Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to –

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther, Equity and Community Power Manager at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Civic Quarter Project – Market Square

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
https://cambridgecivicquarter.co.uk/ Committee report – 29th January 2024 Committee report – 21st November 2024 Cabinet Report - 25th September 2025

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
The Civic Quarter project considers the future of three key Council assets: The Guildhall, the Market Square and the Corn Exchange. There are three primary objectives for the project. 1. Creating a more attractive central Cambridge destination for residents that would increase visitor numbers for the market, the Corn Exchange, and businesses in the area 2. Enhancing revenue streams across theses three sites and reducing operational costs to ensure we can preserve services that our residents need and value most 3. Helping the council to meet its net zero carbon by 2030 target.

This EqIA focuses on the Market Square element of the wider project.

The project will be delivered in phases with the Council having the opportunity to review outputs at key gateways before commitment to subsequent phases. The current phase relates to the completion of RIBA Stage 4 (technical designs) and updated business case and business plans. We are seeking approval from Cabinet and Full Council to proceed to the construction phase (RIBA Stage 5) in 2027.

The scheme received planning permission and listed building consent in September 2026

RIBA is a widely recognised framework established by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for Construction work. They organise the process of managing and designing construction projects into eight easy-to- understand stages.

Market Square

A vision for the Market Square was agreed by councillors in 2022 following consultation in 2021. This consultation showed support for changes to the Market Square to make it a more accessible, attractive, welcoming, exciting and safe place to visit, shop and gather both during the day and into the evening.

The designs have evolved with discussion with key stakeholders including, Market Traders, Historic England, Accessibility groups, Police, Highways Authority and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service, as well as two periods of community engagement in May 2024 and June 2025.

The investment in the Market Square will create a vibrant, accessible, and welcoming space that supports a thriving seven-day market. The goal is to boost long-term economic and social value for the city, enhance sustainability, and improve the experience for traders, visitors, and residents alike.

Key features of the New Market Design (at end of RIBA Stage 4)

- The redesigned market provides a total of 97 stalls, consisting of: -
- Fixed lockable stalls (43): Permanent stalls, with set up flexibility depending on trader use, providing secure trading space with integrated power, lighting and solar panels on roofs.
- Open stalls (12): Permanent open-fronted stalls providing a traditional market trading environment, with green sedum roofs.
- Semi-permanent stalls (18): Fixed into ground sockets but capable of being removed seasonally or adapted for alternative uses.
- Demountable stalls (24): Flexible stalls that can be erected and removed as required to accommodate seasonal demand, special events and changing market needs.
- New market stalls will be provided with integrated power and lighting, alongside improved trader facilities, refurbished basement trader toilets, enhanced storage, upgraded utilities, and underground waste and recycling facilities.
- Accessibility improvements include re-laid historic setts, improved step-free access, accessible seating, enhanced lighting and wayfinding, and accessible toilet provision for Market Traders.
- The historic fountain will be retained and refurbished as a central feature, complemented by new seating, parasols, landscaping and lighting. While it will not be operational initially, ducting will be installed to enable future reinstatement without further excavation.

- Enhanced CCTV, integrated security measures and public realm improvements will help ensure the Market Square remains safe, welcoming and accessible while preserving its role as Cambridge's commercial, civic and social heart.

The final designs also include an accessible shared surface approach surrounding the market. While vehicular access for blue badge holders and emergency vehicles is maintained.

Whilst the market is being refurbished a temporary market will be put in place, There has been extensive engagement with Market Traders and the temporary market locations are proposed for St Mary's Passage, Guildhall Street, Petty Cury, Sidney Street, Fisher Square, and King's Parade and Sussex Street. The arrangements for the temporary market have been through various pre-application discussions including the Colleges, Universities, major retailers, Highways, Police and Fire Services. A planning application was submitted in early August, and it is expected to be considered at Planning Committee in December.

Project Timetable

September 2026 – Planning and Listed Building consent approvals

October 2026 - Report to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet seeking approval to proceed to construction phase.

November 2026 – Full Council approval to release project funding and enter into works contract

December 2026 – Planning Committee considers Temporary Market Planning Application

March 2027 – Start on site and commence setting up the decanted temporary market

March 2028 – Completion of works and traders return

Start dates are subject to confirmation

4. Responsible team
Development Team, Economy & Place Group

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? **(Please tick all that apply)**	☒ Residents ☒ Visitors ☒ Staff

There are a wide range of stakeholders that will be affected

- General public and residents
- Market Traders
- Surrounding businesses, including Arts Theatre, pubs & restaurants and shops
- Cambridge University as they own many buildings close by
- Visitors to the City centre

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?	☒ New ☐ Major change ☐ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)	☒ Yes ☐ No

The project will be managed by the Development Team; Place & Economy Group and the Assistant Director (Development) is the Sponsor.

There are several subject matter experts from across the Council that will feed into the project, particularly from City Services (Markets Management), Property, Procurement, Policy, HR, Customer Services, Cultural Services, Transformation, Greater Cambridge Planning Service, Democratic Services, Economic Development and Communications

External partners include the County Council (including Highways) and the Combined Authority, Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire Police.

The Council's project team will work alongside a Design Team/Consortia led by Cartwright Pickard Architects. Their design team includes communications consultants, Engage Communicate Facilitate (ECF), as a key partner throughout the project.

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Committee report – 29th January 2024
Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Committee report – 21st November 2024
Cabinet - Cabinet Report - 25th September 2025

There was an overarching report that went to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in October 2022 on the Council's Future Office Accommodation Strategy.

The next reports to Cabinet will be in November 2026 and Full Council in November 2026 seeking approval to proceed to the construction phase (RIBA Stage 5) from January 2027.

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

Market Square

A comprehensive engagement programme was delivered by ECF (the comms lead in the Design Team Consortia) for the Civic Quarter project in May 2024 and they reached out to several community and accessibility groups as part of the developing of concept designs as part of the RIBA Stage 2 work. The engagement outcomes report was published on the Council's website and informed the developing design.

- A further round of Community Engagement took place in May 2025, and Community Engagement took place in May 2025 and the outcomes report published in August 2025

There have also been meetings with the Designing out Crime Officers and the Council's Community Safety team throughout the design work in relation to perceptions and realities of using the market square at different times of the day and night and what would improve it.

- Previous consultation and engagement work on the Market Square improvement project, which included capturing information on the protected characteristics of those that responded.
- The Market Square Project was discussed at the Equalities panel on 21 January 2020

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Community engagement

- In the 2024 engagement, the age groups with the largest number of respondents were people aged between 65-74 (21%) and people aged between 45-54 (21%).
- In the 2025 engagement, the age groups with the largest number of respondents were people aged between 65-74 (20.6%) and people aged between 45-54 (18.8%), 10.7% of respondents were aged between 16-34.

Views from school children and young people were captured by:

- a focussed workshop on the Market Square for students from North Cambridge Academy with the Council's Planning Youth engagement service in 2025.
- a youth workshop with the Kite Trust in June 2024.

Feedback from young people included improving the CCTV and spaces between stalls to reduce anti-social behaviour, enhancing the greenery and installing additional flowerbeds. Increasing the number of cultural activities and improving the cleanliness.

Impacts

Impacts for workers on the Market Square (Council workforce and Market Traders) and visitors (local people and tourists)

- People will feel safer, and ability to safeguard children and adults at risk may be improved, due to:
  - Improved sightlines
  - Improved lighting
  - Improved CCTV
  - Retained Help call points
  - Security patrols when there are planned evening activities in the square
  - Additional staffing in the Markets & Street Trading team

Impacts more specifically for visitors (local people and tourists)

Currently the market stalls are close to each other and are not aligned. This makes it difficult to move around, especially for older people who may be more likely to have visual or mobility impairments due to the setts and the general layout of the space and not having clear through-routes. Also, especially for very young children who are more likely to have reduced mobility. There will be improved access between stalls and stall alignment. The setts will also be removed, levelled and re-laid to improve accessibility on the Market Square. Street furniture, such as tables and chairs, needs to be uncluttered so that people can move around them with ease if they have low mobility, are wheelchair users or mobility scooter users. Traders need to ensure that their stalls do not 'overflow' into the through ways so that it doesn't reduce mobility. Moreover, there will be a variety of seating options available, including some with arm rests and backs. Covered seating will provide shade whilst people rest, certain disabilities (and medications) can mean that people need to rest more often, feel the cold or heat more. Signage will be pictorial and written – considering needs of people with visual impairments (likelihood increases with age) and for people with dementia.

The market square and the public realm design ensures better management of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrian using the space. This will help to improve overall safety of pedestrians, including children who might not be as wary of risk of cars and bikes.

(b) Disability

Community engagement

Community Engagement 2024

The community engagement carried out in June 2024, the feedback has reinforced the areas across the Civic Quarter that need attention and improvement. 17% of respondents have physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.

Respondents strongly advocated for improved pedestrianisation and better accessibility for people with mobility issues. Specific suggestions included smoother pavement surfaces, more drop-down kerbs, and additional disabled parking spaces with easier access to pavements. The project team also met with CamSight during the detailed design process.

Impacts

Improvements relating to physical safety and crime

- Between June 2024 and May 2025 there were 217 crimes on or around Market Hill (an average of 18 per month with just over 5 being related to violence or sexual offences). Violent crime can cause injury leading to disability. Moreover, people with disabilities maybe subject to hate crime. Safety from crime has been considered in the designs relating to:
    - Improved sightlines in general when the market is in use and at night where there will be a proportion of stalls that are demountable so removing obstruction
    - Improved lighting
    - Improved CCTV
    - Retention of existing Help call points
    - Security on site when there are planned evening activities reducing risk of harm associated with nighttime economy

- Lockable security doors for the permanent stalls to prevent people using these as hiding places for ASB

Blue Badge parking

The existing Blue Badge Parking spaces are not to current standards. Although the number of spaces will not increase, they will be repositioned and the sizing will meet the standards. This will be a benefit to people with disabilities.

There will be futures changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) that apply to the following areas:

Market Square
Expansion of existing restrictions to include Sunday.
• No motor vehicles, except for permit holders including City Centre disabled access users (for user with a higher level of need) and Dial-A-Ride bus service between 10am-4pm Monday-Sunday.
• All other Blue-Badge holders can access outside of 10am-4pm Monday – Sunday.
• No designated Blue-Badge bays, but Blue-Badge holders can park within the Market Square for up to three hours, including on single or double yellow lines where no loading restrictions are in place or loading access is not obstructed. As per the concessions of the Blue-Badge scheme.

Peas Hill
Key change in location of Blue-Badge spaces within Peas Hill and requirement for all Blue-Badge holders to apply for a TRO permit. Three Blue-Badge space, designed to meet current standards, to be provided in Peas Hill, perpendicular to the carriageway, with accessible space hatch markings provided around the bays in line with standards. Blue-Badge drivers would need to apply for a permit to access the area due to the new TRO. Unlike the Market Square, this would be for all Blue-Badge users and not only those with a higher-level of physical need. Similar scheme to Mill Road Bridge.

Guildhall Street Key change: Two Blue-Badge spaces to be provided in Peas Hill, one perpendicular to the carriageway, with accessible space provided around the bay, one parallel to the carriageway. Both provided in line with standards. Upgrade on existing parallel provision which is not in line with standards. Blue-Badge drivers would need to apply for a permit to access the area due to the new TRO. Unlike the Market Square, this would be for all Blue-Badge users and not only those with a higher-level of physical need.

Corn Exchange Street
Potential future TRO restricting general traffic through Corn Exchange Street/ Wheeler Street/Bene't Street including requirements for all Blue-Badge holders to apply for a TRO permit.

When the new TROs are introduced, there will be a communications campaign to advise the public and blue badge holders on the changes. It should be noted that blue badges are awarded to an individual rather than a vehicle and as such the driver of the vehicle might not be aware of the specifics of the TRO.

Accessibility when moving around the area

- Historic setts – the proposed mitigation to make the setts more level will improve access for people with low mobility, wheelchair users (both self-propelling and powered), and people who use mobility scooters (either their own or those using the Shopmobility service that is available in Grand Arcade nearby). Currently the setts are in poor condition and the steep gradients on cross-falls and linear lengths reduces accessibility and increases risk of trip hazard.

- An accessible Market Trader only toilet at street level will benefit Market Traders who have visible or invisible disabilities. For visitors to the market square, accessible toilet provision is provided at Lion Yard and in the Grand Arcade. There will also be a Changing Places toilet in The Guildhall provided as part of the Civic Quarter programme that will benefit disabled people.

- Street furniture, such as tables and chairs, needs to be uncluttered so that people can move around them with ease if they have low mobility, are wheelchair users or mobility scooter users. Traders need to ensure that their stalls do not 'overflow' into the through ways so that it doesn't reduce mobility.

- Covered seating will provide shade whilst people rest, certain disabilities (and medications) can mean that people need to rest more often, feel the cold or heat more. Moreover, different types of seating will be provided including some with arm rests and backs. Additionally, seating will be designed so that disabled people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters are able to sit next to others and have the same views.

- Signage will be pictorial and written – considering needs of people with visual impairments (likelihood increases with age) and for people with dementia.

- Improved lighting will also be of benefit to people with visual impairments.

- Consideration will need to be given to the visual and textural contrast in surfacing around the Market Square. Guide Dogs may not recognise the different colours as a danger to their person, people with some forms of dementia see darker colours as holes in the ground.

- Consideration needs to be given to the cycle routes through the Market Square due to the potential for conflict between disabled people and cyclists.

(c) Gender reassignment

Improving safety from hate crime

The renovation of the market square may help to improve feelings of safety at night for transgender and gender variant people who may be at risk of hate crime. Safety at night was a concern raised by attendees at the Youth Workshop held with the Kite Trust as part of the summer 2024 engagement programme. People who are/have undergone Gender Reassignment may feel more safe and secure due to:

- Improved sightlines in general when the market is in use and at night where there will be a proportion of stalls that are demountable so removing obstruction
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing Help call points
- Security on site when there are evening events on the stall reducing risk of harm associated with nighttime economy
- Lockable security doors for the permanent stalls to prevent people using these as hiding places/ for ASB

Provision of market trader toilet facilities

- The design for the trader's basement toilets allows for 4 self-contained toilets (toilet, sink and hand dryer), It is proposed that 2 are designated as universal toilets and 1 each assigned to Male and Female. There is also an above ground accessible toilet for Trader use. This approach is based on market trader feedback; however, we will keep this under review and the final determination how the toilets will be gendered will be made once the Council's approach to the EHRC code of practice is set in November 2026.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

Market Square

If the Guildhall becomes a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships the external areas of the Guildhall on Peas Hill, Guildhall Street, and Market Square may become spaces that people wish to be photographed – such as the front of the main steps to the Guildhall, outside of St Edward King and Martyr Church, Great St Mary's Church, around the refurbished fountain in the Market Square.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

People who are pregnant or have young babies may feel safer and more secure due to:

- Improved sightlines
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing Help call points

The proposed mitigation to make the setts level will improve access for people pushing prams/pushchairs, walking with children who are learning to walk.

Seating and shading will provide parents with places to sit and rest, enjoy food and drinks with their babies and young children.

Consideration needs to be given to the cycle routes through the Market Square due to the potential for conflict between pregnant women, people walking with children, and pushing prams and pushchairs and cyclists.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Market Square

The market provides a very diverse range of service offer suited to diverse community and cultural backgrounds, and the city gets many visitors from all over the globe who might use the space.

Community Engagement 2024 Most survey respondents (74.2%) identified themselves as white which correlates with the 2021 census data (74.5%).

Community Engagement 2025

The outreach engagement programme focussed on deprived wards within the city, pop up events at supermarkets and in the Market Square.

There were very few respondents that identify themselves as Black or Asian, which is disproportionate to the make-up of the city. There was no specific mention of issues facing different cultures in the engagement feedback. There was a general reference to anti-social behaviour in the Market Square

Workers on the Market Square (Council workforce and Market Traders) and visitors to the market and space as a public venue (local people and tourists) of all ethnicities are more likely to experience hate crime, and as such may feel safer and more secure because of:

- Improved sightlines
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing Help call points
- Security on site when there are evening activations/events reducing risk of harm

(g) Religion or belief

Market Square

The market will continue to offer a wide variety of stalls and is an inclusive trading space with an ethnic diversity of stallholders, especially in terms of cuisine that bring broad appeal

The Markets team have reviewed their balance of trade policy to ensure that the market remains a vibrant space with a range of stalls.

The design supports multicultural events and civic gatherings, particularly with the potential for an enlarged civic space on quieter trading days

Workers on the market square (Council workforce and Market Traders) and visitors to the market and space as a public venue (local people and tourists) of all religions and beliefs may feel safer and more secure because of:

- Improved sightlines
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing Help call points
- Security on site when there are evening activations/events reducing risk of harm

(h) Sex

Market Square

The Cambridge Civic Quarter Phase 3 engagement report (August 2025, prepared by ECF) shows that the 216 people responded to the question about gender. 50.9% of the respondents were female whilst 44.4% stated they were male. In addition, eight people stated that they prefer not to say, and two people said they were non-binary.

Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) shares the different aspects of the CCSP's work for the public, which includes the **Purple Flag award** achieved since 2019 for an inclusive and safe offer for the city relating to the night-time economy. The changes improving the safety of the Market Square at night will be beneficial in supporting the city's Purple Flag status.

All women and girls accessing the market square may feel safer and more secure from gender-based violence (including sexual harassment/violence and domestic abuse incidents) due to:

- Improved sightlines in general when the market is in use and at night where there will be a proportion of stalls that are demountable so removing obstruction
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing call points
- Security on site when there are planned evening activities in the square or extended trading hours, reducing risk of harm associated with nighttime economy
- Lockable security doors for the permanent stalls, outside of trading hours, to prevent people using these as hiding places/ for ASB

Market Traders

The design for the trader's basement toilets allows for 4 self-contained toilets (toilet, sink and hand dryer), It is proposed that 2 are designated as universal toilets and 1 each assigned to Male and Female. There is also an above ground accessible toilet for Trader use. This will have a positive impact for gender reassignment and non-binary and gender fluid people. We will keep this under review and the final determination how the toilets will be gendered will be made once the Council's approach to the EHRC code of practice is set in November 2026.

(i) Sexual orientation

LGBTQ+ people experience anti-social behaviour and hate crime. A youth workshop with the Kite Trust provided additional feedback particularly around anti-social behaviour in the Market Square and suggested the need for increased CCTV. Changes proposed to the Market Square that may improve safety of LGBTQ+ people include:

- Improved sightlines in general when the market is in use and at night where there will be a proportion of stalls that are demountable so removing obstruction
- Improved lighting
- Improved CCTV
- Retention of existing Help call points
- Security on site when there are evening events on the stall reducing risk of harm associated with nighttime economy
- Lockable security doors for the permanent stalls to prevent people using these as hiding places/ for ASB

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

The space is being designed to allow for spontaneous community led free events to take place and entertainment in the form of buskers will continue. There is also the potential to hold or host events that are part of the Equality and Diversity programme and for temporary public art projects to be displayed which can help capture a wider audience and include people who may not otherwise engage with these events where they are in an enclosed/ booked space.

The diverse market offer provides quality produce at affordable prices for those on low incomes, which will continue to be a consideration in working with and hiring of stalls to market traders in line with the Council's balance of trade policy.

Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) shares the different aspects of the CCSP's work for the public, which includes the **Purple Flag award** achieved since 2019 for an inclusive and safe offer for the city relating to the night-time economy. The changes improving the safety of the Market Square at night will be beneficial in supporting the city's Purple Flag status for all equality groups.

Intersectionality

See the section relating to age for impacts that relate to older people with disabilities.
Not all disabled people are born with the disability, with the majority of disabilities developing as people age due to accident, health conditions, frailty due to aging.

Democratic right to protest and raise awareness

The market square is seen as a key point for demonstrations and protests. These may be against Council policies, Government policies and strategies, global events. This can include raising awareness about issues that relate to people's core beliefs and identity.

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)
Update EqIA at the following project milestones Review at 6 monthly stages whilst progressing through the construction phase and particularly at commissioning/handover of the refurbished Market back to the Council.

12. Do you have any additional comments?
No

13. Sign off
Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Paul Boucher (Capital Project Manager), Civic Quarter Project Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Helen Crowther, Equity and Community Power Manager Graham Lewis, Community Equity Officer Tim Jones, Market and Street Trading Manager Date of EqIA sign off: 1 October 2026 – amended to dates – 22 October 2026 Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: **June 2027** Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: Click here to enter text.

All EqIAs need to be sent to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk