

The Seam Digital Campus Blueprint

Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1 Details of the proposal

Name of service

PLACE

Directorate

Economic Development

Name of officer responsible for EIA

Helen Tate

Name of senior sponsor

Paul Clifford

Description / purpose of proposal

The Council has developed a high-level blueprint, which is a flexible plot based development plan that includes core principles for the expansion of The Seam Digital Campus (Existing Courthouse car park)

Future High Street Funding has been awarded for the period 2021-2024 to deliver site infrastructure (utilities, highway & drainage) which will enable future residential on the site. The funding will also deliver a new active travel hub, consolidation of parking in a multi-storey car park and new areas of public realm and greenspace.

Date EIA started

01/12/21

Assessment Review date

01/03/22

Stage 2 - About the proposal

What is being proposed?

The current 920 space Courthouse car park will be re-developed to expand The Seam, Barnsley's Digital Campus. Phase 1, which will be delivered on the lower Courthouse site, will include a new 376 space MSCP, Active travel hub & enabling infrastructure delivered using Future High Street Funding and BMBC

match funding. There are also plans for private sector residential development on phase 1. This development is subject to further design development, planning and Cabinet approval.

Why is the proposal required?

The Courthouse car park is a key town centre site linked to Glass works. The current surface parking is an inefficient use of a prime town centre site. Re-development of the site, by reducing and re-providing parking in a new multi-storey car park will support key objectives in bringing forward high quality town centre living and expanding the Seam Digital Campus, contributing to growth in digital jobs and skills.

What will this proposal mean for customers?

The customers include immediately adjacent stakeholders (DMC tenants/Barnsley College staff and students) and those using the current car park facilities.

Stakeholders will initially see a reduction in parking across the site during the construction of works, but longer term will benefit from improved pedestrian and cycle access through the different levels of the site, improved public realm and greenspace offering opportunity for relaxation, improved pedestrian experience and outdoor spaces for use during the working day. Active frontages will help to deal with anti-social behaviour issues.

Current parking customers will see a reduction in the number of available spaces as lower Courthouse will need to close for development. In line with the parking strategy, improved management of parking spaces across the town centre, including the new 500 space Glass Works car park will mean customers are re-directed.

Alternative provision for disabled access parking spaces (currently next to the Courthouse pub) will be explored as part of the wider town centre parking strategy.

New customers for the site will include residential occupiers of the new housing and potential new business customers on site who will benefit from an improved offer.

Use the Preliminary screening questions (found in the guidance) to decide whether a full EIA is required

☒ Yes - EIA required (go to next section)

☐ No – EIA not required (provide rationale below including name of E&I Officer consulted with)

Yes

Stage 4 - Scoping exercise - What do we know?

Data: Generic demographics

What generic data do you know?

We know that historically (pre-pandemic) the existing car park is well used and have evidence to support this, including occupancy data and peak times of use.

Pre-pandemic, during the week there was a high proportion of BMBC staff and College staff that use the site. Post Covid there is likely to be a reduction as staff as working patterns have changed and the Council no longer require staff to work from town centre offices 5 days per week.

At a weekend this car park is used heavily by shoppers. The site also provides a number of accessible parking bays that are close to the town centre.

The Councils parking surveys have been monitoring occupancy since Sept 21. Current occupancy of this car park (March 22) is on average 500 users per day and whilst it is difficult to predict what a 'return to normal' would look like, given so many Town Centre office workers now work from home or plan to do hybrid working. There is on average over 1400 empty spaces during the week (including 800 shopper and 600 commuter spaces) and over 1100 empty spaces on weekends.(including 500 shopper and 600 commuter spaces)

Data: Service data / feedback

What equalities knowledge do you already know about the service/location/policy/contract?

Limited equalities knowledge about the existing site and its use, with the exception of use of accessible bays. However recent consultation will enable us to get a better understanding of current users. The site connects to the town centre. Access between the 2 levels (Upper and lower Courthouse) is via a sloped access road at each end of the site.

Data available on the tenants within the two BMBC owned and operated Council buildings on the site.

Data: Previous / similar EIA's

Has there already been an EIA on all or part of this before, or something related? If so, what were the main issues and actions it identified?

No previous EIA - Extensive public consultation was undertaken as part of The Glass works consultation, which also includes new buildings and public realm. Previous consultation information will be shared with design team at the appropriate stage of design development.

Data: Formal consultation

What information has been gathered from formal consultation?

The vision for the Digital Campus was as a result of the 'Tech Town's' vision for Barnsley. The Tech Town programme included engagement with key stakeholders, including businesses from the DMC, Council Officers, Barnsley College and the University, as part of an action planning network to improve digital business opportunities in the town centre.

Policy BTC21 Courthouse Campus in the Local Plan, which was subject to public scrutiny and consultation. In the Local Plan it allows a range of uses aimed to consolidate and build on the success of recent developments within the District. It also requires the creation of a new multi-storey car park, a new public park, and enhanced public spaces. This was developed further by the Arups Town Centre Regeneration Plan which identified the site as a key priority.

As part of the work undertaken by BDP on the blueprint a series of stakeholder workshops were undertaken with businesses within the DMC, Council Officers, Barnsley College, Barnsley Design Panel and members from the Tech Town team around the vision for the site.

There has been no formal consultation with the public on the blueprint, as this is high level and requires further design development.

Arcadis with the aid of BDP have been appointed as the professional design team who will develop the design further to a point where the Council can tender the works for further design development, planning approval and delivery. Consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning submission for each element of the site, starting in January 2022.

Two public consultation exercises on the proposals for Phase one of The Seam have been undertaken, to draw out key concerns and engage with the community and stakeholders. This is in addition to internal BMBC consultations through design workshops and Local Plan consultation on this site.

The first consultation undertaken 14th-23rd January focused on the Active Travel Hub (ATH) proposals, with 129 complete and partial responses. This was primarily aimed at cyclists and current users of the ATH, and disseminated accordingly.

The second was the general, public consultation on plans for Phase one of The Seam, encompassing questions on all the key elements and principles for the site and gathering data on current and potential usage. The public consultation was undertaken 1st – 28th February 2022. An interim analysis of the data has taken place (due to this report concluding before the close of the consultation), with 501 complete and partial responses as of 13th February 2022. Responses before this date were incentivized with a prize draw and online sessions for Q&A.

A report of findings will be produced to feed into the next stage of design.

Stage 5 - Potential impact on different groups

Considering the evidence above, state the likely impact the proposal will have on people with different protected characteristics

(state if negative impact is substantial and highlight with **red text**)

Negative (and potentially positive) impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.

Protected characteristic	Negative '-'	Positive '+'	No impact	Don't know	Details
Sex			x		
Age	x				The location of the new MSCP will result in a longer walking route into the town centre. This could impact on older people that are not as mobile.
Disabled <i>Learning disability, Physical disability, Sensory Impairment, Deaf People, invisible illness, Mental Health etc</i>	x	x			Removal of disabled parking bays on lower Courthouse could impact those with a physical disability. The new public realm will be accessible to all, including a ramped access to improve connectivity between upper and lower levels
Race			x		
Religion & Belief			x		
Sexual orientation			x		
Gender Reassignment			x		
Marriage / civil partnership		N/A	x		
Pregnancy / maternity			x		

Other groups you may want to consider

	Negative	Positive	No impact	Don't know	Details
Ex services			x		
Lower socio-economic			x		
Other ...			x		

Stage 6 - BMBC Minimum access standards

If the proposal relates to the delivery of a new service, please refer to the Customer minimum access standards self-assessment (found at)

If not, move to Stage 7.

Please use the action plan to be taken to ensure the new service complies with the minimum access standards. Reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Not yet live

- ☐ The proposal will meet the minimum access standards.
- ☐ The proposal will not meet the minimum access standards. –provide rationale below.

Stage 7 – Action plan

To improve your knowledge about the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: community engagement with affected groups, analysis of performance data, service equality monitoring, stakeholder focus group etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
Analysis of consultation data from the Glass Works scheme to feed into the design brief information	Helen Tate	31.12.21
Review of consultation undertaken in Jan/Feb 22	Helen Tate	31.03.22

To improve or mitigate the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: altering the policy to protect affected group, limiting scope of proposed change, reviewing actual impact in future, phasing-in changes over period of time, monitor service provider performance indicators, etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
Review the provision of disabled access parking spaces (new Glass Work) & explore requirement to re-provide on site if required	Dale Sparks	31.08.21
Full individual EIA to be undertaken on the following design elements as they are progressed: MSCP/ Active Travel Hub/ Public Realm	Helen Tate	2022/23

To meet the minimum access standards . . . (if relevant)

Actions could include: running focus group with disability forum, amend tender specification, amend business plan to request extra 'accessibility' funding, produce separate MAS action plan, etc.

Action we will take	Completion date

Stage 8 – Assessment findings

Please summarise how different protected groups are likely to be affected

Summary of equality impact

Disabled and elderly groups could be negatively impacted by closure of town centre parking spaces. Review of existing disabled access car parking provision and review of the Glass Works Public realm design consultation and recent consultation on The Seam to inform design development

Summary of next steps

Review impact on disabled access car parking provision
Provide summary of consultation on Glass Works Public Realm and The Seam to appointed designers taking the scheme to RIBA 3.

Signature (officer responsible for EIA) Date

Helen Tate

**** EIA now complete ****

Stage 9 – Assessment Review

(This is the post implementation review of the EIA based on date in Stage 1 if applicable)

What information did you obtain and what does that tell us about equality of outcomes for different groups?