

# 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](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto: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 – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024](#)

[Committee report – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024](#)

## 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 these 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 3 (detailed designs) and updated business case, business plans and preparation for the submission of a planning application in autumn 2025.

*The 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. We are currently at Stage 3 – Design refinement prior to a planning application.*

## **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 concept and detailed designs have evolved with discussion with key stakeholders including, Historic England, Market Traders, Police 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 3)**

- Increased number of fixed market stalls from 27 to 44 and an increase in the total number of stalls from 91 to 96 providing the same square metreage as the current market
- Retention and refurbishment of the Listed Fountain with it becoming the centre piece of the refurbished Market Square
- Omission of the proposed large canopy and introduction of large removable parasols around the fountain
- Trees introduced around the fountain to provide shelter, shade and increase biodiversity
- Increase in the number of cycle parking spaces
- Modernised toilets and storage lockers for traders
- Accessible toilet and above ground accessible storage

A flexible space is proposed to allow the Market Square to operate as a Civic Space as well as a Market. The 7-day Market will remain the main purpose of the Market Square, these proposals will allow other functions to happen on quieter days or into the evening, events that will complement and support the market not work against it. The proposals show the southern side of the market utilising 52 demountable stalls, with 44 fixed, secure stalls to the north.

Retaining and refurbishing the existing fountain on the market making it the community and social hub of the Market Square with seating, trees and removable large parasols.

The proposal for a smaller canopy, within the fixed stalls, over a new seating area (lockable out of hours) as set out in the 2025 Community Engagement has been removed from the

final design. The revised layout of the stalls provides better sight lines and internal circulation space; the area of fixed market stalls will be secured by gates in the evening responding to feedback about antisocial behaviour.

The proposals also include an accessible shared surface approach surrounding the market. While vehicular access for blue badge holders and emergency vehicles are maintained, the shared surface approach promotes and prioritises greater pedestrian use, while addressing issues of motorised scooter use around the square.

### **Markets Business Plan**

In the business plan that has been developed to make the case for investing in the market, there is the option for the Market to trade until 10pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, to increase an evening presence. The business plan sets out the requirement to include employing evening security on these days and overall, in market management, will ensure the presence of more staff to help deter ASB during the day.

### **Project Timetable**

The project outputs for RIBA stage 3 are listed below, together with indicative dates for future project milestones.

January 2025 - Detailed stage 3 design work commences

May 2025 – Community Engagement

Autumn 2025 – End of Stage 3 report to Cabinet

Autumn 2025 - Submission of a planning application (subject to Cabinet decision)

Winter 2026 – Approval to enter a works contract

TBC – First handover of completed works.

## **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

The design work for this phase (up to RIBA Stage 3) included community engagement and stakeholder workshops and consultation on the detailed designs, which were delivered between 12 May – 22 June 2025.

**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 Property, Procurement, Policy, HR, Customer Services, Cultural Services, Transformation, Greater Cambridge Planning Service, Democratic Services, Economic Development, City Services 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 – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024](#)  
Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - [Committee report – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024](#)

The next report to Cabinet will be in September 2025, which will set out the outcomes of the RIBA stage 3 detailed design work and recommendations setting out the next phase of the project and the submission of a planning application.

**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, as the part of the shaping of the detailed design work. A multi-layered approach to reach different audiences was deployed including:

- Workshops and drop-ins were hosted at the Guildhall and local community halls.
- Targeted sessions engaged youth groups, market traders, and the Council's Access Officer and Camsight.
- Digital engagement included over 5,675 unique visits to the consultation site, social media campaigns, and local media coverage.

A full report will be published later in September 2025 but the headlines have been [published](#).

There have also been meetings with the Designing out Crime Officers and the Council's Community Safety team during Spring 2025 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.
- [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 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 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.

The Riba Stage 3 designs take all of this into account (details on CCTV are set out below). The designs also include plans to plant more trees, as opposed to flower beds per se, for greater impact on environmental sustainability and creating sheltered space for users of the square. Cleanliness will be improved through the subterranean bins next to Market Street and the space will 'feel' cleaner due to dismountable stalls and clear sight lines.

## **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 on site when there are evening events in the square

### **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 dropped curbs, cobbles 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 raised and levelled more 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 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 feedback also highlighted the need for more ramps, flat walking areas, and accessible public facilities. This feedback and more improvements, and other impacts relating to disability are set out below:

## **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 may be 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 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

### **Blue Badge parking**

Blue Badge Parking will still be provided that will be of benefit to people with disabilities, and provision around the Civic Quarter will increase from 5 to 6 spaces.

There will be proposed 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**

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 spaces to be provided in Peas Hill, perpendicular to the carriageway, with accessible space 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.

**Guildhall Street** Key change: Requirement to apply for requirement for all Blue-Badge holders to apply for a TRO permit. Maintenance of two Blue-Badge spaces as existing. 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** Key Change: Provision of new Blue-Badge space in existing loading bay and requirement for all Blue-Badge holders to apply for a TRO permit. Provision

When the new TRO's 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. The setts on the market square are listed so levelling off setts will be tested in an area in Peas Hill where setts are not listed to see if this will successfully improve accessibility.
- Accessible toilet at street level will benefit Market Traders and Council staff 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 may need to be given to the colouring of paving and the road – 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 toilet facilities**

Currently the proposed design for the basement toilets for traders use, at the request of women traders, are not gender neutral, so designated as Male or Female. In light of the Supreme Court decision, the Council could revise this given that the only alternative is an above ground accessible toilet, and the current design features self-contained cubicles.

#### **(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

## **(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 stage 3 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

## (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.

The Council has received funding and carried out improvements to sight lines, CCTV, lighting and safety call points to enhance safety and security. This has had an impact for improving safety of women using the space at night.

**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 evening events on the stall 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

## (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\\_159kt25q](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25q)).**

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 EqlA accordingly.)**

Update EqlA during 2026, as part of the development of the technical design and post planning application decision.

**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

Date of EqlA sign off: 27 August 2025

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: **May 2026**

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**All EqlAs need to be sent to [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk)**