



Benchmarking Report

City of York Council

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Document Control

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Introduction and Background

01

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

Mima have been appointed as independent access consultants by the City of York Council to carry out a series of workshops for York residents and city centre businesses, and to create a benchmarking report. This benchmarking report will explore examples of accessibility measures in other historic cities similar to York and outline any solutions that have been put into practice to address challenges related to accessibility and inclusion.

These challenges include but are not limited to: dealing with a medieval city and the historic built environment constraints that arise from this, access to information, concerns about terrorism, and how to mitigate potential attacks. As part of this benchmarking exercise, we have chosen to look at Durham, Edinburgh, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Winchester and Chester.

This benchmarking report should be read alongside Mima's findings and recommendations report. Within it, we have taken positive learnings from various cities in order to provide City of York Council with actionable recommendations of how to further improve accessibility measures within York city centre, with observations about what could be done differently. These recommendations sit in the accompanying findings and recommendations report which also highlights the work that has already been undertaken.

mima



Photograph taken from Monkgate, looking towards Goodramgate and the City Walls.

Durham

02

Durham

Durham is a city in the northeast of England. The wider County Durham has a population of 522,000, according to the 2021 Office of National Statistics. It is thought that the city centre has a population of around 22,000. The historic city centre sits in a loop surrounded by the river Wear, which contains Durham Cathedral and the Norman Durham Castle.

Blue Badge Parking

There are no restrictions to allowing Blue Badge holders into the city centre. However, there are general restrictions in place following the introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

Durham City Council have introduced a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) where parking restrictions apply to help make the best use of the space available. Anyone wishing to park within a CPZ between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday needs to have a valid permit. Parking is free to anyone outside of these hours and during bank holidays.

Blue Badge holders can park in permit holders only areas without charge for a time limit.

Other users can apply for permits such as residents with carers and businesses. Households can apply for scratchcard books for parking in this area.



Image of Durham on a cold winter morning looking over the river towards the Cathedral.

Durham

Accessibility Information

The [‘This is Durham’](#) website signposts visitors to the ‘Visitor Contact Centre’ which is on hand to provide accessibility information for disabled visitors.

The website also signposts people to the Changing Places website, facilitating a search for Changing Places facilities in Durham.

Information is spread across different websites including a website dedicated to providing access information called [‘Durham Disability Access Guide’](#), which includes a map providing access information to various different venues across the city.

There is no single webpage which collates all this accessibility information together, which makes information more difficult to find.

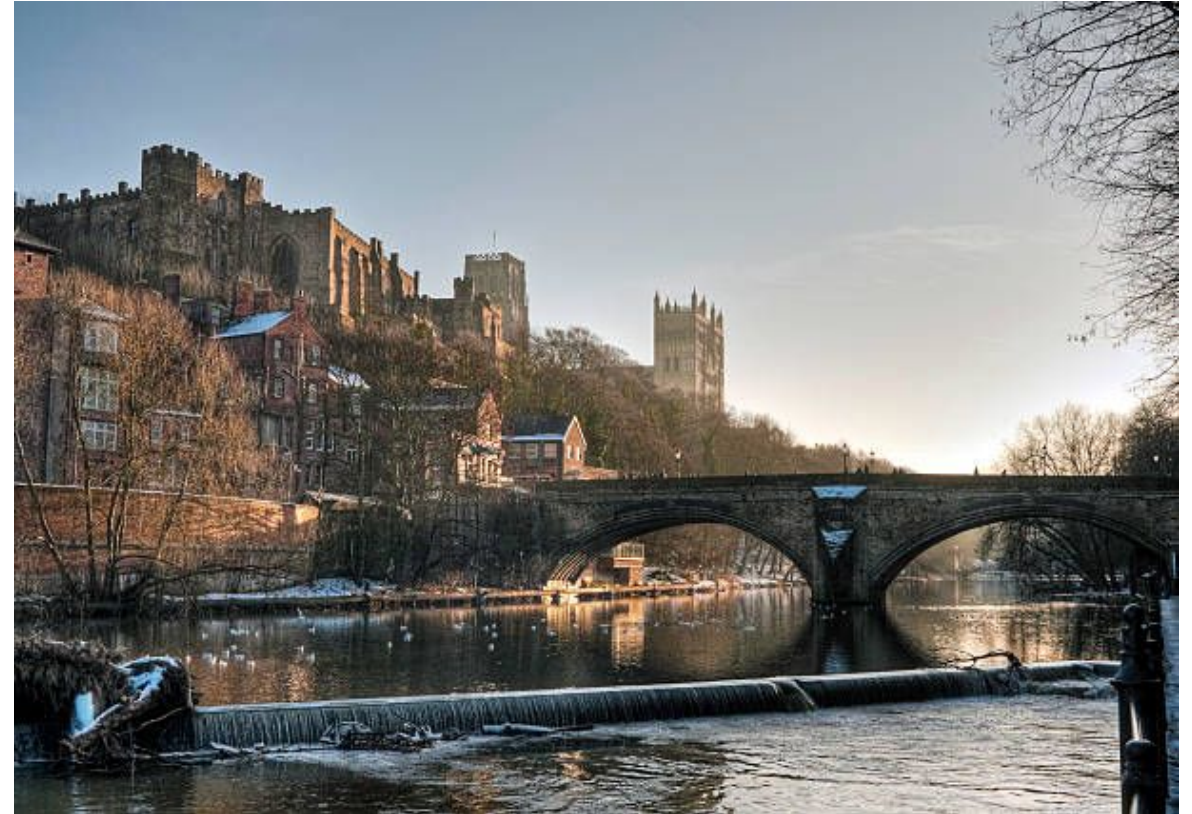


Image of Durham on a cold winter morning looking over the river towards the Cathedral.

Edinburgh

03

Edinburgh

The Scottish capital, Edinburgh, can be subdivided into two distinct areas. The old town is small, approximately 1 mile long and 350m wide and dates primarily from the medieval times with its narrow alleyways. Not surprisingly, the old town contains most of the city's most famous sites, including The Castle and the Royal Mile. However, meandering North and crossing Princes Street, you stumble across Newtown, which is still 200 years old. The streets are laid out in a symmetrical pattern, and most buildings are in a neoclassical style. This part of the city is now a bustling hub for the city's professional commercial and business life, with many offices, shops and banks.

Edinburgh hosts major citywide events throughout the year, including The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August of every year. The Fringe Festival allows performing artists and comedians to get their “break” into their respective professions.



A photo of Edinburgh city centre at sunset

Edinburgh

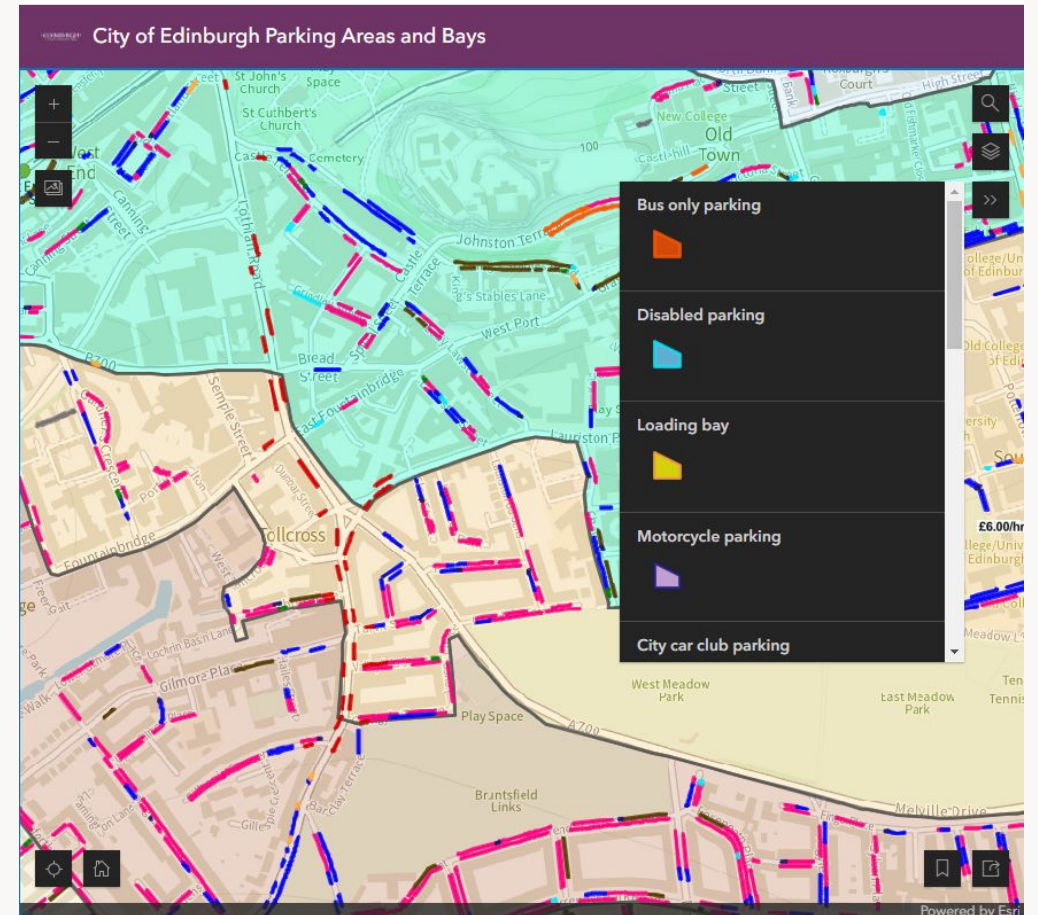
Parking in Edinburgh

The City of Edinburgh Council has an online [interactive map](#) showing the different bays, including accessible parking bays. The map indicates different types of bays ranging from bus-only parking bays highlighted in orange, car club parking bays marked in green and, as the City of Edinburgh Council terms it, disabled persons' parking places in sky blue. Upon clicking on the coloured marker, it provides information as to the bay type, for example, Blue Badge holders only, and it notes the zone the bays are within.

The map has a search function for addresses and notes that if you hold a Blue Badge, then the parking prices do not apply.

Blue Badge holders can park free of charge for an unlimited time limit in the following areas:

- in pay and display and shared use on-street parking bays.
- on single or double yellow lines when loading is allowed.
- in greenways parking places when parking is allowed.
- in accessible parking bays.



City of Edinburgh Parking Areas and Bays Map

Edinburgh

Working with an Access Panel

The City of Edinburgh Council has developed a working relationship with a local access panel by attending the panel's regular monthly meeting, where street design schemes are usually discussed.

City of Edinburgh Council officers have made several key decisions in consultation with the local access panel, including signing off the street design guidance. This incorporated the ban on A-frame signage, which had been raised at almost all disabled street users' focus groups. Additionally, agreement has been reached on a 50mm chamfered kerb to demarcate pedestrian footways and cycleways. Staff members from Edinburgh City Council constructed a real-size one-to-one scale model of a street, including a variable kerb height, which was discussed with all stakeholders in the meeting.

The City of Edinburgh Council has actively engaged with disability organisations and local stakeholders throughout the design development, with at least two engagements for proposals as they are developed, trying to create an end-to-end engagement process.

To inform this process, one-to-one telephone conversations were undertaken with a design consultancy working on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council project.

This consultation demonstrated how the council's design consultants and transportation team had identified all of the key stakeholders and organisations within the study boundary. Further, the design consultants also developed a Community and Engagement Plan and Equality Impact Assessment, both created at the project's inception. Further tools were also created, including a comments tracker and a "you said, we did" tool providing feedback on any comments received.

Bus Accessibility

Lothian buses are 91% owned by the city of Edinburgh Council, with Midlothian, East Lothian and West Lothian Councils owning the remaining 9%. A user "nmcmurdo" on Euan's guide, an extensive resource for disabled people, noted back in November 2016 that they used three bus routes to transport them from the Ocean Terminal to various destinations around the city. "nmcmurdo" particularly noted that:

"I found the drivers of Lothian buses to be very pleasant manner and helpful with the ramp and making sure there was space on the pavement for us to get off".

Norwich

04

Norwich

Norwich has a vast history dating back to the Roman conquest of Britain. Norvic was a royal city and the capital of today's East Anglia during the Anglo-Saxon period. The Saxon Norvic Centre was focused on Tombland, which forms the Cathedral Quarter today.

During the Norman Conquest of 1066, the invading forces built a royal castle and cleared the dwellings. Like many cities throughout the centuries, Norwich continued to evolve with the Royal Arcade, which opened in 1899. The University of East Anglia omitted its first student in 1963, and Norman Foster designed the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in the 1970s. In 2012, Norwich became England's first UNESCO City of Literature.

Online Information

"VisitNorwich" is a not-for-profit organisation part of the Norwich Business Improvement District (Norwich BID) and partly funded by the city council. Furthermore, there are also contributions from the organisation's paid partnership programme scheme.

[Visit Norwich](#) has a webpage that provides some basic yet useful information for anyone planning to visit the city predominantly for leisure activities. The information includes two hotels and one cottage (6 miles from the city) and provides some basic information on accessibility features of each of the properties, such as "disabled parking bays" and, in the case of the Assembly House that it is a registered member of the Norwich City Dementia Action Alliance.

The webpage continues to list information about key attractions within the city, such as the Cathedral, Castle, and Museum of Norwich, and some basic information about each venue. The page continues with sightseeing options and eateries within the city. At the bottom of the website is a section aptly named "the important bits" containing information about Changing Places, accessible toilets (primarily RADAR key accessible), parks with accessible toilets (primarily RADAR key accessible), and Blue Badge parking bays.

Unfortunately, information in this section is just listed and not linked to any further information such as maps or images; nonetheless, it is a useful starting point for anyone wishing to plan a journey around the city.

Oxford

05

Oxford

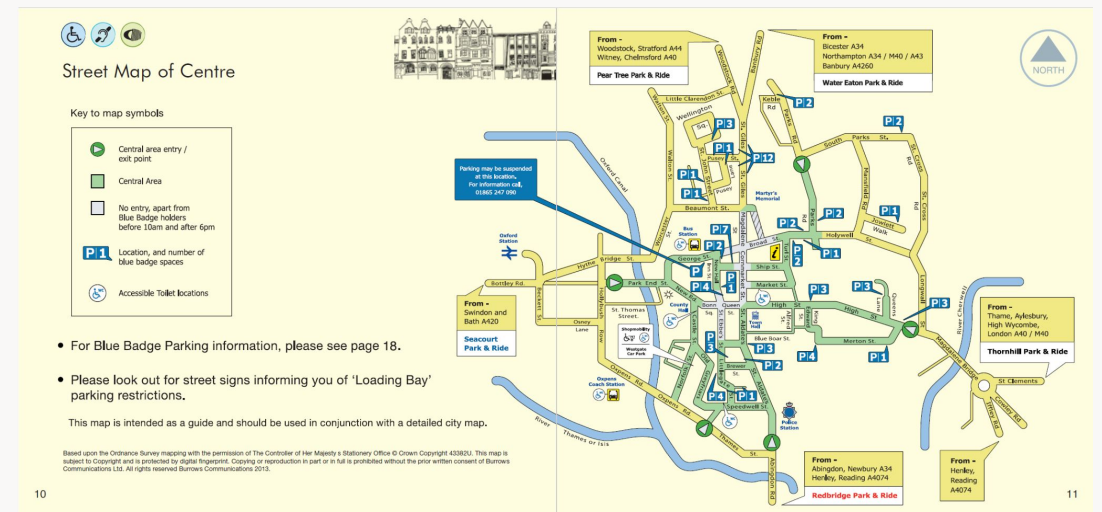
The railway arrived from London to Oxford in 1884. Oxford gained its first cinema in 1910, and by the 1930s, Oxford had become an important manufacturing centre and prosperous city. During the Second World War, Oxford escaped serious damage. Now, Oxford has a population of 162,000 and has a relatively small city centre. Some of the city centre is pedestrianised. Much of the city centre is covered by a Central Conservation Area and contains the medieval core of the University.

Online Information

Oxford City Council published an “[Accessible Oxford Guide](#)” In July 2020. The guide is primarily aimed at tourists however includes information that would also be useful for residents. It is not clear when the guide was last updated or if the information in the guide is up to date.

The guide lists many shopping outlets, points of interest, and civic amenities. The information within the guide is basic; however, it provides a very useful summary, particularly for individuals who may be visiting the establishment for the first time. Instead of recreating a document summary here, key highlights are extracted from each section.

While the information about each attraction may not be in sufficient depth for everyone, it provides a useful springboard for people to start their search, with signposting provided. The guide mostly focuses on physical, hearing and sight impairments instead of non-visible disabilities or neurodiversity. Furthermore, it is not apparent how to request the information within the guide in an alternative format.



Above is a simple map showing the location of roads closed to vehicles apart from those containing Blue Badge holders before 10am and after 6pm. Furthermore, the map shows the location and number of Blue Badge spaces and accessible toilet locations.

Oxford

The document includes the following information:

- Public toilets and Changing Places facilities - information about opening hours and how to purchase RADAR keys.
- A selection of larger shops (such as Marks & Spencers and Primark) - information is provided about facilities, including “disabled WCs” and “disabled changing rooms”.
- Accommodation and hotel information relating to - “disabled parking on site”, “accessible entrance”, and “accessible bedroom/bathroom” is provided.
- Similarly, there is a selection of dining options noted, with information on accessible entrances, “Disabled WC” and large print menus.
- Oxford University Colleges are listed with details about access to the Main entrance, Alternative level entrance, Quads, Hall and Chapel.
- Accessible features concerning museums and libraries are provided. Furthermore, there is a section on other tourist attractions, including gardens, open spaces and the surrounding countryside, with varying details about accessible facilities.
- Banks, Building Societies, Bureaux de Change - information relating to accessible entrances, lower cashier desks, induction loops, large print and Braille leaflets.
- There is an “Oxford on the level self-guided tour”.
- Lastly, the document concludes with useful national and local contact numbers for organisations like the National Autistic Society (NAS) and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).

Oxford

Pedestrianised Area

Oxford City Council temporarily pedestrianised part of St Michaels Street in 2020 to provide outdoor dining space nearby restaurants, pubs and cafes during the pandemic. This space was permanently closed to vehicles in January 2022. It was evident that the pavements in this area were in poor condition and narrow, making it difficult for many people to use this space, including wheelchair users. Engagement with groups including businesses and disability stakeholders took place in 2022, improvement works in this area are due to be completed by March 2025.

In March 2024 , Oxford City Council announced construction works for the Market Street pedestrian-friendly trial, set to begin in April. As part of these changes the following is proposed:

- Surface improvements.
- Wider footpaths.
- A reduction in the number of loading bays to improve safety and use space more efficiently.
- The ability to temporarily close the street for events, markets and other uses to make the most of the public realm improvements.

Oxfordshire County Council has collected public and stakeholder feedback for this proposal to use an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to deliver the Market Street improvements. This trial will last for 18 months, a formal consultation will take place from the 6 months following the introduction of the trial.

The Market Street trial is part of a wider £6.8m regeneration project which amongst other improvements will consider additional cycle parking and refurbishment of the toilet block.

Blue Badge Access and Parking

Blue Badge holders may park in disabled bays for an unlimited amount of time. There are Blue Badge parking bays in city centre car parks however there is no online map on the council website to indicate the number of Blue Badge bays in each car park. The access guide states that there are a total of **90 accessible parking bays** within the city.

Oxford do not have any security HVM bollards in place in the city centre, however there are some areas where vehicles are restricted.

The Oxfordshire County Council website states that there are bus lanes/gate restrictions in the city centre, Blue Badge holders are not exempt from these restrictions. There is an interactive map which shows where the bus gates are and the operational hours. These are monitored by ANPR cameras. Without further studies into this, it is not clear of the overall impact this has on disabled people, however several newspaper articles in the last year have reported on the negative impact this has on disabled people. This issue has been overcome in cities such as Cambridge where Blue Badge holders can apply for an exception for up to two vehicles.

Cambridge

06

Cambridge

The town of Cambridge set up its newspaper in 1744 and a hospital in 1766. The town was connected to London by railway in 1845, opening itself to a major market and due to its impressive reputation and academic status, Cambridge was finally made a city in 1951.

Vehicle Access

CCTV cameras help control traffic in and out of the city. In central Cambridge, pedestrian priority areas operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with access further restricted between 10am-4pm Monday-Saturday. Between these hours there is no access for vehicles except for emergency vehicles or drivers who have been issued with a permit.

A permit may be granted to allow vehicular access to the historic city centre for disabled people. To qualify, someone must be in receipt of the War Pension Mobility Supplement, Mobility Allowance, higher rate Disability Living Allowance or equivalent Personal Independence Payments.

Making Space for People - Greater Cambridgeshire's partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council

This project was part of a larger work remit, City Access Improvements, which looked at predominantly human-powered forms of transportation within the city, tackled congestion, and improved air quality in the public realm.

The Making Space for People project specifically examined an area bordered by the River Cam to the north and west and city centre areas such as Cambridge University's botanical garden to the south, extending to Petersfield and Romsey towards the east of the city.



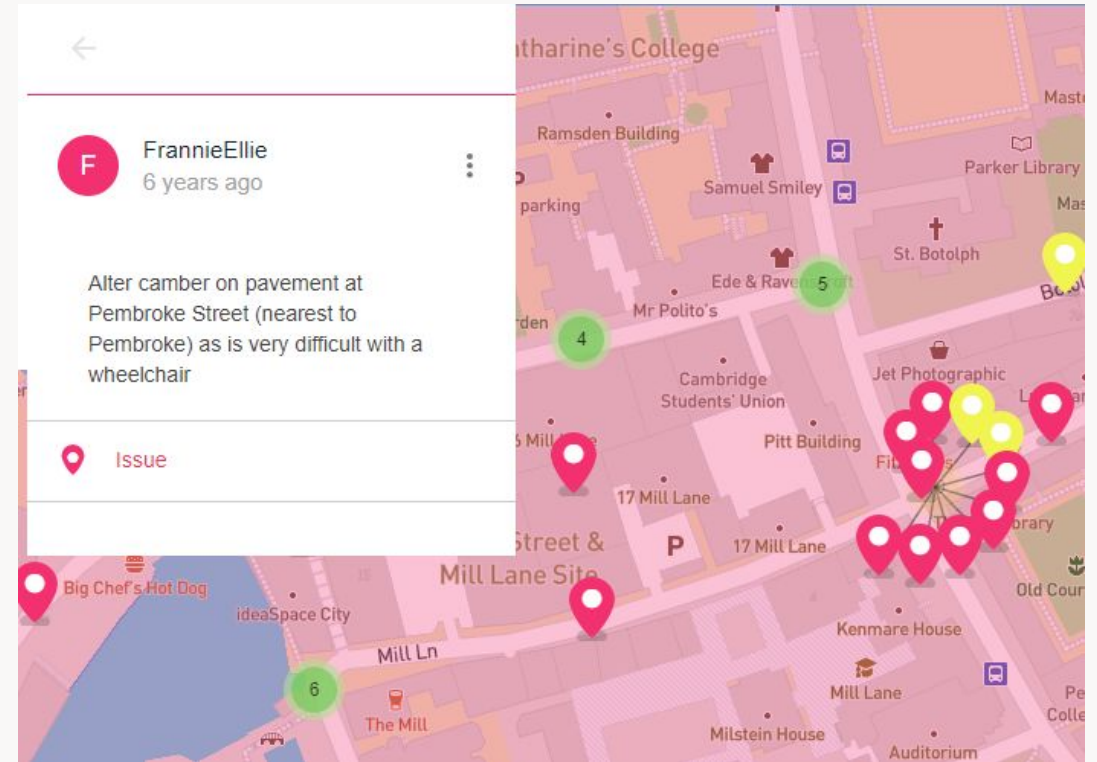
A view over Cambridge city centre today showing some of Cambridge's most famous buildings, including Kings College Chapel.

Cambridge

As part of the project, an online map allowed 478 participants to map issues and opportunities spatially. Yellow icons were opportunities, red icons symbolised issues, and orange icons were general comments. Green icons symbolise where many comments are, and the user must zoom in to receive more information. Participants were also asked to comment on the types of spaces they would like to see in the future. Particularly, participants were asked to comment about leisure activities, heritage issues, environmental concerns, play areas, pedestrian access, cycling infrastructure including parking, mobility and access for shopping and entertainment. Once participants dropped a pin, they could provide their comments.

The vast majority of the comments are located towards the city centre, with areas close to Christ and Emmanuel colleges, each receiving 167 and 114 comments, respectively, whereas the area to the east of the city centre, such as Romsey, receives approximately 25 comments. The interactive map means that comments are broken down to provide more accuracy when individuals zoom into any area.

Example - An individual noted on the intersection of Mill Lane and Trumpington Street that the "Alter camber on the pavement at Pembroke Street (nearest to Pembroke) as is very difficult with a wheelchair".



Screenshot of an online map used to map opportunities, issues and general comments.

Cambridge

As well as the online survey, there were three workshops conducted as part of the project which received widespread attendance, including but not limited to local ward and county councillors, representatives from the universities and the students union, organisations such as Sustrans and Visit Cambridge, as well as representatives from Cambridge Disability Panel and Cambridge City Council's Access Officer.

The project was going to be presented to the Council's planning and transport scrutiny committee in either late 2019 or early 2020, and the representations and public engagement were to be used to inform the preparation of the draft of the Making Space for People Supplementary Planning Document. The document was anticipated to be presented to the Council's Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee again in autumn 2020, seeking approval for public consultation. According to the Cambridge City Council website, the Making Space for People SPD is still being developed.

Bath

07

Bath

The Romans arrived in Bath and built a temple around 50 A.D. Then, the city as we know it today declined in approximately the fourth century when the Romans left Britain. By the 10th century, Bath had a mint. The Abbey was built in the 12th century, and in 1189, a charter was issued, which meant the townspeople got certain rights. In the 18th century, Bath became a much more fashionable place and in 1987, was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

Closing Roads as an Anti-Terrorism Measure

On 1st January 2022, vehicles were permanently restricted in some streets in central Bath. Exemptions are provided for emergency services, royal mail, and private vehicles carrying a valid Blue Badge (including taxis).

This was introduced as a result of concerns from Avon and Somerset police to Bath and North East Somerset Council about the risk from terrorism, which led to proposals for road closures.

A report by Atkins titled "[Bath City Centre Accessibility Study](#)" was completed in May 2021. The report was commissioned to identify the impact of these proposals (both benefits and challenges) regarding accessibility and put forward recommendations for Council consideration in the form of improvements or mitigations. Bath and North East Somerset Council have proposed including four new "disabled bays" along the edge of the A3039 and four further "disabled bays" along the street named "Westgate Buildings".



A view of the city centre showing Bath Abbey off to the right-hand side with Stall Street running throughout the left of this image.

Bath

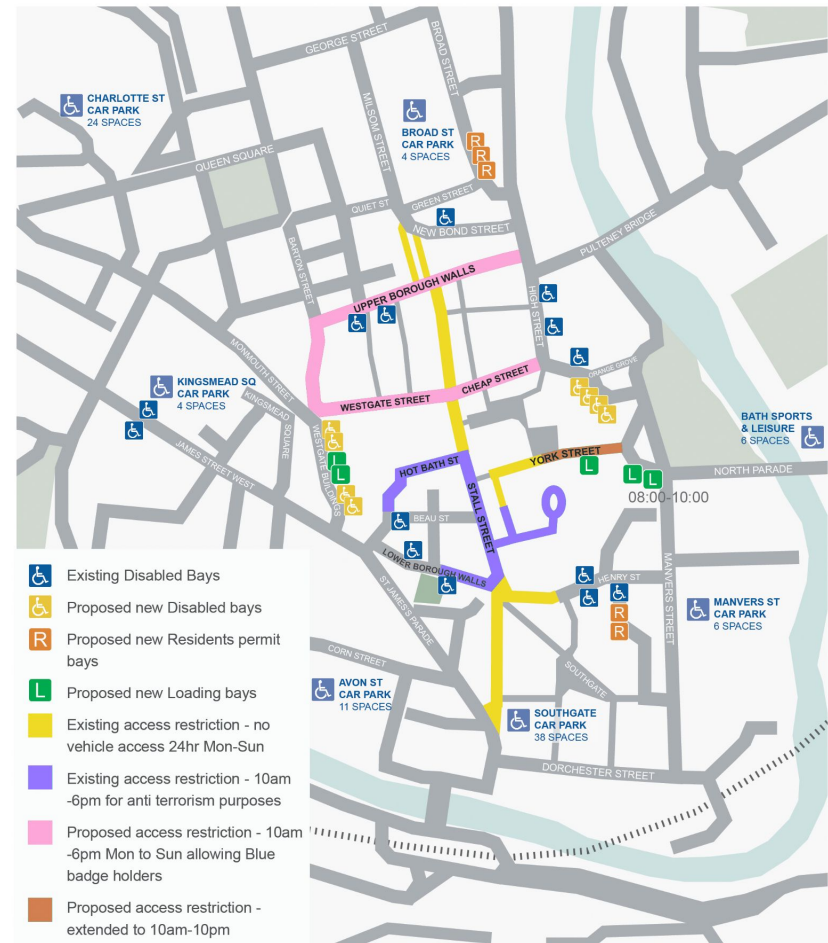
A proposal was made to close off a series of roads in the city centre, most notably York Street, Stall Street, Hot Bath Street and part of Lower Borough Walls, to all traffic, including anyone with a Blue Badge, between 10am and 6pm. Another set of roads, which roughly form a 3 sided rectangle including Cheap Street, Westgate Street part of Saw Close and Upper Borough Walls, were to be closed off to the general public, however Blue Badge holders could park for three hours on double yellow lines without obstructing the road.

Bath and North East Somerset Council produced a traffic regulation order which closed York Street between 10am and 6pm as an anti-terrorism measure and then between 6pm and 10pm to prevent danger to persons or other traffic using the road.

An appeal was lodged by Ms Hannah Downey against the proposals to close a section of York Street effectively from 10am to 10pm and was heard by Rory Cridland on June 8, 2022. Mr Cridland made the recommendation that Bath and North East Somerset Council could proceed with their proposal subject to minor typographical and other drafting errors.

Alternative disabled, resident and loading bays outside the restricted area

Bath City Centre Security Scheme



A map showcasing the proposed interventions in the city of Bath.

Resident Feedback - Bath Echo Newspaper

A Bath local told the Bath Echo in an article published on 22 December 2022.

“I used to go into Bath most days. I'd meet a friend for coffee or lunch. I'd do some shopping or banking. Now I hardly ever leave my house.” They later continued by saying “Some of us with disabilities can't walk very far. But for those who can walk just a little way, being able to park in Milsom Street gives us access to lots of useful shops and services”.

Another person told the Echo:

“Bath and North East Somerset has taken my independence and dignity away from me, just so cyclists and walkers can enjoy the city centre more” and continued with “Able-bodied people have been prioritised over disabled residents”.

Bath and North East Somerset Council's cabinet member for transport Manda Rigby, said:

“We always assess the impact on people with disabilities when we undertake schemes and we listen to residents, businesses, disability groups and Blue Badge holders to ensure we strike the right balance for everyone's needs....[W]e have good Blue Badge parking in the city which has been protected as part of our City Centre Security scheme, in fact people with Blue Badges are no longer in competition for street parking places with other vehicles within this zone”.

Bath

The Introduction of Automated Vehicle Access

From 18 October 2023, access from Cheap Street was automated, with the following [guidance](#) provided:

Between the hours of 10am and 6pm you will no longer need to show your Blue Badge to the safety marshal positioned at the Cheap Street gate. Instead, you will need to press the intercom, show your blue badge to the camera when requested, wait for the green light and drive through the open bollards. It is important that you do not try to follow a vehicle through the bollards.

You (or a carer, relative or friend who is driving you) can pick up, drop off or park for up to 3 hours on double yellow lines on the following streets inside the restricted area: Cheap Street (when open), Westgate Street, Saw Close and Upper Borough Walls. Between the hours of 10am and 6pm, you will need to show your Blue Badge to the safety marshal positioned at the gates to enter and exit these streets.

Taxis carrying you as a passenger can also pick up and drop off at any time on these streets. Between the hours of 10am and 6pm, you will need to show your Blue Badge to the safety marshal positioned at the gates to enter and exit these streets.

If you come into the restricted area via taxi, you can arrange to be picked up later by another taxi, without having to decide the time in advance. After you order your pick-up taxi, just call Council Connect on **01225 39 40 41**, and they will transfer you to our CCTV team, who can check the first six digits of your Blue Badge Card and the name of the taxi company you have ordered.

Winchester



Winchester

Winchester was one of the most important cities in England until the Norman conquest in the 11th century. It has since become one of the most expensive and affluent areas in the UK. The city's major landmark is Winchester Cathedral. The city is also home to the University of Winchester and Winchester College, the oldest public school in the UK still using its original buildings.

Visitor Trail

Winchester City Council has collaborated with Winchester Shopmobility to create a relatively short, approximately one-mile circular "Visitor Trail by Winchester." The information is provided in a leaflet format and includes maps, photographs, and a short text description of each of the tour's destinations.

The text that accompanies the trail information is short but provides information, particularly for any wheelchair users visiting the historic city for the first time, noting critical information such as:

"Turn left into Market Street. Keep on the right-hand side and turn right into The Square. Take care at the corner, as the dropped kerb is quite steep. The Square is not pedestrianised, so there is occasional traffic. (Winchester Visitor Trail by Wheelchair)".



 From the Brooks Shopping Centre take the road between Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury's, **Middle Brook Street** ①. Take care here as buses come through every few minutes. Turn right and head up the **High Street**. ②



The High Street started life some 2,500 years ago as a route leading to a crossing point of the River Itchen. It was the main thoroughfare for Roman, Saxon and medieval Winchester and lays claim to being the oldest street in any English city. At the first corner on the left is the 'new' Market Hall, built in 1772.




 Turn left into **Market Street**. ③ Keep on the right-hand side and turn right into **The Square**. ④ Take care at the corner, as the dropped kerb is quite steep. The Square is not pedestrianised, so there is occasional traffic coming through.

Image showing a sample of the visitor trail route guide, designed to be used by wheelchair users.

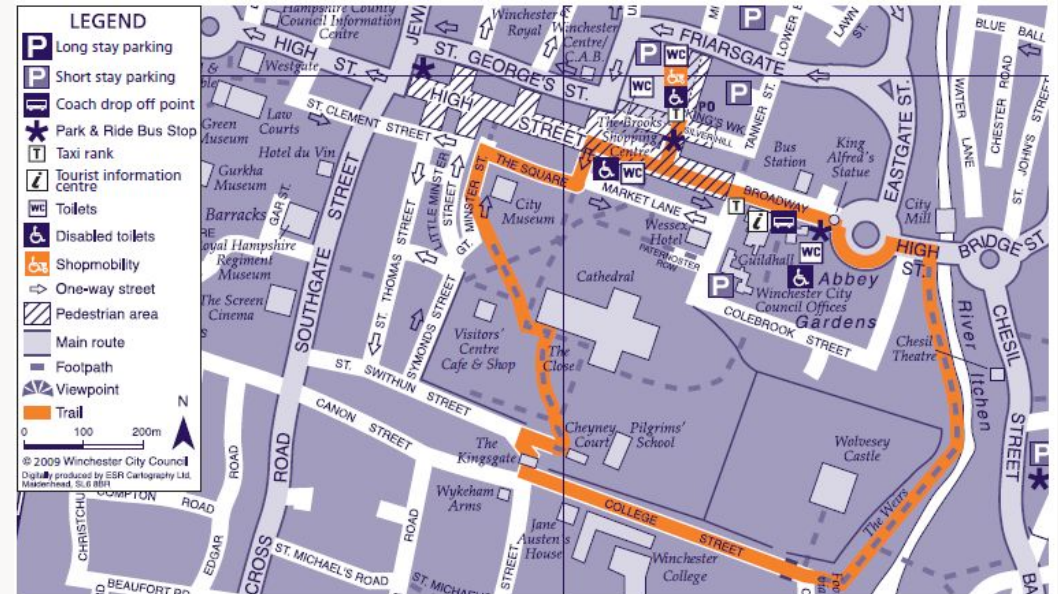
Winchester

This information is vital, as it provides the wheelchair user or disabled person with critical information about how someone may be able to navigate this historic environment. Such information is highlighted in a different text format, for instance, blue text with a larger font, making it stand out from the surrounding text. Photographs of a young wheelchair user also accompany each information point, which may allow any individual to imagine themselves in that environment.

A map is included within the leaflet, which shows the trail in orange. Within the map, a scale bar is provided, which allows individuals to gauge the distances between key tourist attractions and other facilities. The map highlights key tourist attractions such as the Cathedral and castle. Further information, such as “disabled toilets”, long and short-stay parking, pedestrianised areas, footpaths and viewpoints, are also restricted on the map. Such information may be extremely useful to anyone visiting Winchester for the first time, as it provides a “one-stop shop” for critical information. Signposting and contact details for organisations that may benefit disabled people, including Winchester Tourist Information Centre and Winchester Public Transport Group, are also provided.

Individuals have remarked:

“Winchester’s pedestrianised streets and extensive dropped kerbs make it especially wheelchair-friendly. Winchester City Council and Winchester Shopmobility have devised this trail to help wheelchair users confidently explore the historic city.” (Winchester Visitor Trail by Wheelchair).



The above image shows a light purple map with the accessible trail marked in orange and many key pieces of information, such as short-stay parking and “disabled toilets,” which may be useful for any first-time visitor to Winchester.

Chester

09

Chester

Chester was the first British city to win the European Access City award in 2017 for its commitment to ensuring that the historic city becomes more accessible to all. The current Chester One City Plan sets out a vision to be an accessible city for all, that is easy to travel around, and promotes safe, reliable, affordable travel options that meet the needs of everyone.

The Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF)

The [Corporate Disability Access Forum](#) (CDAF) has been established since 2013, this is a partnership of local and regional disability organisations, local access groups and Cheshire and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The role of CDAF is to:

- work with developers, architects and project managers to encourage greater accessibility at major new developments and in the public realm.
- promote the adoption of inclusive design and management to create environments which are universally designed and usable by everyone.
- promote and encourage greater access to information and in accessible formats and more positive attitudes towards disabled people when providing services.

- ensure that local issues are addressed from an informed and representative consumer viewpoint by a group that is made up of people who are either disabled themselves or others who represent disabled people.

Alfresco Licenses

Chester West and Chester Council set out how businesses are expected to run their alfresco areas in line with up-to-date national guidance. This guidance aligns with national accessibility guidance and DfT Inclusive mobility, 2022. In summary this requires that:

- 2m of footway is to be left clear.
- Should not conflict with access or dropped crossings.
- Be contained within a clearly marked area.
- In pedestrian areas - only be licenced during these hours.
- The areas must be marked by clear barriers.
- A smooth panel handrail fixed at a height of 1-1.2m.
- A tapping rail of at least 15cm depth and at a fixed height of no more than 20cm off the ground.
- Barriers should be easily identified by visually impaired people.

Chester

Information on Accessibility

Online information on accessibility can be found on the following webpages:

[Visit Chester and Cheshire](#) is a webpage which contains a variety of visitor information. It provides links to venues in the city listed on AccessAble including places to visit, eat and drink. It also provides information on:

- Changing Places facilities.
- Accessible travel (including links to travel partner access information).
- Shopmobility.
- Park and Ride service.
- A link to the Chester City Centre Access Guide.
- A link to access information on the Chester Rows.
- Blue Badge parking.

Images of the Chester City Centre Access Guide are shown on the following pages. This provides a useful summary of key access information in the City including:

- Changing Places.
- Public Toilets.
- Dedicated Blue Badge car parks.

- A map of showing step-free access points to the Rows.
- A map of the city, including car parks, shopmobility, taxi ranks, wheelchair access onto the walls.

It is possible to get a physical copy of this map and additional information from the Chester Visitor Information Centre which is located centrally. Here, it is also possible to pick up a step-free walking tour guide to the Rows and speak to a member of staff with knowledge on accessibility within the city.

Vehicle Access and Parking

Chester currently has a pedestrian area, which is smaller than York. This includes Watergate Street, St Werburgh Street, Eastgate Street and Bridge Street.

Whilst part of the city centre follows a pedestrianised model year-round, further bollards are in place to limit public traffic during event time only, for example, the Christmas market. Access to the pedestrian areas when the bollards are in place requires drivers to show their Blue Badge to a marshal on a gate at Northgate Street. This is a similar set up to the process in York.

Chester has two dedicated Blue Badge car parks, in addition to on-street accessible parking. These car parks are found in city centre locations at Frodsham Street and Hamilton Street. Blue Badge holders can park for 4 hours in these car parks. Some on-street accessible parking bays have an unlimited time duration.

Chester

Adjacent Image: the Chester City Centre Access Guide provides an overview of key access information in the city centre.

Changing Places



A Changing Places toilet is available in the Frodsham Street Public Toilets. The toilet is larger than a standard accessible toilet and includes extra equipment such as ceiling track hoist and adult size changing bench. The toilet is operated using a RADAR key and is open every day from 8am to 8pm.

Community Toilet Scheme



Several city centre shops, bars and restaurants have signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme which allows members of the public to use their toilet facilities.

For further information please visit:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/communitytoilets

Public Toilets



A unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet facility can be found at each of the following Council-owned public conveniences. Toilets are operated using RADAR key. In addition, there are accessible toilet facilities located within The Mall shopping precinct.

Location	Summer (Easter - Sept)	Winter (Oct - Easter)
Princess Street (under the Market)	08.00 - 18.00	08.00 - 18.00
Frodsham Street	08.00 - 18.00	08.00 - 18.00
Union Street (Near Grosvenor Park)	11.00 - 17.10	closed
The Groves (Near Suspension Bridge)	08.00 - 20.00	09.00 - 16.30
Little Roodee (on the coach/car park)	seasonal times	seasonal times

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille and Large Print formats. If you would like a copy in any of these formats or in another language, please email us at equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk. We are also able to provide a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter to support customers with accessing Council services.

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 Textphone: 01606 867 670
 email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
 web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Access points to the Rows

The Rows are a feature unique to Chester which comprise elevated walkways on the main shopping streets. There are a number of steps accessing the Rows, however, all sections are also accessible to wheelchair users. The location of these access points is shown on the map:



Bridge Street Row West and Watergate Row South

Ramp on Pierpoint Lane next to Carluccios restaurant OR via passageway from Weaver Street



Watergate Row North

Ramp access from Goss Street (next to Reiss) OR level access via Goss Street (limited headroom)



Eastgate Row South and Bridge Street Row East

Level access through the Grosvenor Shopping Centre (open Mon-Sat 09.00-17.00, Sun 11.00-17.00, Bank Holidays 10.00-17.00) OR via lift on Pepper Street



Eastgate Row North and Northgate Row East

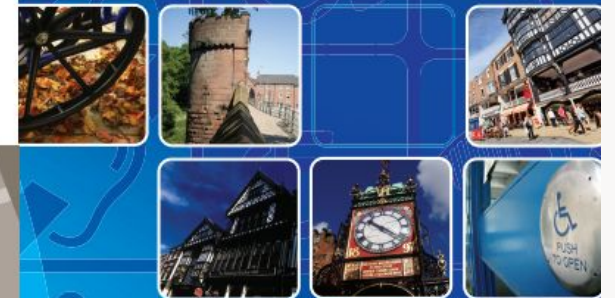
Level access via Godstall Lane, which is accessed from St Werburgh Street



Cheshire West & Chester Council

Chester City Centre Access

A guide for disabled people



Chester

Adjacent Image: the Chester City Centre Access Guide provides an overview of key access information in the city centre.

Car Parks

P Please display your valid blue badge with serial number and expiry date clearly to obtain up to 4 hours free parking in the following Council owned car parks:

- Frodsham Street dedicated disabled parking area (CH1 3JJ)
- Hamilton Street dedicated disabled parking area (CH1 2BG)
- Any Council pay and display car parks. If you wish to stay longer than four hours, please purchase a pay and display ticket for the additional time and display the ticket next to your disabled parking badge and clock.

On-street parking for Blue Badge holders is also available on St Werburgh Street and Hamilton Street.

DisabledGo Online Access Guide

disabledGo DisabledGo provide online access guides to over 90,000 venues across the UK, including 1,000 venues in Cheshire West and Chester. You can find detailed information about access to all kinds of places – cinemas, hotels, restaurants, libraries – the list goes on. The website is free to use and you don't need to register, just go to www.disabledgo.com

Dial House

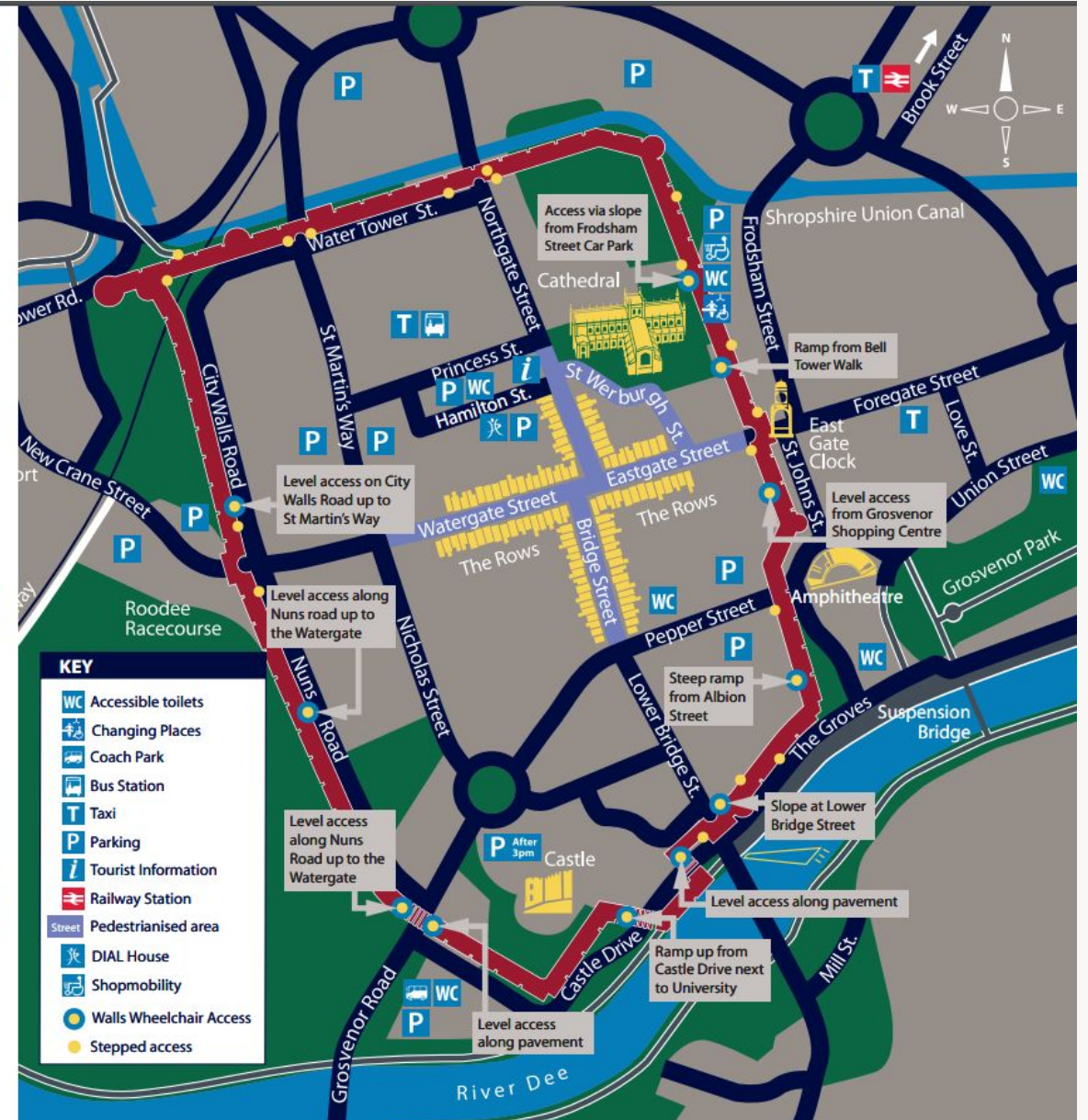
DIAL HOUSE Disability Rights Centre
DIAL House provides a free, confidential and independent advice service on issues such as disability rights, community care, education, health & leisure, mobility & transport, sports & leisure and welfare benefits. Additionally there is a Community Cafe providing home cooked food at reasonable prices.

For further information please contact:

Telephone: (01244) 345655
Textphone: (01244) 315122
Email: contactus@dialhousechester.org.uk
Address: DIAL House Chester, Hamilton Place, Chester CH1 2BH

Shopmobility

Shopmobility The DIAL House Shopmobility Service, based in the Kaleyards car park off Frodsham Street, (CH1 3JH) provides daily use of mobility scooters and wheelchairs to enable people with disabilities to access city centre shops and facilities. For a one-off fee anyone can join the Regular Users Scheme and book a scooter or wheelchair as often as they like, seven days per week (except bank holidays). Alternatively, daily hire fees apply to visitors / tourists / occasional users.
Tel: **01244 312 626** or Email: shopmobility@dialhousechester.org.uk



Conclusion

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Conclusion

This benchmarking report has explored how other historic cities such as Durham, Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Norwich, Edinburgh, Chester and Winchester manage accessibility. It serves as a useful tool when understanding areas for improvement within York's infrastructure and policies, and provision of information for residents and visitors.

This report should be read alongside the findings and recommendations from the series of workshops conducted by Mima in March and May 2024 with residents, disabled residents, carers and support workers, and city centre businesses.



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