

# Diversity impact assessment

<b>TITLE</b> Name / description of the issue being assessed	Medway Red Routes schemes
<b>DATE</b> Date the DIA is completed	10/08/2023
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b> Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Ruth Du-Lieu – Deputy Director of Place
<b>1 Summary description of the proposed change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed?</li> <li>• How does it compare with the current situation?</li> </ul>	
<p>As part of the Safer, Healthier Streets programme, it is proposed to implement five red routes on key strategic transport links across the network. This involves replacing double yellow line restrictions with double red lines across the five routes. All formal parking bays on the routes are maintained. Installing the different restrictions will enable effective enforce of indiscriminate parking which will help to reduce congestion, create less delay on essential bus routes and improve road safety. The red routes proposals will support Council priorities and contribute to objectives outlined in the Local Transport Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting a safer, healthier, and more secure community in Medway by promoting active lifestyles and by reducing the risk of death, injury or ill health or being the victim of crime.</li> <li>• Supporting a healthier natural environment by contributing to tackling climate change and improving air quality.</li> </ul> <p>The first phase consists of the following five locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporation Street between The Esplanade continuing onto Star Hill</li> <li>• Star Hill between Corporation Street and New Road/City Way</li> <li>• Best Street between Union Street and Railway Street</li> <li>• The Brook between The Brook Theatre, Whiffens Avenue, and the junction of New Road (including Union Street)</li> <li>• A2 Rainham High Street between Maidstone Road and High Dewar Road</li> </ul>	
<b>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.</li> <li>• Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile</li> </ul>	

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Medway Council considered a potential list of locations across Medway as part of our wider transport plan to keep Medway moving. Creating safer, healthier streets, whilst improving air quality and promoting more sustainable transport.

Through the various workshops and public meetings during the development of the plan, key responses received regarding improving infrastructure capacity covered the following areas:

- Less congested roads and traffic flow improvements
- Road capacity has got to keep up with development
- Ensure that buses run on time
- Parking regulations enforced.

Road users, residents, and businesses were invited to take part in a public consultation regarding the introduction of red routes, which took place between 5<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023. A total of 900 survey responses were received across all five locations.

The following key findings have been identified through analysis of the consultation responses.

## **Potential positive impacts of proposed red routes:**

All five of the proposed red routes will help to contribute to the following positive impacts:

- A reduction in traffic congestion and keeping traffic moving will contribute to reduced vehicle emissions and improved road safety.
- Improving air quality and road safety will benefit all people in the protected characteristic groups but especially disabled people with chronic breathing conditions, older people, and children.
- The red routes will provide a safer opportunity to use more sustainable choices of travel and therefore encourage further use of this choice. This will benefit all people in the protected characteristic groups but especially those who are economically disadvantaged.
- The red routes aim to improve bus journey times and reliability, benefiting all people in the protected characteristic groups but especially, older people, disabled people and the economically disadvantaged.
- All formal parking bays on the routes are maintained as part of the proposals, so this will mean parity of accessibility to facilities for older people, disabled people and other groups who may rely on taxis or parking close to the town centre or other desired locations.

## **Potential adverse impacts of proposed red routes:**

From the consultation feedback there was several comments made in regards to each of the specific sites.

### **Corporation Street between The Esplanade continuing onto Star Hill:**

- Some respondents had concerns about access to Foord House (apartment blocks), particularly for the resident's car park which could impact on accessibility for disabled and older residents requiring parking near their home or use taxis.
- Some respondents had concerns about access and deliveries for Cloudsley House and Pullman House (residential and commercial) which could impact accessibility for disabled and older residents wishing to park near their homes or use taxis.
- Some respondents had concerns about access to parking at Rochester Train Station which could impact on disabled and older travellers, given that parking opportunities are limited at the station.

## **Star Hill between Corporation Street and New Road/City Way**

- Some respondents had concerns about red routes causing an issue for residents wishing to open/close driveway gate on the proposed routes. This could cause accessibility concerns for disabled and older people living on the red route.

## **Best Street between Union Street and Railway Street**

- Some respondents had concerns about access to Chatham Post Office and this could have an adverse impact on disabled and older people wishing to visit the post office if sufficient parking or drop off for taxi services is not available.

## **The Brook between The Brook Theatre, Whiffens Avenue, and the junction of New Road (including Union Street)**

- Some respondents had concerns that access to Chatham town centre would be impacted by the proposed route and this could have a potential adverse impact on disabled and older people wishing to visit the town centre.
- Some respondents had concerns about access to local businesses, including Brook Garage. Disabled and older people could be adversely impacted if parking near local businesses is not available.

## **A2 Rainham High Street between Maidstone Road and High Dewar Road**

- Some respondents had concerns about the impact on local businesses such as Greggs and Costa Coffee outside the shopping centre – this could have an adverse impact on disabled and older people wishing to visit these businesses.
- Some respondents had concerns about the impact on funeral operations at St Margaret's Church and this could have an adverse impact on disabled and older people visiting the church.
- Some respondents concerned about the impact of the route on the ability to drop off and pick up at the Rainham Healthy Living Centre, which could adversely impact disabled and older people.
- Some respondents had concerns about access to safe parking opportunities between Mierscourt Road to Ivy Street and this could impact adversely on disabled and older people.

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### 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	✓	✓	
Disability	✓	✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Marriage/civil partnership		✓	
Pregnancy/maternity		✓	
Race		✓	
Religion/belief		✓	
Sex		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Other (e.g., low income groups)		✓	

### 4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

**All groups** – The overall equalities impact of Red Routes is generally positive. By implementing red routes and preventing stopping and loading, the restrictions keep key routes moving and improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Other benefits include:

- Reduced congestion on key routes,
- Quicker, more reliable journeys,
- Less delays on essential bus routes,
- Improved road safety,
- Improved journeys for cyclists,
- Prevent illegal and unsafe parking and driving.

- Improved air quality and fuel efficiency because of decreased idling

Air quality exposure is worse inside of a vehicle than outside of it, so **all groups**, including those with protected characteristics, will benefit from increased active travel by lower exposure to poor air quality. They will also benefit from the other positives of active travel, such as the associated health benefits.

Implementing the Red Routes will therefore benefit **all groups** by improving air quality around the main network corridors in Medway.

**Age** – young children will benefit from reduced risk and exposure to both air pollution and road danger. [Data](#) on air quality shows that it is particularly harmful for children and elderly people. Children under the age of 12 have the [highest percentage](#) of pedestrian fatalities.

**Age** – older local residents who are at greater risk of experiencing negative health impacts of air pollution will benefit from reduced exposure to air pollution. [Data](#) on air quality shows that it is particularly harmful for children and elderly people.

**Disability** – Air quality exposure is worse inside of a vehicle than outside of it, so all groups, including those with protected characteristics, will benefit from lower exposure to poor air quality and improved road safety. They will also benefit from the positives of active travel choices, such as the associated health benefits.

**Deprivation** - 2023 research by The Runnymede Trust showed 20 per cent of the UK's most deprived areas experience some of the worst impacts of air pollution. Interventions like the introduction of Red Routes are, designed to reduce poor air quality, can help reduce the impacts of air pollution and advance equality, particularly with regard to public health outcomes.

Those who could be **negatively** impacted by the implementation of the Red Routes include:

**Age** – older local residents may be negatively impacted by the Red Route implementation as it could affect their access to parking, relatives/unofficial carers coming to care for them and accessing parking, and using taxis to be picked up and dropped off close to destinations near Red Route locations.

**Disability** – the Red Routes could have the potential to affect a disabled resident's access to their home or other destinations which may be within the Red Route area. This could be those who drive, use taxis/community transport or are driven by someone else. Section 5 includes recommendations for those with blue badges, Blue Badge holders will

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continue to be able to drop-off and pick-up passengers on Red Routes. Provided their badge is displayed clearly and they move off promptly.

Additional potentially negative impacts of Red Routes could include:

- Local businesses on the Red Routes: employees, visitors and suppliers loading or unloading at properties within the Red Route areas. There are current restriction in place which doesn't allow for this activity, however 5 additional formal bays are being provide to create a better solution.

**The mitigations identified for these in section 5.**

## 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Are there alternative providers?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

The following actions have been identified to mitigate against adverse impacts:

- Ensure timely and clear communications in preparation of the Red Route implementation and for signage and information once the routes are implemented.
- The introduction of 5 additional loading bays across the sites to enable easier access for businesses.
- Blue Badge holders will continue to be able to drop-off and pick-up passengers on Red Routes. Provided their badge is displayed clearly and they move off promptly, they will not be subject to a PCN.
- Signage will be clear and consistent across all sites, aligning with statutory guidance. Where relevant, signage decluttering could take place along these routes, with any old or redundant signage removed to reduce confusion.
- Potential site-specific exemptions have been identified and these will be finalised following further engagement with the relevant organisations.

## 6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Ensure communications regarding the introduction of the Red Routes is completed in a timely manner using plain English and offer all relevant materials in different languages and formats, as required.	TBC	TBC

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Ensure information is provided to Blue Badge holders regarding the Red Routes implementation in a timely manner	TBC	TBC
Clearly communicate intentions to implement the Red Routes to affected residents and businesses, as appropriate.	TBC	TBC
Ensure adequate warning period for first offences, to allow people to change behaviour.	TBC	TBC

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Three options have been considered:

Option 1: Do nothing. Option 1 is to keep the existing yellow line restrictions and to not take forward the red route proposal any further. In taking this option the benefits of red routes will not be realised including helping to manage the road network, improving safety and traffic flow at specific locations during key parts of the day. As part of the public consultation the majority of respondents reported experiencing congestion along the routes and more than a third of respondents reported experiencing dangerous or inconvenient parking.

Option 2: Implementation of consultation proposal. Option 2 is to take forward the proposed design as per the consultation. This would help meet the council policy to improve safety and reduce congestion across the road network by allowing more efficient traffic management, however there has been comments raised that this will impact on loading and unloading for some businesses.

Option 3: Implementation of proposal with changes to the design. Option 3 is to take forward the scheme to replace the existing yellow line restrictions with red lines however rather than a straight replacement of existing restrictions improvements will be made to incorporating feedback from the public consultation. This includes creating an additional 5 formal loading bays. The changes can be identified in section 5.

Option 3 is recommended to enable the benefits and mitigate against any negative impacts.

## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

**Assistant Director**

**Date**