

The 'Better Decision Making' tool has been designed to help you consider the impact of your proposal on the health and wellbeing of communities, the environment, and local economy. It draws upon the priorities set out in our Council Plan and will help us to provide inclusive and discrimination-free services by considering the equalities and human rights implications of the decisions we make. The purpose of this tool is to avoid decisions being made in isolation, and to encourage evidence-based decision making that carefully balances social, economic and environmental factors, helping us to become a more responsive and resilient organisation.

The Better Decision Making tool should be used when proposing new projects, services, policies or strategies, or significant amendments to them. The tool should be completed at the earliest opportunity, ideally when you are just beginning to develop a proposal. However, it can be completed at any stage of the decision-making process. If the tool is completed just prior to the Executive, it can still help to guide future courses of action as the proposal is implemented.

The Better Decision Making tool must be attached as an annex to Executive reports. A brief summary of your findings should be reported in the One Planet Council / Equalities section of the report itself.

Guidance to help you complete the assessment can be obtained by hovering over the relevant question.

Please complete all fields. If you wish to enter multiple paragraphs in any of the boxes, hold down 'Alt' before hitting 'Enter'.

Introduction

Service submitting the proposal:	Regeneration and Major Projects and Transport
Name of person completing the assessment:	Andy Kerr
Job title:	Head of Regeneration Programmes
Directorate:	Economy and Place
Date Completed:	11/11/20
Date Approved (form to be checked by head of service):	Andy Kerr 11/11/20

Section 1: What is the proposal?

1.1	<p>Name of the service, project, programme, policy or strategy being assessed?</p> <p>The ongoing extension of the city centre footstreets in response to Covid-19 that were initially introduced through Economic recovery strategy (COVID-19): Transport and Place Strategy</p>
1.2	<p>What are the main aims of the proposal?</p> <p>Under the city's economic recovery plan and government's Safer Public Place guidance in response to the covid 19 pandemic, a Transport and Place Strategy was introduced, with an accompanying EIA. Within this strategy a number of the city centre footstreets were extended to allow social distancing and to allow businesses to continue to operate during the pandemic. The footstreet hours were also extended from 5pm to 8pm. These measures were for an initial 6 month period and are due to expire on 14 December. It is proposed to extend a number of these measures until September 2021 in response to the ongoing pandemic, but to improve the mitigations in place for those who have been adversely affected by their introduction. It is also proposed that some of the temporary extensions may become permanent, but this will require a separate formal statutory process in the future. This will require further EIAs to assess the impact in making decisions at that point.</p>
1.3	<p>What are the key outcomes?</p> <p>Key outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the temporary extension of the city centre footstreets until 8pm that were implemented in Summer 2020 in response to Covid-19 will continue until September 2021, except for Monk Bar to Deangate and College Green which will be removed from the footstreet area to increase blue badge car parking capacity on the edge of the footstreet area - based on feedback and discussions with groups of disabled people a number of revised mitigations are to be put in place including removing the taxi shuttle service from Monk Bar car park to be replaced by increased blue badge parking on the edge of the footstreets; creation of a single information point on disabled parking, quality of access, benches, disabled toilets and other relevant information; the council to undertake a full strategic review of city centre parking and disabled access to include a review of shopmobility, identifying gold standard disabled parking options, a city centre shuttle service, and delivery hubs. - proposals that some of the temporary footstreets may become permanent, but with a formal future process required with further EIAs and consideration of the impact on all.

Section 2: Evidence

What data / evidence is available to support the proposal and understand its likely impact? (e.g. hate crime figures, obesity levels, recycling statistics)

2.1	<p>Current government guidance around social distancing, and positive health/ pandemic management impacts is widely available, and updated regularly. The UK is currently being managed daily through an alert management system, in order to balance the social and economic impacts of the approach with health/ pandemic management imperatives</p> <p>Since the footstreets were extended under the emergency covid measures there has been ongoing monitoring of the situation, and a major engagement exercise with those affected by the footstreet extensions, which is set out below.</p>
2.2	<p>What public / stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and what were the findings?</p> <p>We have engaged c450 individuals as well as advocacy groups representing thousands of disabled people across the city. The open community brief details the main themes and challenges which these proposals seek to address, and the summary of conversations with the city's businesses and representative groups.</p> <p>The principles of the footstreets extension is broadly supported by a majority of respondents to the citywide survey, which is also reflected in the support from residents identifying as disabled. There are tangible benefits for many, in particular blind and partially sighted and older people. However, the desire from many for footstreets and spaces to be vehicle free, while other Blue Badge holders request access to the otherwise pedestrianised roads, appear incompatible. These objections are articulated in a petition signed by 1093 people, including 501 York residents, calling for the reversal of the extensions.</p>
2.3	<p>Are there any other initiatives that may produce a combined impact with this proposal? (e.g. will the same individuals / communities of identity also be impacted by a different project or policy?)</p> <p>Parking measures within the city centre. The impacts of this initiative are considered within this assessment.</p>



Section 3: Impact on One Planet principles

Please summarise any potential positive and negative impacts that may arise from your proposal on residents or staff. This section relates to the impact of your proposal on the ten One Planet principles.

For 'Impact', please select from the options in the drop-down menu. If you wish to enter multiple paragraphs in any of the boxes, hold down 'Alt' before hitting 'Enter'.

Equity and Local Economy

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.1	Impact positively on the business community in York?	Positive	The proposals will enable the continued operation of businesses in York city centre that the extended footstreets have facilitated. There is unanimous support for the continuation of the temporary footstreets in response to COVID-19 from business representative groups, although some individual businesses have objected due to the impact on deliveries. Whilst this can be an inconvenience to those affected, the space created for pavement cafe licences by the footstreets have been fundamental to the ability of those businesses to open and operate. On balance the impact is therefore viewed as positive.
3.2	Provide additional employment or training opportunities in the city?	Positive	Whilst the proposals have not created additional employment opportunities they have been vital to allow businesses to reopen which in turn has safeguarded jobs and employment.
3.3	Help improve the lives of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds or underrepresented groups?	Mixed	The proposals as a whole are designed to support the economic robustness and social function of the City Centre, particularly saving jobs in the service sector which has general low wages. The footstreets have also been well received by many groups with mental health and physical disabilities, improving the environment and reducing the conflict with vehicles, particularly those with visual impairments.

Health & Happiness

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.4	Improve the physical health or emotional wellbeing of residents or staff?	Positive	The proposed measures are likely to have a positive impact on emotional wellbeing of residents and visitors to the city centre. For example, -> enabling adherence of social distancing which will positively impact on health physically, and may ease concerns of those worried about being able to distance within the city centre -> business owners concerned about their long-term viability and wanting to remain open, and their employees concerned about their income -> business owners wanting to open safely.
3.5	Help reduce health inequalities?	Positive	These measures allow most individuals to move safely around the city centre, enabling access to public spaces whilst managing the pandemic and its health impacts.
3.6	Encourage residents to be more responsible for their own health?	Positive	Measures enable individuals to take responsibility for their own health (and that of others) by adhering to social distancing measures, reinforced by appropriate signage from the local authority.
3.7	Reduce crime or fear of crime?	Positive	The extended footstreets are enabling businesses to remain open, reducing the number of closed shops and vacant premises that could lead to anti-social behaviour and vandalism, and the perception of an unsafe city centre
3.8	Help to give children and young people a good start in life?	Neutral	Proposals do not specifically target children or young people.

Culture & Community

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.9	Help bring communities together?	Positive	The proposals have allowed the reopening and continued operation of the city centre area; markets, shops, services and public spaces. This has helped to bring the local community together in terms of being able to support city centre businesses safely. Open public areas have provided space for individuals and groups within the community to meet safely, whilst adhering to social distancing.
3.10	Improve access to services for residents, especially those most in need?	Mixed	Reopening the city centre has allowed businesses to reopen, which is likely to improve access to services for many residents. Displacement of parking for blue-badge holders has made accessing services more difficult, and some of the initial mitigations were deemed to be unsuitable by some blue badge holders. The revised mitigations however are based on feedback from those affected and will improve the availability of blue badge parking in close proximity to the city centre. However, those with mobility issues who do not use a mobility aid will have further to walk to access the heart of the footstreet area.
3.11	Improve the cultural offerings of York?	Positive	The temporary footstreets has allowed and will continue to allow the animation of the footstreet area with events such as the College Green, managed outdoor seating space in the summer, and the York Food Festival, and for these events to be spread more widely across the city centre.

3.12	Encourage residents to be more socially responsible?	Positive	The temporary footstreets have created the space and capacity to allow residents and visitors to comply with social distancing guidance.
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Zero Carbon and Sustainable Water

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.13	Minimise the amount of energy we use and / or reduce the amount of energy we pay for? E.g. through the use of low or zero carbon sources of energy?	Neutral	Whilst the extended footstreets displace vehicles from that area they do not necessarily reduce journeys.
3.14	Minimise the amount of water we use and/or reduce the amount of water we pay for?	Neutral	These proposals have no direct impact on water use.

Zero Waste

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.15	Reduce waste and the amount of money we pay to dispose of waste by maximising reuse and/or recycling of materials?	Neutral	No impact

Sustainable Transport

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.16	Encourage the use of sustainable transport, such as walking, cycling, ultra low emission vehicles and public transport?	Positive	Extension of the footstreets is likely to affect how people travel to the city centre positively and the priority measures are aligned with a broader transport and place strategy designed to lock in sustainable transport benefits accruing over the COVID lockdown period.
3.17	Help improve the quality of the air we breathe?	Positive	Extending footstreets will likely have a positive impact on local air quality to those streets, as restricting traffic movement within the city centre. Enabling a greater area of the city centre to be opened for pedestrian access may also encourage more sustainable travel methods to be taken to reach the city centre. Likely to cause displaced emissions for blue badge holders parking further from the city centre.

Sustainable Materials

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.18	Minimise the environmental impact of the goods and services used?	Neutral	No impact

Local and Sustainable Food

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.19	Maximise opportunities to support local and sustainable food initiatives?	Neutral	No impact

Land Use and Wildlife

Does your proposal?		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
3.20	Maximise opportunities to conserve or enhance the natural environment?	Mixed	As previously stated, likely to have an ongoing positive impact on local air quality due to extension of footstreets. Open city centre businesses may encourage more people to travel to the city centre. Wider social distancing measures may mean that this travel is undertaken through unsustainable means (e.g. car). reopening the Centre will draw people away from less urban environments which they may have been frequenting more often than usual during lockdown, reducing pressure on the natural environment. There are unlikely to be more direct impacts on the natural environment given the urban built up nature
3.21	Improve the quality of the built environment?	Positive	The removal of vehicles from key heritage areas such as King's Square helps to improve the visual amenity of the space and setting. Ensuring the economic viability of the city centre will enable future investment in the built environment from freeholders and stakeholders
3.22	Preserve the character and setting of the historic city of York?	Positive	As above, the removal of cars from the heritage environment does enable the character of York's history to be better enjoyed and understood. Reopening and reanimating the centre supports its economic viability, allowing investment from freeholders and stakeholders to be maintained.
3.23	Enable residents to enjoy public spaces?	Positive	The extended footstreets include two public squares which allows more space of the public to enjoy without competing with vehicles.

3.40	Additional space to comment on the impacts		
There are a number of negative or mixed impacts outlined within this assessment. These measures should be considered within the broader context of national legislation around enabling the opening of non-essential retail whilst ensuring public safety through social distancing measures.			

Section 4: Impact on Equalities and Human Rights

Please summarise any potential positive and negative impacts that may arise from your proposal on staff or residents. This section relates to the impact of your proposal on **advancing equalities and human rights** and should build on the impacts you identified in the previous section.

For 'Impact', please select from the options in the drop-down menu.
If you wish to enter multiple paragraphs in any of the boxes, hold down 'Alt' before hitting 'Enter'

Equalities

Will the proposal **adversely impact** upon 'communities of identity'?
Will it **help advance equality** or **foster good relations** between people in 'communities of identity'?

		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
4.1	Age	Mixed	<p>The proposals have a mixed impact. Many older people have benefited due to the removal of conflict with vehicles in footstreet areas, which means that those who are slower or unsure on their feet have a safer environment. However, older people may also be more likely to have a blue badge and may have previously parked in the extended footstreets and now have further to walk.</p> <p>People of all ages have on the whole been positively affected by the footstreets, which have enabled social distancing, an enhanced environment and have protect businesses and jobs. 70% of respondents to the Our Big Conversation are in favour of the footstreets.</p>
4.2	Disability	Mixed	<p>The majority of people who identify as disabled that responded to Our Big Conversation are in favour of the extension of the footstreets (60%), and more respondents agree with the safety principles behind the footstreets than disagree. The in depth discussions with disabled people and advocacy groups have reflected that many disabled people have benefited from the footstreet extensions. This is particularly the case for those with visual impairments and mobility issues that do not rely on a car and blue badge parking due to the reduction in conflict with vehicles and cyclists.</p> <p>However, a large number of those responding to our engagement do not believe the existing mitigation measures offer an adequate replacement for the loss of on-street parking for approximately 40 vehicles within the now pedestrianised area. In some cases the impact has been manageable, with other modes of transport, the taxi shuttle, or a longer walk from car to destination being achievable.</p> <p>However, for some who the above are not alternative solutions the removal of the ability to park in those areas has had a significant impact, and reduced the prospects of them visiting the city centre. They remain strongly of the view that the footstreet extensions should end immediately. Whilst the removal of College Green from the footstreets will help by reinstating a considerable number of spaces much closer to all city centre services, the journey for those with the most limited mobility who do not use a mobility aid may find it too far to walk. The proposed mitigations acknowledge this, reinstating closer parking in several locations alongside a mix of responses to meet diverse needs. These include improved information, reviews of existing parking and mobility aid provision as well as longer term developments of gold standard car parks and routes to city centres, and a feasibility study for city centre shuttle service to explore options to continue to address and improve York's access offer.</p>
4.3	Gender	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact.
4.4	Gender Reassignment	Neutral	
4.5	Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact

4.6	Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact
4.7	Race	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact
4.8	Religion or belief	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact
4.9	Sexual orientation	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact
4.10	Carer	Mixed	The impact on carers reflects the impact on those with disabilities, in that some groups who require care have benefited from the extended footstreets, whereas blue badge holders who wish to park in the footstreet areas have not.
4.11	Lowest income groups	Positive	The extended footstreets have helped businesses to reopen, particularly in sectors that have traditionally low pay.
4.12	Veterans, Armed forces community	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to have an impact.

Human Rights	
Consider how a human rights approach is evident in the proposal	

		Impact	What are the impacts and how do you know?
4.13	Right to education	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.14	Right not to be subjected to torture, degrading treatment or punishment	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.15	Right to a fair and public hearing	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.16	Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.17	Freedom of expression	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.18	Right not to be subject to discrimination	Neutral	Proposals are not expected to impact.
4.19	Other Rights	Neutral	These proposals impact on the ability of people to move freely around the city centre. However this is required to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

4.20 Additional space to comment on the impacts	
In all cases, appropriate social distancing measures implemented are likely to have a positive impact on the overall health of the population by enabling people to adhere to social distancing, and therefore reducing the potential to spread / exposure to COVID-19.	



Section 5: Planning for Improvement

5.1	What have you changed in order to improve the impact of the proposal on the One Planet principles? (please consider the questions you marked either mixed or negative, as well as any additional positive impacts that may be achievable)
	The proposal considers the safety of residents and visitors to the city centre given the current and ongoing social distancing measures. The proposals enable changes to be made and adaptations to take place in the city centre as any changes to social distancing measures are made.

5.2	What have you changed in order to improve the impact of the proposal on equalities and human rights? (please consider the questions you marked either mixed or negative, as well as any additional positive impacts that may be achievable)
	The initial extension of the footstreets in response to Covid-19 were brought in at pace under emergency powers in response to the pandemic. They were accompanied by a number of mitigations to offset the impact on anyone who may be negatively affected. During the summer and autumn an in-depth engagement exercise has been undertaken with those individuals and groups to understand the personal impact on them and how any mitigations and measures can be revised and improved. This has resulted in a number of new actions that will accompany the continuation of the extended footstreets, and the commissioning of a strategic review of car parking and access for disabled people.

5.3	Going forward, what further evidence or consultation is needed to ensure the proposal delivers its intended benefits? e.g. consultation with specific vulnerable groups, additional data)
	The engagement undertaken to date is based on the "My" principles that have been developed in York as an open conversation approach, where the debate remains ongoing to make change together. The mitigations developed to date will continue to be considered and refined, whilst the strategic review of parking and access to the city will remain embedded in the engagement approach. Working collaboratively we can continue to improve York's accessibility offer.

5.4	Please record any outstanding actions needed to maximise benefits or minimise negative impacts in relation to this proposal? (Expand / insert more rows if needed)
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Action	Person(s)	Due date
Ongoing Business Community Engagement	Andy Kerr/Gareth Wilce	Ongoing
Ongoing consultation and liaison with communities of interest	Andy Kerr/Gareth Wilce	Ongoing
Ongoing liaison with blue badge holders	Andy Kerr/Gareth Wilce	Ongoing
Continuous review of the impact of highway measures, changes to government guidance, and compliance with equalities guidance, and implement the mitigations set out in the report	Tony Clarke	Ongoing
Begin the formal process to make some of the temporary footstreets permanent, with full EIAs	Tony Clarke	Spring 2021
Undertake a strategic review of York's parking and access offer	James Gilchrist	Summer 2021

In the One Planet / Equalities section of your Executive report, please briefly summarise the changes you have made (or intend to make) in order to improve the social, economic and environmental impact of your proposal.