability rank |
|---------------|--|
| E01032376 | 29523 |
| E01032377 | 7697 |
| E01032378 | 13640 |
| E01032379 | 24881 |
| E01032380 | 23094 |
| E01032381 | 12595 |

Source: IMD, Department of Communities and Local Government 2007

Data from the 2001 census shows there were 536 people with limiting long term illnesses in Evesham North and 490 in Evesham South approximately 10% and 11% of the population respectively. Of the total population with limiting long term illnesses in Evesham North, 49% were male and 51% female compared 46% and 54% respectively in Evesham South. However, the proportion of the population with limiting long term illnesses in both wards was lower than the Wychavon average of 14%.

Table 7: Limiting Long term illnesses, Evesham North and South



Source: Census 2001, Nomis

Conclusion

The data shows that the most prominent equality groups in the study area are disability, age and economic inclusion. Although all issues are important and have been considered, these groups are the most proportionately significant.