



Norfolk County Council

PRA020 Proposed changes to the Longwater Interchange

Equality Impact Assessment – Findings and Recommendations

January 2022

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Equality impact assessments enable decision-makers to consider the impact of proposals on people with protected characteristics.

You can update an assessment at any time to inform service planning and commissioning.

For help or information please contact equalities@norfolk.gov.uk.

1. The proposal – changes to the Longwater Interchange

1.1 The proposal is to provide infrastructure which will ultimately connect the Persimmon Housing Development (informally referred to as 'Festival Park' - see South Norfolk Council planning application ref: 2014/2611) at Easton, via a shared-use (pedestrian and cycle) pathway (to note: one section is pedestrian only due to width restrictions over the A47 bridge deck crossing), to the catchment school Ormiston Victory Academy (secondary school and sixth form in Costessey) by:

- Construction of a 3m wide shared-use central refuge on Dereham Road, Norwich to link with a shared-use (pedestrian and cycle pathway) to be delivered separately as part of works funded by the developer (Persimmon) [see point 4.5](#).
- Construction of connecting shared-use facilities to tie in with the proposed widened footways on Dereham Road and William Frost Way.
- Widening existing footways along Dereham Road to 3m wide to facilitate the pedestrian / cycle pathway on the respective approaches to the A47 bridge-deck crossing.
- Provision of signal-controlled pedestrian crossing facilities across each of the A47 slip roads (to enable access between Easton and Longwater)
- Construction of a 2m wide footway across the bridge-deck between the signal-controlled crossings.
- Provision of a continuous shared-use (pedestrian / cycle pathway) across the existing access / egress for the Premier Inn and Showground Table, Table restaurant car park

1.1..1 The EqIA does not include review of the elements beyond the pedestrian refuge crossing of Dereham Road, or beyond the tie-in to the shared use facility on William Frost Way

1.2 The proposal also includes reconfiguring the southern roundabout of the interchange to a 'teardrop' design which will assist with the traffic flows through the signalised approach both controlling traffic flows and congestion back onto the A47 from the slip road.

1.3 To implement a 40mph speed limit through the interchange and along the route of the proposed facility to assist motorists in managing their vehicle speed as they transition from a rural environment to an urban, more built up and pedestrianised area. The consistent speed limit will also enable road crossing users to better anticipate gaps in traffic as opposed to motorists determining their own approach speeds to these crossing points.

1.4 Raise the bridge parapet along the proposed 2m pathway to a minimum level of 1.4m in line with Highways Standards

2. Legal context

2.1 Public authorities are required by the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to equality when exercising public functions¹. This is called the 'Public Sector Equality Duty'.

- 2.2 The purpose of an equality impact assessment is to consider the potential impact of a proposed change or issue on people with protected characteristics. If the assessment identifies any detrimental impact, this enables mitigating actions to be developed.
- 2.3 It is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote the interests of people with protected characteristics. However, equality assessments enable informed decisions to be made that take every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

3. Information about the people affected by the proposal

- 3.1 This proposal will impact everyone who lives, works, learns in and visits Easton. This will include people with a range of protected characteristics, in relation to disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation. Key headline statistics include:
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Norfolk (JSNA) estimates that as of 2020 Easton's population was 2166. This breaks down to 392 aged 0 to 15, 1287 aged 16 to 64 and 487 aged over 65.
 - The majority of people living in Easton identify as 'White', 'Asian / Asian British' and 'Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups' (census 2011). The most common language spoken other than English is 'South' or 'East' Asian language (census 2011).
 - In relation to health and social care, the number of people who state in the 2011 census in Easton that their day-to-day activities are limited 'a lot' is 101, 'a little' is 128 and 'not at all' is 1285 based on 2011 census data. This means that approximately 7% of those that answered the question would be considered to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010.
 - The Roundwell site, accessed via Dereham Road is a managed site for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, approximately 1 mile from the proposal.
 - Ormiston Victor Academy currently has 1272 students on the roll (figure as of May 2021), aged between 11/12 and 17/18 years. The Academy catchment area covers Easton, Marlingford, East Tuddenham, Bawburgh, Bowthorpe, and Costessey.
 - The Longwater development contains a variety of amenities including shops, gym, pub and provides access via a link road to Queen's Hill, a residential development of 1,784 houses and home to approximately 5,000 people and a Primary School with capacity for 315 pupils.
 - An effective breakdown of visitor numbers to the area is not possible, however the Royal Norfolk Showground, a major visitor attraction which the proposal will impact upon is made up of a 150-acre site, with a 4000 seat arena and multiple meeting venues all of which host regular events including markets, exhibitions and festivals. The annual Royal Norfolk Show for example, can attract 80,000 visitors over the two-day event.

4. Potential impact

- 4.1 Based on the evidence available, this proposal is likely to have a positive impact on some people with protected characteristics accessing the area and a negative impact upon others. This is partly due to the nature of the location, which is home to a significant local resident population, as well as visitors to the area. It is likely the impacts noted in the following sections will apply, however it is difficult to ascertain

the level of impact in relation to number of people affected should the proposal go ahead.

- 4.2 People of all ages will be affected by the proposal, however, due to the intention stated in 1.1 of this EqIA, that the shared cycle / pedestrian pathway will facilitate journeys to and from Ormiston Victory Academy, it is anticipated that there will be a larger proportion of young people (aged 11/12 to 17/18 years) positively impacted than other age groups, as it is being designed to facilitate their journey to and from school. It is likely, given the age group involved, that young people may be travelling unsupervised and therefore the inclusion of the shared facility should provide reassurance to parents of safe passage for their child. Given that cycling / walking to school is generally encouraged for health reasons and provides environmental benefits when compared to travel options such as car or public transport, the impact of this shift may also be positive for other age groups wishing to access the area for work or leisure. It is noted however, that the positive impact for children and young people may cause a negative experience for other users of the facility at the start and end of the school day, when the pathway may experience heightened use.
- 4.3 Due to the increased popularity in cycling and walking for health benefits and as a result of changed behaviour due to the pandemic (noted in A Moment of Change – increasing cycling uptake – DfT Behavioural Insights Team), the pedestrian / cycle path may also be used by people commuting to and from work, providing an alternative to car or public transport. This may include parents using the facility to take both older and younger children to education / nursery / day care prior to work and older people wishing to access facilities such as shopping.
- 4.4 The proposal will also impact on all highway users accessing to and from the Royal Norfolk Showground and the services available at the Longwater Shopping complex, which will vary on seasonal use and in relation to specific events. There is potential for some highway users to experience a negative impact, especially at times of high usage of the shared pathway in relation to the proposed push-button controlled crossings holding traffic while pedestrians and cyclist cross. However, this should be seen in context with the positive impact upon pedestrians and cyclists in gaining safe passage across the road and the potential for individuals who may not have seen cycling / walking as a 'safe' option previously, to choose this form of transport instead of a car for example.
- 4.5 In addition to the scheme on which this EqIA is based, a separate proposal is in place to convert the existing composite footway / trod (between 1A Dereham Road eastwards, to the location of the proposed pedestrian refuge on Dereham Road) to an unsegregated shared use facility of 3m width. Thus, promoting an improved and safer facility for Non-motorised Users than the existing. However, as the phasing of the works is outside the control of the County Council, improvements to ultimately achieve the ambition of a continuous facility may take time to realise and will be dependent upon achieving agreement from all parties.
- 4.6 The proposed refuge is likely to have a positive impact on people with restricted mobility including those who use a wheelchair or mobility scooter, as it will provide a safe space in which to pause when crossing the road. This is important as people with restricted mobility may otherwise fear that they will not be able to cross the road in a safe manner if they feel unable to cross quickly enough.
- i. It may also provide a safe space for parents with young children, who may lack the discipline and awareness to cross the road in a

single movement. This may be particularly relevant due to the reasons stated in 1.1 as a family may contain children of differing ages that wish to walk to school together.

- ii. It may also provide a safe space for cyclists with disabilities, who may use an adapted bicycle which is often wider than a non-adapted version.
- iii. However, due to the reasons detailed in 4.2 and 4.3, there may be times during the day when demand for accessing the refuge is high. This could lead to conflict between different users as, for example, a wheelchair user may lack sufficient space to enter the refuge or may be required to wait longer than other users if they are unable to see if it is safe to cross due to pedestrians / cyclists blocking their sight line.
- iv. It is also possible that people with sensory loss may benefit from an alternative provision to the pedestrian refuge, as they may feel unable to trust their ability to judge moving traffic in a way in which allows them to cross safely. The lack of 'control' of traffic which can be obtained through a traffic signal-controlled crossing may also present a challenge. This is often because this type of crossing requires a level of 'trust' between road user and pedestrian.

4.7 The proposed introduction of signalised crossings on the slip roads from and to the A47 is likely to have a positive impact on users with sensory loss and people with restricted mobility as this type of crossing provides a way in which to manually control traffic flow through the use of traffic lights. This means that the pedestrian or cyclist does not need to trust that road users will stop or slow speed in order to allow them sufficient time to cross safely, unlike some other forms of crossing. This is particularly important as the location of the crossings is controlling traffic moving between a 40mph restricted zone to a 70mph restricted zone, meaning that some vehicles may be moving faster than might be experienced elsewhere in the area covered by the proposal.

4.8 Cyclists will be required to dismount to use the crossing which may lead to a negative impact on some users with protected characteristics. For example, as the restriction will be self-governing, there may be individuals that disregard the need, despite signage, this may reduce the positive impact of having a signal-controlled crossing for some people with sensory loss. The potential for individuals to continue to ride their bicycle through the crossing could lead to conflict between users, especially as the cyclist may be travelling faster than other crossing users. If the cyclist lacks stability and / or decides to move between pedestrians there is the danger of collision. This has the potential to have a negative impact not only because of the potential accident but also due to the citing of the crossings between the A47 and the interchange meaning potentially high volumes of traffic.

4.9 The shared-use pedestrian / cycle pathway will form part of a continuous pathway across the existing junction to the Premier Inn and Showground Table, Table Restaurant. This means that anyone using the pathway will have priority over vehicles accessing and egressing the site with vehicular traffic held by means of a give way line at the junction.

- 4.10 This may have both a positive and negative impact on users of the pathway. For example, people with sensory loss or who have restricted mobility may feel pressure to get across the shared space quickly, especially if vehicles are waiting to cross. They may also experience a positive impact as this form of infrastructure legally provides pedestrians / cyclists with priority over motorised vehicles. This is also an improvement on the existing infrastructure which does not facilitate the travel of pedestrians and cyclists in a safe manner. This is particularly relevant in allowing safer access and egress to the Royal Norfolk Showground and the events held there.
- 4.11 Due to the physical constraints of the National Highways owned bridge deck over the A47 which links the localities contained in this proposal, it is not possible to provide a continuous 3m wide shared use pathway over the bridge. Instead, it is only possible to provide a 2m wide pedestrian pathway, requiring cyclists to dismount at the crossing points detailed in 4.11. Within the 2m pathway, there may also be points where infrastructure such as streetlights, brackets and fixings for guard rails / fences may reduce this provision further thereby impacting negatively on people with restricted mobility such as wheelchair and mobility scooter users and parents with pushchairs. It may also impact upon cyclists using adapted bicycles who do not wish to transfer on to the road. People with sensory loss, such as Blind and Visually Impaired people may also experience a negative impact due to the reduced space if other pedestrians do not provide the space needed to navigate the pathway safely, especially if the individual uses a mobility aid such as a cane and if the infrastructure causes pinch points.
- 4.12 The pathway, at this point is also subject to traffic noise from the A47 which may be considerable, potentially leading to sensory overload for people who are neurodiverse. For example, people with autism may find the combination of a crowded space, coupled with high volumes of noise and the unpredictability of other users difficult to cope with. This includes the potential for cyclists not following the requirement to dismount prior to crossing.
- 4.13 Additional widening to 5m along some parts of the proposed shared-use facility could be considered if determined by the Safety Audit to be available by the end of December 2021. However, if the proposal is amended to facilitate this additional space, this could potentially be subject to illegal parking, leading to further conflict between users requiring enforcement action.
- 4.14 There will be some disruption during construction of the proposed changes where the present informal route will be unavailable, but temporary provision for these users will be considered as part of the traffic management to mitigate against this impact with consultation with the County Council's Network Safety Team.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 There is no legal impediment to going ahead with the proposal. It would be implemented in full accordance with due process, national guidance and policy.
- 5.2 It is possible to conclude that the proposal may have a positive impact on some people with protected characteristics as well as some detrimental impacts, as set out in the assessment.

- 5.3 Decision-makers are therefore advised to take these impacts into account when deciding whether or not the proposal should go ahead, in addition to the mitigating actions recommended below.
- 5.4 Some of the actions will address the potential detrimental impacts identified in this assessment, but it is not possible to address all the potential impacts. Ultimately, the task for decision-makers is to balance these impacts alongside the need to manage reduced resources and continue to target support at those who need it most.

6. Recommended actions

	Action	Lead	Date
1.	The findings of this EqlA will be used to inform the next stages of the project.	Project manager	2021/22
2.	During the construction phase careful consideration will be given to how access can be maintained, with the potential of a further EqlA being written to cover any temporary measures.	Contractor/design team	2022
3.	Engagement to be carried out with local community and businesses in order to inform future direction. Where possible this will also include specific engagement with organisations representing protected characteristic groups and stakeholders .	Project manager	2021/22
4.	This EqlA to be used to inform future phases of works in the surrounding area and act as a baseline for phase specific EqlA's as and when required.	Project manager	2022

7. Evidence used to inform this assessment

- Norfolk County Council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- Norfolk County Council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives](#)
- Demographic factors set out in [Norfolk's Story 2019](#)
- Norfolk County Council [Area Reports](#) on Norfolk's JSNA relating to protected characteristics:
- Business intelligence and management data, as quoted in this report
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty codes of practice

8. Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact Tony Stepney, Project Manager, tony.stepney@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Neil Howard on E-Mail neil.howard@norfolk.gov.uk or 01603 224196 (Textphone).

Annex 1 – table of protected characteristics

The following table sets out details of each protected characteristic.

Remember that people with multiple characteristics may face the most barriers:

Characteristic	Who this covers
Age	Adults and children etc, or specific/different age groups
Disability	<p>All disabled people including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with mobility issues (e.g. wheelchair or cane users; people of short stature; people who do not have mobility in a limb etc) • Blind and partially sighted people • People who are D/deaf or hearing impaired • People with learning disabilities • People who have mental health issues • People who identify as neurodiverse (this refers to neurological differences including, for example, dyspraxia, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the autistic spectrum and others).
People with a long-term health condition	People with long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of a disability.
Gender reassignment	<p>People who identify as transgender (defined as someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex. It is not necessary for the person to be under medical supervision or undergoing surgery).</p> <p>You may also want to consider the needs of people who identify as non-binary (a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine).</p>
Marriage/civil partnerships	People who are married or in a civil partnership. They may be of the opposite or same sex.
Pregnancy & Maternity	
Race	<p>Race can mean colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as current nationality.</p> <p>A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.</p>
Religion/belief	Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or no belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and

Characteristic	Who this covers
	behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.
Sex	This covers men and women. You may also want to consider the needs of people who identify as intersex (people who have variations in sex characteristics).
Sexual orientation	People who identify as straight/heterosexual/lesbian, gay or bisexual.

¹ The Act states that public bodies must pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The full Act is available [here](#).