

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Thames Way Scheme

Responsible Officer

Christopher Bennett - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Highways and Transport

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Overview:

The Thames Way Scheme is a proposed junction upgrade scheme that is a strategic priority for the local highway network within the Ebbsfleet area (Dartford and Gravesham border).

The Thames Way area is due to be developed by EDC, who have now submitted plans for Ebbsfleet Central (this application includes the Thames Way area). These plans include upgrading three of the four junctions within the scheme area but will not dual the Thames Way. The preferred option for the scheme is to reduce the original scheme scope to only include improvements at the Thames Way/Springhead Road junction. Thames Way will remain single carriageway across the route. Presuming Ebbsfleet Central receives planning permission, the remaining junctions will be upgraded by this development improving the capacity across the western end of Thames Way.

Summary of equality impact:

Equality & Diversity Screening highlights four protected groups as being particularly affected by the proposed scheme: Age, Disability, Pregnancy & Maternity and Carer Responsibility. Medium level, negative (but temporary) impacts have been identified. However, the scheme results in high level positive outcomes for the group. The negative impacts generated by the proposed scheme come from the short construction period whereas the positive outcomes identified are longer term benefits for the protected groups.

At this point no further investigation or analysis has been undertaken however, the proposed engagement

exercises will connect with national and local groups from the identified protected groups and any feedback received will be noted and this document updated, as necessary.

Adverse Impact

The adverse effects of the proposed scheme that would have the potential to affect the mobility of vulnerable groups are temporary. Although construction may disrupt journeys for these groups during the construction period, it should not stop journeys being made, as alternative locations and timings will be put in place and advertised. These adverse impacts are far outweighed by the positive impact on mobility once the schemes are completed and in use.

Once the schemes are complete, the adverse effects for the majority of vulnerable people will be removed. The possible adverse effects on mental health, including increased anxiety/panic attacks, loneliness, depression, and stress, could take longer to reduce. However, the improved environment should provide an improved travelling experience, which could help recovery times. With advanced notice and information about the works publicised appropriately, the possible adverse effects can be minimised. The action plan sets out steps to mitigate against the possible temporary impact of the scheme.

Positive impact

The positive impacts from this scheme are wide ranging and will have long lasting effects on every user group in this assessment on some level. The scheme aims is to improve the pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity across Ebbsfleet and deliver substantial enhancements to the network

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Ongoing Activity:

KCC holds regular STIP working group meetings with Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, and other stakeholders. The scheme when developed also regularly reports to the Joint Transport Boards of both relevant Borough Councils.

Engagement: A public consultation will be undertaken during the design stage of the scheme.

There will also be an engagement exercise to share details of the final designs with the general public, local businesses, protected groups and other key stakeholders.

Local and District Councillors are being kept updated together with regular reports to the STIP working group

To update on the progress on this scheme, KCC will use a series of methods to ensure local residents and stakeholders are engaged with the project:

- A letter drop, containing information on the proposed scheme, will be undertaken to ensure all residents in close vicinity to the proposed scheme are able to access information.
- Meeting to be held with various stakeholder groups where members will be invited to feedback on the proposed scheme.

- All information about the scheme will be available online and via hard copies and there will be the opportunity for feedback to be gathered, either verbally, written or online.
- All promotional material will include details of how people can contact Kent County Council by email and phone.
- All promotional material and scheme information is written in plain English and produced in a digitally accessible PDF version for use with audio transcription software.
- All engagement and consultation material will be available in other languages and formats on request

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

No

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

In addition to the positive impacts identified for all residents and users of the scheme, specific positive impacts have been identified for the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race

Age:

Walking routes are used frequently by older people and young people (particularly to and from school) and improvements to access and facilities will increase confidence in both walking and cycling and therefore, increase its use for learning, education, leisure, and health.

The scheme will improve connections across the Garden City meaning that those with decreased mobility will be able to travel more directly and easily. This will increase access to the service and subsequently increase access to vital hub locations.

Improvements in infrastructure such as improved pedestrian crossings will significantly improve the user experience, leading to increased use, improved traffic safety, reduced fear of crime and increased confidence to make independent journeys for school, social, recreation and travel to essential services.

Clear, signed routes help avoid confusion in new areas often experienced by young or older people.

Disability:

Works will include improvements to pavements and highway surfaces. This will improve connections across the Garden City meaning that those with decreased mobility will be able to travel more directly and easily.

Pedestrian crossings will also be upgraded. Improvements in infrastructure such as improved pedestrian crossings will significantly improve the user experience, leading to increased use, improved traffic safety, reduced fear of crime and increased confidence to make independent journeys for school, social, recreation and travel to essential services.

Clear, signed routes help avoid uncertainty in new areas often experienced by disabled people.

Gender:

Improving the route and widening the footway may increase perceptions of safety leading to increased confidence when travelling for employment, learning, health, and social activities.

Pregnancy and maternity:

Schemes will include improvements to pavements, pedestrian crossings, and highway surfaces. Therefore, there will be a decreased risk of falls or injury, that may disproportionately impact pregnant women.

Widening footways will also benefit parents with prams and pushchairs

Schemes will include improvements to pedestrian crossings and highway surfaces. Therefore, there will be a decreased risk of falls or injury, that may disproportionately impact pregnant women. Widening footways will also benefit parents with prams and pushchairs.

Race:

Walking for Everyone (Livings Streets, 2022) states that ethnic minority individuals are likely to make less trips by car. Improved pedestrian crossings at junctions will improve commuting infrastructure for pedestrians potentially benefiting ethnic minority individuals.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

Construction could result in temporary closure, & diversion of footpaths for users, this may result in uneven footway surfaces which could affect young and older pedestrians.

Pedestrians and road users may have to find alternative and more lengthy routes to access services (such as hospital, schools, public transport etc.).

Noise disruption from the construction works could cause anxiety and confusion for some people.

If access to services and access to transport is disrupted it could disproportionately impact elderly people's health and wellbeing .

Mitigating Actions for Age

Safety audits will be completed at the design and construction stage. NMU audits will be undertaken to ensure due consideration is given to all road users.

The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.

Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.

Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulation

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Christopher Bennett

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Construction will result in temporary closures of footpaths, for road users including pedestrians & cyclists. This may temporarily disrupt access to essential services for disability groups meaning alternative routes may be required. Construction works can cause major obstructions on key walking routes and unexpected changes to the 'landscape' for visually impaired people. Construction works can be noisy, potentially causing confusion and anxiety for disabled individuals and those with learning difficulties.

Mitigating actions for Disability

Safety audits will be completed at the construction stage. NMU audits will be undertaken to ensure due consideration is given to all road users.

The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.

The design will meet recommended guidance from the Department for Transport on inclusive mobility, the Kent Design Guide and associated standard details. Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.

Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulations with access to services kept clear with ramps where required

Responsible Officer for Disability

Christopher Bennett

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Women may feel less safe walking on streets at night in comparison to men. Diversions that lead individuals to less familiar or underlit streets could disproportionately affect women's feeling of safety when using pedestrian infrastructure during construction.

Mitigating actions for Sex

Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings, where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure users can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.

Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.

Responsible Officer for Sex

Christopher Bennett
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
Yes
Negative impacts for Race
<p>Walking for Everyone (Livings Streets, 2022) states that ethnic minorities are less likely to make trips by car. As such, footpath closures or diversions during construction could have a disproportionate effect on ethnic minority groups during daily trips or commutes by increasing required distance to walk or reduce areas in which roads can be crossed.</p> <p>Some individuals may find it more difficult to communicate with KCC due to a language barrier, which could have a disproportionate effect if no arrangements are made to consider language as a barrier to public information.</p>
Mitigating actions for Race
<p>Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings, where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure users can access and use the highway safely during the construction works. Materials will be made available in other languages based on data of the local population.</p> <p>Provisions to reduce pedestrian impact will be considered when any road/footpath closures are required.</p>
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Christopher Bennett
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Yes
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
There is a possible increased risk of falls during work if pregnant women are walking unfamiliar routes.
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulations. Diversion routes to be lit, as necessary, and well signed with ramped access to services as required
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Christopher Bennett
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Yes
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Diversions and major construction works may impact on travel plans if works are not known about in advance. Construction works and changes to the site area could affect planning for independent travel with client groups.
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Christopher Bennett