

# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA)**

## **YATE TOWN IMPROVEMENT MASTERPLAN**

### **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

Consultation regarding the Yate Town Improvement Masterplan has been conducted and this EqIAA sets out a revised analysis of the equalities issues which pertain to the masterplan.

South Gloucestershire Council, along with its partners, has prepared a masterplan for Yate, which will set out the long-term vision for improving the town.

At the heart of the masterplan is a whole town approach set around the 6 themes of economy, movement, the town centre, happy health people, community and environment, set in the context of the climate change emergency; and a vision of the urban lifestyles and regeneration opportunities around Yate Station, Station Road, Western Gateway/industrial area, and the Town Centre.

The whole town approach is a contemporary vision that represents the town's next phase of growth, conditioned by the current context and future proofed in order to properly address the complex challenges that we face and help ensure sustainable growth and transport infrastructure investment. It is intended to reflect the desire of all stakeholders with whom we have jointly explored opportunities to identify the catalysts for change, and to meet stakeholder and community aspirations.

The masterplan aims to offer a compelling vision for the town and key areas, creating a vibrant and connected centre for Yate, that will help to unlock redevelopment and regeneration across the entire town, whilst balancing this against protecting and enhancing Yate's high quality natural and historic environment, and conserving its agricultural and natural hinterland.

The masterplan aims to create a new and dynamic identity for Yate, which addresses the towns future trajectory over the coming fifteen to twenty years. The objectives for Yate Town Improvement Masterplan respond to and redefine objectives set out in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy and the Vision for Yate outlined in its Community Plan.

The key to unlocking wider and comprehensive regeneration and transformation lies in the four key focus areas that the Masterplan defines; Station Road, Rail Station, Western Gateway/Industrial Estate and the Town Centre. The Masterplan defines a specific vision for each area in the belief they will once more prove to be catalysts for change and offers a number of development options that explore potential alternative future scenarios.

The Masterplan also aims to provide the evidence, vision and site-specific detail to inform the council's emerging Local Plan and approach to urban lifestyles. Finally, the purpose of the Masterplan is also to capture feedback and input from Yate residents and the wider community alike, about their ideas of the future of Yate. We have gathered this feedback during targeted sessions with key stakeholders, project review sessions with SGC officers, during a period of public engagement (Autumn 2020) and during the public consultation period (June – Sept 2021).

## SECTION 2 – RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

The regeneration of key areas within Yate including the town centre and the rail station will impact everyone who use these facilities. The protected characteristics most relevant are ‘Age’, ‘Disability’, and ‘Pregnancy & Maternity’, although all protected characteristics are clearly impacted.

Overall, the final Yate Town Improvement Masterplan sets an ambitious vision with clear regard for the experiences and needs of all protected characteristic groups. However, detailed aspects such as design issues and standards, which are often the level of detail that consider the needs of specific groups are not part of the Masterplan – these considerations will follow as projects arising from the master plan are implemented.

### Informal engagement stage Autumn 2020 - Winter 2021

Background evidence was collected and presented in a baseline report; a 6 week public engagement took place in Autumn 2020; and early engagement with groups including with older and disabled residents took place in February 2021. The Autumn 2020 engagement report can be found at [www.yatefuture.com](http://www.yatefuture.com). Feedback received during informal engagement is summarised below and shaped the draft masterplan prior to the consultation period.

What you said	How it has been reflected in the draft masterplan
<b>Town Centre</b>	
The shopping centre should be updated and have a mix of different uses in both the daytime and evening, including outdoor spaces to meet and more shops, restaurants and leisure facilities.	We have presented three options (see page 10 of the consultation brochure) to transform the town centre into a vibrant mixed-use area, with new public spaces, pedestrian friendly streets and a newly located leisure centre.
The town centre should be easily accessible by car and bus and for people with additional needs.	The options for the town centre see the bus station redesigned as a multi-modal transport interchange providing options for those arriving on foot, by bicycle or by car. There are also proposals for improved pedestrian crossings and new walking and cycling routes to and within the town centre.
Construction in the town centre needs to be phased and any disruption should be communicated in advance.	Our options for the town centre focus on the long-term future of the town, with a gradual development and transformation over the next 15-20 years. We are not yet at the stage of planning timings for construction, but it will be communicated with the public in advance.
<b>Railway Station and Surrounds</b>	
There is support for having a greater mix of facilities at the railway station and in the surrounding area.	We have presented two options for the railway station and surrounding area (see page 12) to make the station a destination in its own right. Both options have a new station building with facilities, such as shops and places to eat, and space in the area for new residential and commercial buildings.
The railway station should be made more accessible.	Both options for the railway station would improve connections to the station for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and cars, including taxis. The new station buildings would provide accessible access to platforms via lifts, in addition to steps for pedestrians.
The railway station needs to be made safer.	Both options for the railway station would mean that there would be more people in the station throughout the day and evening, and that platforms are more visible from the new station facilities, are well lit and have CCTV.
<b>Industrial Estate</b>	

The masterplan should create space for the next generation of businesses.	The proposals for the industrial estate include space for new businesses, start-ups and co-working. There would be a mix of land use to encourage a range of activities across the industrial estate, such as retail and gyms, to make it a more attractive place to work and socialise.
There is support for carbon neutral and sustainable practices.	The proposals for the industrial estate include access to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, and sustainable waste management and recycling. A new tree-lined boulevard would divert heavy traffic and provide safe pedestrian footpaths. There would also be electric vehicle charging points and a dedicated bus route from the railway station.
<b>Station Road</b>	
Reducing traffic congestion along Station Road.	There is an aspiration in the masterplan to reduce traffic on key routes such as Station Road to enable the reallocation of road space and provide an opportunity for other users and uses (such as cycle lanes, community spaces, climate change mitigation and biodiversity). This would allow residents and local communities to gain back some of the space that has been lost to cars and heavy goods vehicles.
There should be adequate parking for shops and businesses.	The masterplan seeks to find a new off-road parking area for Station Road and free up spaces in front of shops and businesses for spill out spaces and to enable pedestrians and cyclists to easily see into shops.
There is support for improving pedestrian facilities, such as pavements and crossings.	The vision for Station Road includes having adequate space for pedestrians on both sides of the road, including space for buggies, wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc.
<b>Movement</b>	
The frequency of buses, bus links, the location of bus stops and the quality of bus shelters should be improved.	The masterplan seeks opportunities to make trips by bus faster, more convenient and more reliable. It also proposes improvements to bus shelters to provide shelter from the weather with attractive and comfortable seating, as well as the potential to create green roofs to enhance biodiversity.
The availability of cycle lanes and connections for cyclists should be increased.	The Movement Vision for the masterplan seeks to capitalise on Yate's compact size to transform opportunities for cycling trips by providing safe and convenient routes and high-quality cycle parking.

### Public consultation period June 2021 – September 2021

The public consultation period ran between Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June and Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September. Diverse groups were contacted to inform group members of the launch of the public consultation period. This included those in more isolated and rural areas, gypsies and travellers, young people, disabled people and people from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic (BAME) groups. In total, 77 representatives were contacted via email and / or telephone to encourage group members to participate in the public consultation process. Appendix A shows the list of groups contacted.

A number of representatives confirmed that they had distributed the engagement materials and circulated the dedicated masterplan website to their network in order to invite all group members to provide their feedback using their preferred contact method.

Consultees were able to feedback via email, telephone, on-line at the dedicated webpage, telephone, face to face at events, or via on-line events. Offering a mixture of on-line sessions and face to face events were designed to ensure they were accessible and enable those who wished to meet the team and ask questions to attend. This was especially important in light of Covid 19 concerns residents may have felt.

Profile of respondents:

31% of respondents were over the age of 65.

44% identified as male, 46% as female, 0.8% selected 'other', and 9% selected 'prefer not to say'.

79% of respondents said they did not consider themselves to be disabled. 11% identified as disabled. 10% selected "prefer not to say".

The table below are the key themes raised during the public consultation and these are incorporated in the final masterplan.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>What you said</b>	<b>How it has been reflected in the final masterplan</b>
Parking provision	Strong opposition to a perceived reduction of car parking spaces throughout Yate, including the Town Centre and Railway Station and Surrounds focus areas.	The masterplan's aim is for future transformations to integrate parking spaces within buildings, not reduce them. The plan will not set out future car parking standards. The ambition is to reduce car dependency in Yate over time. As the masterplan proposals are brought forward, car parking provision will be determined based on levels of demand and access requirements and this specifically includes blue badge parking.
Supporting infrastructure	Concern that Yate's transport network and community cohesion will struggle with the town's growth, due to lack of supporting infrastructure (e.g. schools, libraries etc).	Yate's movement vision is for the transport network to meet future growth thanks to more and better walking and cycling routes and facilities, as well as improved public transport. Wider community infrastructure is delivered through the planning process for new development, however the masterplan vision helps support infrastructure to cater for the growth and development of Yate.
Community needs	General sense that the masterplan is prioritising short-term economic gain for developers (housing and business units) over long-term community needs.	The masterplan will ensure that existing community facilities are enhanced rather than negatively impacted.  A masterplan needs to be viable, which means public and private investment should jointly help achieve the ambitions set out in it.
Needs of elderly and disabled people	Perceived lack of consideration for the elderly and mobility impaired.	From the start, the masterplan has put people first. Examples include its aim to provide a healthy environment in addition to opportunities and facilities for all ages and abilities. Health facilities, other public services and shops will remain in the centre which are easily accessible by car, public transport, or walking.  Improving access to places and spaces for all users of the transport

		<p>network is the key principle which underpins all of the proposals outlined in the Masterplan. As changes to the transport network come forward to support the redevelopment of the focus areas, consideration should be given to designing to better enable all users, including those with specific mobility needs. These could include users of mobility scooters, mobility aids or wheelchairs, those with visual or hearing impairments, those with small children or those carrying heavy shopping for instance.</p> <p>In line with the ‘people first’ pillar of the movement vision, the masterplan will provide additional focus on needs and accessibility for elderly and disabled people. For example, wider footways with flat surfacing for improved accessibility in the focus areas, appropriate levels of high quality, enforceable blue badge parking in key locations etc.</p> <p>Ensuring a focus on disability and accessibility at all stages benefits everyone. For each scheme coming forwards, we will conduct accessibility audits and consult directly with disabled and older people to ensure high levels of accessibility in all aspects of design.</p>
<p>Reallocating road space</p>	<p>Concerns relating to reallocating of road space on key routes for community space, biodiversity, development, and priority for other modes of transport.</p>	<p>No specific locations have been identified within the masterplan for the reallocation of road space.</p> <p>Road space reallocation will be considered by co-design and engagement with local communities and driven by the ‘people first’ approach and sustainable movement strategy.</p>
<p>Perceived future loss of retail and leisure activities in the town centre</p>	<p>Concerns the masterplan options will result in a loss of shops and leisure facilities, such as the cinema, in the town centre.</p>	<p>The masterplan’s aim is to keep, improve and grow the services, facilities and activities that support the town centre. Those services and facilities, together with a quality public realm and an improved town centre, where more people live and work, will help retain and strengthen the existing retail and leisure offer. The masterplan will remain flexible to respond to changing retail trends. The aim is to ensure a strong vibrant mix</p>

		of uses in the town centre and as many shops and facilities as possible. There is no intention to reduce the leisure centre offer.
Bus station relocation	Support for keeping the bus station in its current location due to proximity to shops. Central location benefits community well, particularly elderly and disability passengers.	The masterplan will retain the bus station in its current location, with improved facilities and services, but not preclude future relocation in the longer term to enable improved levels of accessibility and services.
Homes	Concerns over having flats in the town centre, particularly high-rise flats, and the impact this will have on the character of the town centre. And the need to ensure there are active frontages at ground level in the town centre.	<p>The current local character of Yate, its heritage, type of homes, heights and density are all a reference for the masterplan to ensure that proposed new homes build on and also enhance and improve that character, guided by design guidelines and principles. Medium height buildings equate to 5/6 storeys, which could provide meaningful scale and massing to the new public spaces, whilst retaining the existing surrounding character of Yate. And ensuring active frontages at ground level in the town centre.</p> <p>The number of new homes and the height of buildings will be considered through future design guidelines for the town centre and will not be included in the masterplan.</p>
Leisure centre relocation	Support for keeping the leisure centre in its current location, partly due to the centre recently being refurbished.	The leisure centre can be retained in its current location and is compatible with future transformation, although future relocation is not precluded in the longer term, reflecting that the leisure centre will soon reach its life span of 50 years.
Relocating essential services	Concern relating to the perception that the masterplan will lead to the relocation of existing public services (e.g., banks, post offices, minor injuries unit) out of the town centre.	The masterplan's aim is to keep, improve and grow public services and facilities in the town centre.
Station Road	Perception that the masterplan proposes the closure of Station Road to traffic. Opposition to the reduction of car parking along Station Road, with concerns measures to improve the cycling and walking offer would result in further loss of car parking spaces and a loss of trade for businesses along Station Road.	The aspiration within the masterplan for Station Road will be for a primary and fully segregated cycle route to tie into wider connectivity in the town and neighbouring settlements. The masterplan will also highlight that road space reallocation will be considered and driven by co-design and engagement with local communities, which includes finding alternative parking spaces where needed in support of businesses and residents.

### SECTION 3 - IDENTIFICATION OF DISPARITIES, IMPACTS AND ISSUES

The protected characteristics most relevant are ‘Age’, ‘Disability’, and ‘Pregnancy & Maternity’, although all protected characteristics are clearly impacted. The masterplan is clear that accessibility is a fundamental part of ‘good design’ and results in positive impacts for everyone.

Key equalities issues have been considered throughout, including during the vision and options engagement phase and in the final masterplan. The masterplan aims to ensure everybody, regardless of protected characteristics, can get to where they need to and move around conveniently and safely and as identified, specifically identifies the accessibility as a fundamental factor.

The engagement and consultation undertaken gave an opportunity for individuals and groups representing the needs and requirements in relation to protected characteristics to have their say.

Specific issues raised by all respondents through the engagement and consultation periods are included within the tables in section 2. It also includes how this feedback has been reflected in the masterplan.

### SECTION 4 - ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

As stated, ensuring a focus on disability and accessibility at all stages benefits everyone. For each future project arising from the masterplan, we will conduct accessibility audits and consult directly with disabled and older people to ensure high levels of accessibility in all aspects of design.

### SECTION 5 - EqIAA OUTCOME

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and Justification
Outcome 1: No major change required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Equalities groups have been engaged with throughout and feedback considered and the final masterplan has been revised in-line with feedback.</p> <p>As projects from the masterplan arise at the next stage of the project, detailed aspects such as design issues and standards, which are often the level of detail that consider the needs of specific groups, will be identified through accessibility audits and direct engagement, paying particular attention to ensuring engagement with disabled and older people.</p>
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## **SECTION 6 - EVIDENCE INFORMING THIS EqIAA**

Yate masterplan baseline report (March 2020)

Yate Town Improvement master plan, Autumn 2020 engagement output report (December 2020)

Yate vision and options report (May 2021)

Yate Masterplan consultation report (October 2021)

Yate Town Improvement Masterplan (November 2021)

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – List of groups contacted.