

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

<p>What is being reviewed?</p>	<p>This EIA focuses on improvements in Purewell (Christchurch), as part of BCP Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).</p> <p>BCP Council was successful in being awarded £8.9m of BSIP funding in February 2023, for a three year period, to deliver a package of improvements for bus passengers. These include providing bus priority to reduce delays to services and improvements to passenger waiting facilities.</p> <p>Purewell is one of six locations identified across BCP, with further schemes being developed for Bournemouth Town Centre, Christchurch Westbourne, Branksome, and Southbourne. Note an overall EIA has been completed for these schemes EIA Screening Tool Bus Service Improvement Plan Delivery V1 Aug 2023.docx which received the following EIA panel outcome EIA Panel outcome form - Bus Service Improvement Plan (002).docx. Individual EIAs are now being produced as project progress as recommended in the above mentioned EIA Panel.</p> <p>The proposed work can be summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purewell (Stony Lane to Purewell Cross Roundabout) Current parking arrangements along Purewell result in large sections of road only suitable for single file traffic. Although there are some passing places suitable for cars, the length of these sections is not sufficient enough to allow buses. This delays services and contributes to increased congestion in Purewell affecting traffic in Christchurch High Street and Somerford Road.
<p>What changes are being made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purewell (Stony Lane to Purewell Cross Roundabout) A reduction in parking provision for up to 10 vehicles at strategic locations along the length of Purewell. This will increase provision of sufficient 'passing places' to allow two bus movement. This will increase the flow of traffic along Purewell, reducing congestion and journey times for all road user, and improving reliability for bus services. Reduction in on-street parking will also improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
<p>Service Unit:</p>	<p>Planning & Transport</p>
<p>Participants in the conversation:</p>	<p>Richard Barnes – Service Unit Equality Champion and part of Sustainable Travel Team Richard Wintrip – Sustainable Travel Policy Team Leader Nick Phillips – Sustainable Travel Operations Team Leader. Kevin Brolan – Senior Transport Officer Liva Rigler – Public Transport Technician Andy Brown – Traffic Team Leader Matthew Carruthers – Senior Traffic Technician Clare Griffiths – Senior Traffic Technician Sean Bevis – Senior Research Officer Paula Sales – Economic Development Officer Wendy Lane – Director, Planning & Transport Councillor Andy Hadley – Portfolio Holder, Climate Mitigation Environment and Energy Councillor Mike Cox – Ward Member, Christchurch Town</p>

	Councillor Michael Tarling – Ward member, Christchurch Town Representatives of Christchurch Town Council
Conversation date/s:	<p>Discussions with Traffic team since 16th January 2024 to discuss arrangement concerning advertising of changes to TRO. This has included regular discussion with Morebus including a site visit on 12 April 2024 to reconstruct issues experienced by services.</p> <p>Recommendations presentation sent to Senior Officer on 24 May 2024 with support received</p> <p>Recommendations presentation shared with Portfolio Holder and Leader on 30 May 2024 with support received.</p> <p>Recommendations presentation shared with impacted Ward Councillors and members of Christchurch Town Council on 15 July 2024, with invitation to site visit on 24 July 2024. Site visit rescheduled at request of invitees for 1 August 2024. Representation from Christchurch Chamber of Trade and BCP Council Economic Development Officer for Christchurch also provided with engagement.</p> <p>Following site visit on 1 August 2024 further request to comments on the recommendations sent out to key stakeholders requested feedback by 30 August 2024. No comments were received though a member of Christchurch Town Council informed they had contacted over 200 residents with no detrimental comments received.</p> <p>Discussion between Sustainable Travel Operations Team, Traffic Management Team and Consultation Team was held on 24 October 2024. The meeting was held to agree suitable level of consultation to be undertaken. As the proposed works consist solely of alterations to existing Traffic Regulation Orders, it was agreed that the existing statutory Traffic Regulation Order consultation process would be appropriate. To enhance awareness of the consultation and to encourage responses it was agreed that leafleting of directly impacted residents would be undertaken. The proposed method of consultation was shared with the impacted Ward Members on 29 November 2024 to which no objection was received.</p> <p>Consultation was launched on 10 January 2025 running for 21 days until 31 January 2025. The consultation was publicised through display of public notices along the corridor and advertising in local press; these are requirements to fulfil a statutory Traffic Regulation Consultation. In addition as mentioned above a leafleting campaign to local residents was also undertaken – all residents and businesses within 100m of the scheme extent were leafleted to, with a total of 1000 leaflets delivered.</p> <p>The results of the consultation have been reviewed and show a mixture of support and objection across all sections of the scheme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 201 total responses to the proposals - 20 overall responses of support to the proposals - 181 overall objected to the proposals <p>In addition, a petition with over 900 signatures was received. It should be noted that the numbers above account for the overall number of responses to the consultation and not the number of respondents. In</p>

	<p>some cases residents have commented on multiple items outlined in the consultation as well as signing the petition. A formal objection was also received from Christchurch Town Council's Planning & Regulatory Committee.</p> <p>The main points of objection raised were the impact the reduction in parking would have on local businesses and on parking provision for local residents. The reduction in parking would also impact patrons of St Josephs Church located on Purewell.</p> <p>Those supporting the scheme suggested that the scheme helped reduce congestion, improving traffic flow for all road users. This would make public transport more efficient and encourage modal shift but also the reduction of carriageway obstruction would improve road safety, a particular benefit to vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Other suggestions for the scheme include road safety improvements including pedestrian crossings, lower speed limits and traffic calming measures. Responses did not include reference to request for disabled parking bays and with no existing disabled parking bays on the scheme extent, none are considered for removal. These suggested improvements are not considered in the adjusted recommendations as they do not fall within the scope of the scheme, however they are noted by the relevant teams within the Planning & Transport Directorate for future considerations.</p> <p>The results of the consultation have been briefed to the Enhanced Partnership Board (which includes Director and Portfolio Holder as members) who have recommended the scheme be presented to Transport Advisory Group (TAG) for consideration on 7 May 2025, where the scheme can be further scrutinised before a recommendation be made to Cabinet.</p>
<p>Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local bus operators including Morebus. - Residents and visitors that are current bus users. - Future bus users as improved bus priority/passenger facilities are intended to increase patronage. - Residents and visitors that use the BCP transport network as some changes will affect all road users, not just those who travel by bus. - Business and organisations in the locations where changes to road layouts will be undertaken. - Residents living in the locations where changes to road layouts will be undertaken - BCP Council colleagues working in transport and other roles that need to support the activity required to deliver the changes. - Councillors – through relevant democratic process. - Suppliers who will undertake the works required.

Do different groups have different needs or experiences?

The overall aim of the scheme is to improve bus priority to improve reliability of bus services, to benefit those reliant on public transport and encourage modal shift. The proposed changes intend to deliver faster journey times on sections of road with frequent bus services (5 separate bus services with a total frequency up to 9 buses per hour) – the BCP Council Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) identifies faster journey times as one of the most important means to increase passenger numbers. Priority schemes in locations with a very frequent service deliver proportionately greater benefits.

Bus use is particularly common for people aged 17-20, aged over 70, for women and girls, most ethnic minority groups and people on lower incomes – according to the National Audit Office.

A BCP Council travel survey from October 2018-Jan 2019, <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/About-the-council/Research-reports/Documents/Travel-Survey-Report.pdf> showed that 60% of respondents had used a bus within the last 12 months. Locally bus use was for **age**; highest for over 65's and under 24s; **disability** – disabled people were more likely to travel by bus than people without a disability; **ethnicity** – 'White Other' and BME people were more likely to use buses than white British people; **sexual orientation** – all other sexual orientations were more likely to travel by bus than heterosexual people; **religion** – all other religions were more likely to travel by bus compared to Christians and residents from more deprived areas were more likely to use buses.

A BCP Council residents survey from September 2021 suggested that younger age groups are more satisfied with local bus services – particularly the 16-24 age groups. Those aged 35-44 are less satisfied – this could be as car ownership is higher compared to younger people so with more of this group having a choice of transport, they are less satisfied.

Whether a household has a car available may result in a different need or experience – this could be linked to **socio-economic** conditions, with households from less prosperous areas having lower levels of car ownership and more likely to rely on bus services for transport needs.

A repeated perspective from a BCP Council survey 'Bus Back Better' from 29 November 2021 to 7 January 2022 to inform priorities for the Enhanced Partnership, mentioned safety and security concerns travelling on buses and waiting at stops and interchanges. These concerns are likely to be more prevalent amongst certain protected groups including women and some ethnic groups. This project includes the provision of CCTV in the busiest bus shelters in Christchurch.

Where changes are made to road layouts studies have shown, that people react in different ways. A Transport for All study - 'Pave the Way' January 2021, covered the impact of low traffic neighbourhoods on disabled people and the future of accessible active travel. It mentioned that 'Any change implemented which affects the movement of vehicles and pedestrians as well as flow of traffic will inevitably have some sort of impact on disabled people who feel the changes more strongly due to limited alternative

	<p>options for travel'. The report also mentioned that change itself can be an access barrier.</p> <p>Where parking is considered for removal or redistribution to nearby side roads, residents and visitors to the area using parking to access businesses or other activities may be less supportive of this, however we do not believe this will implicitly impact on any specific protected group</p> <p>There are not any identifiable or known impacts specific to Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender reassignment, human rights, the Armed Forces or those with caring responsibilities.</p>
Will this change affect any service users?	<p>This project considers changes to deliver bus priority, it does not directly cover any service users as it is not a policy change. Service users may be affected as part of the wider community and likely changes will be covered in that section.</p>
What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>The National Bus Strategy stated that improvements to bus services would liberate people who are old, young, disabled and isolated. The BCP Council BSIP mentions that based on the profile of people that use buses, improving the offer has equal benefits for younger, older, disabled, BME, 'White other', non-heterosexual people and people from all other non-Christian religious groups.</p> <p>By providing bus priority/improved passenger facilities the viability of bus services will increase and the operators are committed as part of the partnership to re-invest savings to provide service enhancements. This creates a "virtuous circle" of improvements. A better local bus network will initially benefit the groups that tend to use them more but if as intended, bus use increases, then other groups who currently use buses less will also gain.</p> <p>More people using buses will lead to improved air quality as bus fleets are increasingly 'Euro 6' designation with very low levels of tailpipe emissions and with modal shift from cars to buses also improving air quality. Poor air quality disproportionately impacts children and people with existing health conditions, so improvements provide positives for these groups in particular.</p> <p>Through increasing numbers of people travelling by bus footfall in town and local centres could increase. The number of trips on buses in the BCP area has a target to increase from 17 million in 2022 to 28 million at the end of the current BSIP funding in 2025.</p> <p>The proposed changes will also improve the passage of all traffic, not just buses, through the area specified - the existing parking and loading arrangements cause delays to all vehicles. Progression of the changes are intended to benefit all vehicular traffic and a wider profile of people.</p> <p>The current time limited parking restrictions along Purewell is limited to 30 minutes with no return within 30 minutes, The proposals include extending the permitted parking period for users to become 1 hour with no return within 2 hours. The increased time of parking provides additional opportunity to access local businesses.</p>

	<p>The current time limited parking restrictions are enforced Monday to Saturday until 6pm, after which there is no time restriction on parking on these sections. There is no time restriction on parking throughout the entire length of the scheme on Sundays. The proposals intend to maintain no restriction on parking after 6pm. Where parking sections have been removed and replaced with 'No Waiting' in the daytime this restriction is only until 6pm, after which as above, no parking restrictions apply. These proposals result in no alteration to parking for residents along the scheme in the evening at a time when parking pressure is at its highest for residents.</p> <p>In addition, there is no restrictions throughout the entire 24 hour period of Sunday. This further supports residents in finding parking at the weekend where vehicles are less used (not used for commuting to work) and maintains availability of parking for patrons of St Josephs Church.</p> <p>There are currently no disabled bays located along the scheme section, with exception to a bay within the Purewell Dairy Car Park, of which there is no proposals to adjust this.</p> <p>On sections of Purewell where 'No Waiting' restrictions are proposed, disabled parking permit 'Blue Badge' holders are permitted to park for up to three hours where it is safe to do so.</p> <p>The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England - GOV.UK</p> <p>The exception is where a 'No Loading' restriction is in place, however no such restriction is proposed along this scheme.</p>
<p>What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?</p>	<p>During the period of any works there will be a degree of disruption. In order to minimise this works will not be undertaken during the busiest times as follows;- the 6 weeks of the Summer holidays, at Christmas or during events such as the Food Festival.</p> <p>In order to reconfigure existing parking arrangements the recommendations include remove of some sections of parking which are often used by nearby residents particularly in the evening. This will cause inconvenience to some residents that may lose parking from outside their premises meaning they may need to park further from their home. There is no Disabled parking along this section currently with the exception of one disabled parking bay within Purewell Dairy Car Park. The results of the consultation did not make reference to any negative impact to current parking provision for disabled car users or any request for additional disabled parking bays, though any such drivers with a disabled parking permit can park as advised above.</p>
<p>Will the change affect employees?</p>	<p>Many employees and others in their households will use buses, to get to/from work, for work business travel and general personal travel. The BCP employee travel survey 2022 stated that 7% sometimes used a bus to travel to/from work, with bus as the main mode for 4%. Nearby Christchurch Library and Hub, where BCP Council and Christchurch Town Council employees work is located directly beside bus stops for Christchurch High Street which are being considered for improvement.</p> <p>It has not been determined whether any residents directly impacted by recommendations along this corridor are employees of BCP Council. Any employees resident along the corridor who own a private vehicle would be impacted by parking reconfigurations as explained above.</p>

<p>Will the change affect the wider community?</p>	<p>Yes – for the schemes to be successful improvements to bus services will be provided which are intended to benefit the wider community. The partnership with local bus operators means that re-investment of operational savings will go towards wider bus network benefits. Positives will include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to work, education, healthcare, leisure and community activity. • Increased opportunity through access to employment for areas of higher social deprivation with lower levels of car ownership. • Reduced congestion and pollution – improving air quality. (The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership conference in May 2019, voted 'Transport Infrastructure and Congestion' as the top main external constraint to business growth) • An improved bus network contributes to combating climate change considering BCP Council's declared Climate and Ecological emergency. Increased modal shift to public transport, with a full bus taking up to 75 cars off the network, reduces our transport carbon footprint. • Buses reduce social isolation for many one person households – particularly for elderly people. • Contribution to the participation equality domain from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. – though participation in communities and access to services.
<p>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?</p>	<p>Changes to road layouts have been cited as an access barrier for some disabled people, even if the changes are intended to be of benefit to them. Consultation has been enhanced accordingly to ensure that all immediately impacted residents and businesses are aware of the intended changes and allow comment on any concerns and understanding of revised layouts. .</p> <p>In regard to loss of parking provision there is currently a public car park nearby (Purewell Dairy Car Park). Surveys undertaken by parking services show these to be underutilised and have sufficient space available to accommodate displaced parked vehicles from Purewell. This car park offers rates starting at £1 for two hours, £1.70 for four hours or all day for £4. The car park is free after 5pm providing overnight parking for residents.</p> <p>The proposals do not see a change to the existing parking restrictions along Purewell which allow unrestricted parking after 6pm. This maintains overnight parking provision for local residents to compliment to parking provision at Purewell Dairy Car Park and to those residents that also have off street parking provision which is shown within the proposals.</p> <p>The strategy supporting the works will be communicated to those affected and concerns about any negative impacts will be covered.</p> <p>The benefits to communities and business of improving bus services including spend by bus passengers is usually not considered as any parking changes dominate discussions.</p> <p>There is an opportunity in communications to highlight the economic benefits that more people travelling by bus will bring to local shopping centres. The living streets 'Pedestrian Pound' report from 2018 states that retailers have been shown to over-estimate the importance of the car for</p>

	<p>customer travel, studies have shown that more people walked, cycled, or came by bus than car.</p> <p>Changes to street parking arrangements require consultation before implementation according to specific Traffic Regulation Order requirements. The consultation is scheduled for January 2025, responses to the consultation required to deliver this scheme will be evaluated, including any equality issues raised and these will be provided as part of the decision making process linked to the consultation.</p>
<p>Summary of Equality Implications:</p>	<p>The basis of the capital schemes resulting from the award of HM Government funding through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is to improve the viability of bus services. This will be achieved through measures to prioritise buses through traffic at known locations where they are delayed and new or enhanced facilities to encourage more people to use buses.</p> <p>There are significant anticipated positive equality impacts – based on the profile of people that use bus services. These benefits will not just affect people who are existing bus users but also potential users as the strategy aims to encourage people that have not necessarily used buses before to do so.</p> <p>The profile of people that use buses from both national and local evidence are groups the Equality Act is intended to benefit by advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Much older, much younger age groups, people with a disability, women, other ethnic groups, other religions, other sexual orientations and residents from more deprived areas are all more likely to use buses, compared to others in their protected groups.</p> <p>Enhancements to infrastructure to support people that use buses – shelters, CCTV, better information, extended clearways and raised boarding kerbs will benefit all, but easier boarding and egress from buses and a safer waiting environment will particularly help many disabled and elderly people and women. Additionally easier access onto and off buses with pushchairs/buggies provide a maternity/paternity benefit. As some of these enhancements address as a mitigating action, safety concerns raised by some protected groups, while waiting for the bus.</p> <p>Developing priority for buses and bus users help create a more viable bus network with potential for services to expand. Increasing frequencies and better bus provision throughout the day and days of the week will benefit the groups that use buses but also encouraging new people from different profiles.</p> <p>Wider benefits to our communities through improved transport to access employment, education, healthcare, retail and leisure opportunities, reduced congestion and better air quality will also result in positive equality implications. Visitors to our area will also benefit from an enhanced public transport network. Some groups will view the outcomes from the partnership as less relevant to them, and also noting that the extent bus services vary across the BCP area. At this stage it is considered unlikely</p>

that any groups will be implicitly disadvantaged by the proposals and their implementation.

The scheme focuses on removal of a small number of on-street parking places on the key bus corridor between Christchurch Town Centre and Purewell. This will increase pressure on demand for parking spaces for residents and those visiting the area to access local businesses during the day time, but will improve journey times for all road users making journeys to the area. The provision of unrestricted parking along the section in the evenings to support residents is maintained. Alterations to disabled parking provision are not proposed but current provision along the section has been noted for future implementation along with other road safety improvements to assist road users and pedestrians. Where some sections of parking has been removed in the daytime replaced with no waiting/loading, disabled blue badge holders are permitted to park for short periods of time on these sections.

This EIA will continue to be updated as appropriate as further discussions including scrutiny from Transport Advisory Group are undertaken for which recommendations will be taken account in the final schemes provided.