

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Decision on the proposal by BT to permanently remove 42 public phone boxes around the borough	
Directorate: Planning Regeneration and Transport	Service area: Planning and Building Control
Lead person: Rachel Overfield	Contact number: X 54746
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
Decision on the proposal by BT to permanently remove 42 public phone boxes around the borough

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3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		x
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		x

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

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If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

(think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

BT have informed us they are not consulting to remove any public payphones that fall within the parameter of those with a social and reasonable need.

These will remain and have been identified as being:

- *Located in suicide hotspots.*
- *A payphone near a coastline where there's no other within 400m.*
- *The payphone is the only one within 800 metres (this is the distance you can expect to walk to find a motorway emergency phone - not provided by BT- and are spaced at approximately 1,600 metre intervals).*
- *The payphone has had at least 120 calls made from it in the last 12 months.*
- *There are more than 500 households within 1 kilometre of the payphone (obviously very rural areas without households or mobile signal will still be protected by the overriding social need criteria).*

who is likely to be affected

There may be residents who have limited access to mobile phones and land line connections, particularly those on low incomes and elderly people.

The criteria set out in the Communications Act 2003 and the Council's internally derived criteria as set out below have been used to assess phone box removal. The Council has considered whether to support or object to the proposed public phone box closures based on the internally derived criteria as follows:

- *Whether phone boxes are recorded as having had 52 or more calls in 12 months (this is equivalent to one call per week which is considered to be a reasonable level of usage).*
- *Whether phone boxes are close to areas where highways injury*

incidents have been recorded.

- Whether sites are located in areas at high risk of flooding.
- Whether phone boxes are in areas with a high level of population over 75 years of age, is in an area of below national average home ownership and has fewer than 50 properties within 400 metres.

consultation and engagement

Two periods of public consultation took place on the proposed closure of the 42 phone boxes:

20 July to 16 August 2020.

7 September to 7 October 2020.

• **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

Negative impact - It is considered many households now own at least one mobile phone. An Ofcom study found that mobile services are now seen as essential or important for most consumers to access voice calls and text based communication, except for older consumers who continue to rely on landline for voice services. The criteria for phone box assessment includes consideration of areas with a high level of population over 75 years of age in one of the criteria for phone box assessment (Whether phone boxes are in areas with a high level of population over 75 years of age, is in an area of below national average home ownership and has fewer than 50 properties within 400 metres).*

Positive impact - Some phone boxes may attract antisocial behaviour. Their removal may be seen as a positive benefit to all the community. Public consultation can highlight any objections or support for closure.

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https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/40231/affordability_report.pdf

• **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact)

Carry out public consultation. Recommend Council applies local veto to prevent closure for phone boxes that meet local criteria or for which there is strong local opposition.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:

19 August 2020

Date to complete your Equality Analysis:

19 August 2020

Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Rachel Overfield Planning Officer
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5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Ryan Shepherd	Senior Planning Officer	19 August 2020

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	19 August 2020
Report title and date	The Delegated Officer Decision Report will be submitted to Simon Moss, Assistant Director – Planning, Regeneration and Transport
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Between 14 to 21 October 2020
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	19 August 2020