

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.

Service update of the Library Strategy 2021 – 2026 and Action Plan 2020-2022 for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs.

Directorate: Regeneration & Environment

Lead person: Zoe Oxley

Contact number: 01709 334283

Directorate: Regeneration & Environment

Service area: Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs

Is this a:

☒ **Strategy / Policy** ☐ **Service / Function** ☐ **Other**

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The IPSC report “Service update of the Library Strategy 2021 – 2026 and Action

Plan 2020-2022 for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs” updates the Improving Places Select Commission of the progress made against the Library Strategy 2021-2026 and the associated action plan 2021 – 2022. The report sets out how the Strategy and new service offer in enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory duty under the Public Library Act and meet the needs of the community through the delivery of the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Service.

The report sets out the following recommendations -

1. Note the progress made against the Library Strategy 2021-2026 and the action plan.
2. Note the progress made on the development of the new Central Library
3. Note the progress made on the transfer of Brinsworth Library to Brinsworth Community Trust, supported by Brinsworth Parish Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
4. Note the progress made on the relocation of Thurcroft Library from Thurcroft Junior Academy to the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall site utilising the approved libraries capital allocated.
5. Note the progress made on the implementation of self- service technology in order for customers to access library sites independently.
6. Acknowledge the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Library and Neighbourhood Hubs service.

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?	✓	
Could the proposal affect service users?	✓	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		✓

Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	✓	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	✓	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?	✓	
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

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?**

Yes, an Equality Analysis has been produced and the appropriate approvals received.

- **Key findings**

The Service has created an action plan which is being developed and maintained as the service evolves, to address areas for improvement, and where we need to widen access and make the customer base more diverse. This will link into the wider strategic agenda of the Council.

As well as having an exceptionally high rate of customer satisfaction, currently the Service is engaging well with the following key areas: Females borough wide, White British people, Those who do not declare themselves as disabled and the following age groups: 4-11, 26-40, 41-65 and 65 and over.

Further work is required in order to engage better with the following; Males of all ages, borough wide, BAME, Disabled People, Ages 0-3, 12-17 and 18-25.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions <p>A robust action plan has been developed to address the areas where following analysis, the service is falling short in terms of engagement. It is envisaged that the Service will work with the wider Council and community/voluntary partners to focus on this utilising cross cutting agendas including Thriving neighbourhoods, Health and Wellbeing agenda, Building Stronger Communities vision and the Creative Recovery Programme.</p> <p>It is important to note that on 23rd March 2020 the UK entered the first national lockdown as a result of Covid-19, which saw an immediate closure of library sites across the borough. Throughout the last eighteen months there has been a range of operating conditions from full and partial closures to normal service resuming. During these challenging times the Library service has continued to provide a range of opportunities for Rotherham's residents to engage with its services, supporting vulnerable communities, reducing isolation and increasing participation. Services have been adapted to ensure that libraries were accessible either digitally, outdoors or face to face</p>	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	6 th March, 2019 onwards
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	08 th October 2021
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Aileen Heggie Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs Service Manager, Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Eling	Policy Officer	08/10/2021
Zoe Oxley	Acting Assistant Director. Head of Operations and Business Transformation	08/10/2021

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	08 th October 2021
Report title and date	Service update of the Library Strategy 2021 – 2026 and Action Plan 2020-2022 for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Improving Places Select Commission report – 2 nd November 2021
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	15 th October 2021

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics 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. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Library Strategy 2021-2026	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 18 th August 2020	
Directorate: Regeneration & Environment	Service area: Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs
Lead Manager: Zoe Oxley	Contact number: 01709 334283
Is this a: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify 	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Zoe Oxley	RMBC	Head of Operations and Business Transformation
Gillian Moss	RMBC	Operational Manager
Gina White	RMBC	Operational Manager

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope

The new Library Strategy covers the period 2021-2026. Since 8th July 2019, Rotherham libraries have undertaken extensive public consultation and engagement to inform the content within the new five-year Library Strategy.

The new Strategy sets out the direction of Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs during this period of transformation, aiming to meet the Council's statutory duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service for all those wanting to use it (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964), while at the same time implementing the necessary cost efficiencies. As part of the launch of the new strategy the service must consider implications of a revised service offer and how the library service better exercises the Public Sector Equality Duty in line with the new strategy.

Libraries are for everyone and the service is committed to ensuring that Rotherham libraries are inclusive and engaging with all sectors of the community, including people with protected characteristics. The priority is to ensure that all residents are able to enjoy the benefits of Rotherham's Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs. More groups and partner organisations are using the local community library as a valuable local base for their activities.

The financial pressure on the Council budget has not lessened, however, Capital investment has been approved for the existing 14 neighbourhood sites to a value of £1.4m and in a new site for the Central Library currently anticipated to require investment to a value of £5.7m.

Following the public consultation and engagement between 3rd February 2020 to 26th April 2020, a final analysis report has been written.

The key finding of the future of libraries consultation was the 83% of respondents agreed with the new vision for Rotherham Libraries and 79% agreed with the proposed core offer.

The priorities of the service are aligned to the wider Culture, Sport and Tourism (CST) service and as such, Libraries contribute to the cultural strategy outcomes, whereby a programme of cultural and artistic activities and events will be delivered to provide everyone with the opportunity to enjoy some form of creative experience.

Diversity and equality go hand in hand with the arts and culture, as they encourage individuals from every background and ability to realise their true potential therefore contributing to citizens artistic and cultural talent.

The Arts Council England 'Creative Case for Diversity' is a way of exploring how arts and cultural organisations and artists can enrich the work they do by embracing a wide range of influences and practices. The Council believes that libraries are a critical link between Rotherham communities and the wider cultural agenda. The location of libraries within the heart of communities affords the ideal platform to develop this piece of work.

Libraries occupy a position of trust within local communities, with a customer base which strongly values local proximity and the diverse offer which is available. The thriving neighbourhood strategy works in tandem with a library service offer within a neighbourhood setting which allows the service to tailor community activities with the demographic of each specific community where it is located. In doing so, this has contributed to a current customer satisfaction rating of 99% which is advantageous in contributing to a wide range of agendas

In addition, Libraries play an important role in supporting health and wellbeing. For vulnerable and inactive people, libraries can assist to re-motivate individuals to go outside and walk to their local library, giving purpose to their 'daily exercise'. Reading has been proven to be beneficial to mental health, and libraries have been developing work in this field, recognising that, particularly for people with low-level mental health issues (depression and anxiety), libraries offer a source of solace, respite and self-help. For this latter group, safe engagement with the physical world is an important part of reducing social isolation.

In considering how the service can better exercise the Public Sector Equality Duty it is important to consider this in relation to staff, customers, the complete library offer and the library buildings. The way in which libraries can incorporate this is as follows;

Staff: We will ensure that staff and volunteers are broadly representative of the community we serve. This may mean changes to current processes, and the way in which staff are currently recruited will be challenged and made more inclusive of those with protected characteristics. We therefore need to adopt new ways of working and engage with current staff to ensure they are comfortable and proactive in working alongside all sectors of the community, inclusive of those that may be different to them such as those with protected characteristics.

A training programme will be explored as part of staff induction which highlights the principles of equalities in the libraries and the workforce as a whole, and how the library offer reflects this. Staff will also complete the mandatory equalities training. It is important that staff and volunteers understand the importance of how those with protected characteristics should feel and that their needs are considered. All staff should be acting as allies and advocates to ensure that equality is our core business.

Customers: The Council's Customer Access Strategy explains how we will meet customer needs and demands using our resources most effectively and make sure all our customers have access to services irrespective of their circumstances. It outlines how we will strengthen customer relationships, improving experience and increasing satisfaction by continuing to work closely with our customers to ensure their needs are met. Libraries will be proactive in working to engage people who are non-users, particularly those with protected characteristics. Libraries have recognised that there is under-representation in terms of males, young adults and BAME individuals, and are working to improve this over the timeline of the strategy.

Libraries are currently collaborating with Early Help as part of the Kiveton Park Library capital project. The Early Help Service proposes to use the library in a variety of ways and for a range of purposes; with a key objective of maintaining a presence in the Kiveton Park locality, as this is important to the children, young people and families within the community. Libraries can capitalise on this partnership by engaging with their clients that wouldn't normally attend libraries and therefore ensure that residents, particularly those under-represented in our services, are involved in decision-making about our activities and services moving forward.

The Offer: Libraries will ensure that the book stock, resources and activity programmes are inclusive and diverse, and that we include books written by people with protected characteristics. It is important that books and other resources are available in diverse formats to address sensory impairments or language barriers. It is also important to focus efforts on underrepresented groups within the service to understand their needs and embrace their requirements to ensure libraries are attractive to everyone. Libraries will work over the five-year strategy to ensure that artists, partners and organisations that we collaborate with are diverse and committed to widening and diversifying engagement. Targeted events, projects and activities will be co-designed in collaboration with the very people we are seeking to work with.

Library Buildings: All Library venues and activities will be accessible to all including those with protected characteristics. The location of libraries was considered as part of the extensive public consultation and engagement carried out to inform the Library strategy. Where it has been identified that buildings could be better placed, libraries will adapt their location either by relocation or co-location (if a refurbishment to improve physical accessibility is not possible) to enhance the libraries position within the community. Libraries will use their position within the neighbourhood to deliver activities, with events such as Fun Palaces, which will support our community to create with, by, and for themselves. Libraries will help to develop local networks, linking individuals and organisations, encouraging staff and partners to co-create with local people, and help small groups to shout about their value as grassroots community activists. It is also important that libraries work in tandem with Fun Palaces and other arts organisations to shine a light on and value everyone's existing creative skills and activities and connect people to people and organisations to collaborate for change in their communities. Libraries will work with other Council services, community and voluntary sector partners to harness the support we need to make Rotherham libraries make the most of local strengths and assets, including individuals' abilities.

What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

As a key element of the Library Review, a three-phase consultation was carried out.

An initial Assessment of Local Need describes local needs for a library service, including the general and specific needs of adults and children who live, work and study in the borough. It provides data to inform the consultation and subsequent Library Strategy.

The first phase of consultation in respect of developing a future service delivery model was carried out in April 2019, followed by consultation on more detailed proposals in May 2019, followed by the final phase of consultation and engagement in April 2020. Detailed proposals

were shared, including identification of potential improvements to services and efficiencies, in the context of a refreshed Library Strategy.

The following data is available on existing library users which has been obtained from the Library Management System. This information is collated monthly for all sites. By using this data we can make a comparison against the overall Rotherham population in terms of how well we are engaging with those in the community with protected characteristics. This allows us to identify if there is a fair representation within our local libraries to reflect the population by area. By identifying these areas for improvement, the service will target the key gaps within the local community and formulate an action plan to address these as part of the Library Strategy.

Age Profile Users Vs Population

Table 1	2019-2020		
		Active %	Registered %
	Age 0-3	2.10	3.97
	Age 4-11	17.73	27.46
	Age 12-17	10.44	6.68
	Age 18-25	8.44	4.21
	Age 26-40	20.95	13.92
	Age 41-65	24.17	20.48
	Age 66+	16.17	23.27

Table 1 breaks down the number of both registered and active borrowers by age. When we compare this to the overall population of Rotherham by age we can recognise where Rotherham libraries members are lacking in terms of age group.

Based on Rotherham as a whole, 19.3% of the population are aged under 16. Rotherham East has the highest proportion of 0-15 year olds at 25.4% (higher than the England average of 19.1%). When we compare this to the same age group in Table 1, we can see that our active members aged between 0-17 is 30.27%. This highlights that Rotherham Libraries engaging above the average in comparison to the overall population. However, we can see by the above breakdown that 17-25 age group is where the level of users decrease. This highlights an area for improvement. As Rotherham strives to become a child centred borough, libraries are well placed to engage with children and young people, making a significant contribution to giving children the best start in life.

When we make this same comparison with regards to those aged 65 and over. We know that 19.4% of the Rotherham population are aged 65 and over with this age group steadily increasing. Anston and Woodsetts Ward has the highest proportion of residents aged 65 and over at 26.3% (higher than the England average of 18.0%) When we compare this same age group of 66+ in Table 1 we can see that 16.17% are active users of Rotherham Libraries, with a proportion (65 year olds) falling in to another category.

The demographic profile of Rotherham indicates that the borough has an aging population,

and there is a demand for library services from the 66+ age group at 22.7% active usage. The Library Service is ideally placed to support older people to live independently and help them to remain actively engaged in their community. Libraries can and do enhance the quality of older people's lives, especially around reducing isolation and increasing socialisation.

Gender Profile

Table 2

2019-2020		
	Registered (%)	Active (%)
Male	41.34	37.47
Female	57.86	59.79
Unknown	0.79	2.74

Table 2 demonstrates that there are more females both registered and active library users in Rotherham than there are male. When this data is compared to the UK national statistics for Rotherham, we can clearly see that this is not a fair representation of the gender split in the borough. We therefore acknowledge that this is an area for improvement and targeted work on engaging with Rotherham males will be carried out as part of the Library strategy. It is important to note that Rotherham libraries are engaging above average with an excellent percentage which is more than that of the Female Rotherham population.

Males	Females
49.2%	50.8%
130,564 persons	134,847 persons

*sourced from UK National statistics for Rotherham

Ethnicity Profile

2019-2020		
	Registered (%)	Active (%)
White	64.89	65.59
Black or Black British	1.53	1.14
Dual Heritage	0.39	0.45

Table 3

Asian or Asian British	4.09	3.08
Other	1.81	1.00
Chose not to disclose	27.30	28.74

When considering the ethnic profiles of Rotherham libraries in terms of Registered and active users, these are predominately from a white background. Targeted work is required in order to better engage with BAME individuals and communities.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public services to avoid discrimination on the grounds of race and religion or belief. Rotherham's population is not homogenous and people with different cultural identities may have different needs or require different approaches to service provision. Changes in international migration patterns have a significant effect on the composition the minority ethnic population and the growth of new migrant communities which in turn can have an impact on demand for local services.

When we compare the overall Rotherham population of those who identify themselves as from a black and minority ethnic group, we know that they make up 8.1% of Rotherham residents (any group apart from white British) in the 2011 census. This compares to making up 5.67% of active library users or 7.82% registered users.

In Rotherham the BAME population is 20,842 people. The BAME population doubled between 2001 and 2011 and continued to increase to an estimated 27,500 or approximately 10.5% of the population in 2016 (latest RMBC estimate). We acknowledge that 1.1% of the population in Rotherham report that they cannot speak English well or at all. This is 2,712 people. This compares with 1.7% for England, and 1.6% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Therefore, Rotherham libraries will adapt new ways of how we can engage with this group so that they don't miss out on the opportunity to utilise their local library through the use of voluntary organisations such as REMA or Clifton Learning Partnership that enhance the engagement with this sector of the community

When considering the BAME Rotherham population figures against those of Table 3, the figures show that we need to do more to engage with those outside of the White British category. Percentage of BAME population by Ward can be found below:

Percentage of BAME Population by Ward:

Ward Name

BME Population 2011

Anston and Woodsetts	2.1%
Boston Castle	36.8%
Brinsworth and Catcliffe	6.2%
Dinnington	3.6%
Hellaby	2.7%
Holderness	3.4%
Hoover	2.9%
Keppel	2.7%
Maltby	3.0%
Rawmarsh	4.2%
Rother Vale	3.4%
Rotherham East	29.7%
Rotherham West	21.7%
Silverwood	3.4%
Sitwell	11.5%
Swinton	2.4%
Valley	7.5%
Wales	3.1%
Wath	3.6%
Wickersley	2.9%
Wingfield	4.1%

In relation to the demographic profile, 8.1% of the population belong to ethnic groups other than White British (6.4% are from non-white groups), well below the UK average of 20.2%. It follows that 91.9% of Rotherham residents are White British.

The Library Service has a central role in co-ordinating and facilitating learning activities to our BAME communities, reducing exclusion and encouraging participation. Support is given to foreign language speakers and to those who wish to improve their English language skills. Cultural events are organised and supported, especially at Mowbray Gardens Community Library, which serves the area with one of the largest populations of BAME residents in the borough.

Disability Profile

Table 4

2019-2020		
	Active %	Registered %
Self-declared disabled	1.34%	3.76%

Table 4 demonstrates the figures collated from library users when asked whether they consider themselves disabled. The number of active borrowers who consider themselves disabled is small compared to the overall total number of active borrowers for Rotherham

libraries.

Many factors influence health and wellbeing over the course of a lifetime. The whole system for health and wellbeing is focused around achieving positive health outcomes for the population and reducing inequalities in health. Wingfield has the highest percentage of residents who self-report their health to be bad or very bad at 10.2% of the overall Rotherham population, which in comparison to Rotherham Libraries active users is considerably low and work needs to be done in order to better engage with residents.

Living alone can also impact on the health and wellbeing of a person. Many older customers say that a visit to a library helps to reduce social isolation, therefore it is worth noting the percentage of pensioners living alone and how Libraries can impact and improve their Health and Wellbeing. Within Rotherham 31.9% of pensioners live alone, or 14,286 people. Anston and Woodsetts has the lowest proportion of pensioners living alone at 24.4 %. Rotherham East has the highest proportion at 39.8 %.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

By making the comparison of data from the library management system and Rotherham's demographics overall, we have identified several areas where the number of library users with protected characteristics is lower than that of the representation for Rotherham's population overall. This analysis has allowed Rotherham libraries to recognise the sectors that are underrepresented as part of Library users.

Whilst there are areas that we can clearly see Rotherham Libraries are engaging well such as Females, Children 0-11 and Over 65's, it also indicates that there are groups which could be targeted to ensure Rotherham libraries widen access in order to make the customer base more diverse. These include BAME Individuals, young people aged between 12-25 and those that identify as male. We can also see that the sector that self-declare themselves as disabled is also an area to focus on.

Whilst we know where we have gaps in representation, we still need to learn more about how best to engage and cater for these sectors. Part of our approach involves aligning our needs with other Council departments, such as Early Help and RoSIS to engage with young people, and Adult Social Care in relation to disabled people. This also means strengthening the contribution we can make to the wider strategic priorities of the Council. We can also support other partners in the voluntary and community sector, such as working with Places Leisure to engage men, with the co-located library at Maltby providing an ideal opportunity to reach male users of the leisure centre. In turn we can enable Places Leisure to reach women who might not otherwise engage with their services, in turn helping to increase levels of physical activity which can improve health outcomes in the borough.

Whilst we have reasonably good data about library usage related to age, sex, disability and ethnicity, we know less about engagement related to: gender reassignment, sexual orientation, faith, 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.

As part of the library strategy over the next five years Rotherham libraries will develop and deliver a robust action plan as to increase our understanding of the issues experienced by people who hold these protected characteristics. We will work to address under-representation in usage and in our workforce across all Rotherham libraries. Our Equalities Impact Assessment EIA Action Plan is a starting point, identifying men, disabled people, young people and BAME sectors as those parts of the community who are currently known to be least-engaged. The expectation is that this work will be rapidly followed up by plans to engage with those who may be less visible, and therefore more disenfranchised.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

To ensure the service is monitoring the impact of the Library Strategy and how this impacts on those with protected characteristics, it will be imperative that the quarterly monitoring arrangements that we currently have in place to check against the corporate Key Performance Indicator's are broken down further to allow the service to see how it is meeting the needs of those with protected characteristics.

The service currently reports on the following:

- Customer satisfaction
- Visitor numbers
- Active borrowers

We will work with the performance team to monitor this. This can also be explored when looking to implement self-service technology in libraries to gather data around those utilising the service.

The EIA Action Plan will be integrated with the wider Action Plan for the delivery of the Library Strategy. Progress will be monitored:

- Monthly reports to the Culture Sport Senior Management Team
- Performance reports to Directorate Leadership Team
- Quarterly monitoring as part of the Year Ahead/Council Plan
- Quarterly updates to the Cultural Partnership Board.
- Via Personal Development Reviews with Library Managers and staff

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Extensive public consultation and engagement has now ended. The service received 1507 responses overall from public, partners and stakeholders.

Please see below the breakdown by protected characteristics for each of the consultations. For those that opted not to respond or left this blank, the numbers are not accounted for.

The BAME column indicates anyone that falls outside of the White British category.

- **01/04/19 – 30/04/19 – 385 responses**

Category	Gender	Age Range	BAME	Self-reported disabled
No. Of persons.	Female 243 Male 127	Under 16 – 9 16-25 – 22 25-34 – 39 35-44 – 77 45-54 – 69 55-64 – 74 65+ - 83	67	51

- **03/06/19 – 14/07/19 – 665 responses**

Category	Gender	Age Range	BAME	Self-reported disabled
No. Of persons.	Female - 423 Male - 207	Under 16 – 8 16-25 – 28 25-34 – 73 35-44 – 123 45-54 – 94 55-64 – 121 65+ - 186	50	100

- **03/02/20 – 26/04/20 – 365 responses (Library Strategy)**

Category	Gender	Age Range	BAME	Self-reported disabled
No. Of persons.	Female - 227 Male - 108	Under 25 - 10 25-34 – 24 35-44 – 71 45-54 – 61 55-64 – 68	14	43

		65+ - 106		
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• **03/02/20 – 26/04/20 – 88 responses (Brinsworth Community Managed)**

Category	Gender	Age Range	BAME	Self-reported disabled
No. Of persons.	Female - 64 Male - 17	Under 25 – 5 25-34 – 14 35-44 – 22 45-54 – 20 55-64 – 15 65+ - 9	2	6

• **25/06/20 – 09/07/20 - 4 responses (extended Library Strategy)**

Category	Gender	Age Range	BAME	Self-reported disabled
No. Of persons.	Female - 1 Male - 3	Under 16 - 4	2	-

Please see the Report on the Consultation Findings for further information.

Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Consultation has taken place with key managers and staff throughout the process and drop-in sessions/workshops were held for staff as follows:

- 8th July 2019 - Riverside House
- 11th July 2019 - Swinton Library
- 12th July 2019 - Aston Library
- 28th November 2019 – Riverside Gallery
- 9th December 2019 - Greasbrough Library

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The following table gives a breakdown of all the characteristics that Rotherham libraries currently retain with regards to active and registered library users:

Sector:	Area for Improvement
Male	Yes
Female	No
White British	No
BAME	Yes
Disabled	Yes
Not Disabled	No
0-3	Yes
4-11	No
12-17	Yes
18-25	Yes
26 – 40	No
41 – 65	No
66 and over	No

The Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Strategy is intended to fulfil the statutory requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all who want to use it.

It presents the following as fundamental to our service offer:

- Libraries Connected nationally accepted Universal Offers: Reading, Learning, Information, Digital, Health, Culture and Children's.
- DCMS Libraries Taskforce "Libraries Deliver" report: Cultural and creative enrichment, Increased reading and literacy, improved digital access and literacy, Helping everyone achieve their full potential, Healthier and happier lives, Greater prosperity, Stronger, more resilient communities
- Arts Council England "Envisioning the Library of the Future" report priorities: Place the library as the hub of the community, Make the most of digital technology and creative media, Ensure libraries are resilient and sustainable, Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

The Service provides a hub at the heart of the local community and for those areas without access to a local building, there is a mobile and home delivery service.

The stock policy aims to provide a broad range of material in a variety of formats: material in print (hardback and paperbacks, newspapers and magazines) audio visual and

electronic formats. The service may focus on particular needs and demands when setting annual priorities, so it is therefore possible to find the same title in ordinary print, large print – for the visually impaired – spoken word CD, downloadable spoken word and e-book.

Every library offers free wi-fi access to the internet and all libraries have computers available free of charge to library members.

The service has invested in online resources including a wide selection of e-books, e-magazines and downloadable spoken word titles. The service participates in a co-operative partnership with a number of other library authorities which has significantly increased the number of e-book titles available to our borrowers at no extra cost to the service.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

As highlighted above these are the groups identified through this equality's analysis where Rotherham libraries are falling short in terms of engagement with these sectors of protected characteristics. Whilst there may be obvious barriers of engagement such as accessibility to buildings which has been acknowledged as part of the consultation and engagement. It is important for the Library service moving forward to acknowledge these priority areas and embark upon an action plan to address these, which may include working with voluntary organisations, community groups, charities and public health. Through this approach we can ensure that we are directly targeting those that are unrepresented within Rotherham libraries.

By setting out this action plan it will allow us to identify any problems or barriers these groups face which prevents being a user of Rotherham libraries. This may include revision of stock to suit the needs of these groups, accessibility to buildings or groups fit for purpose to meet the requirements of those with a protected characteristic.

An internal barrier which could also play a factor with regards to having low engagement with these groups is Rotherham libraries staffing compliment and how this is representative of the Rotherham population and having a presence of staff with protected characteristics within all Rotherham Library sites. Rotherham libraries will contribute to the wider RMBC agenda with regards to fairly representing all protected characteristics within recruitment. RMBC is submitting a report to cabinet in November for approval seeking accreditation for local government equalities framework. A component of this is around the workforce and key lines of enquiry on this accreditation, therefore Rotherham libraries will strive to be an active participant of this wider piece of work to address having an equal representative of those with protected characteristics.

The criteria going forward with regards to recruiting future library staff needs to ensure it allows all those with a protective characteristic to have an equal opportunity to be part of Rotherham libraries.

The Library Strategy will provide the roadmap for the forthcoming five years' service delivery. As such our core offers, underpinned by nationally accepted minimum standards,

will ensure a service that is both comprehensive and efficient, accessible by all those wishing to use it.

This setting of minimum standards is important, given that the service is entering a period of significant change in order to effect savings efficiencies.

Public consultation invited users and non-users of the service to feedback on what they require from a library service. The Strategy reflects this, as it has been revised to meet customer needs while also seeking efficiencies of service delivery.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

These are yet to be determined, there still needs to be further work on ensuring the service offer is appropriate and accessible for minorities within the overall population but the core service offer ensures all sectors are addressed. This will be done as an ongoing piece of work as the new Strategy is launched to ensure that the service offer within each community promotes community cohesion and has a positive impact on the lives of those accessing the service.

As part of the library strategy Rotherham libraries will seek to:

- Commit to widening access that the library service provides such as vehicle-based services, mainly to older people who might otherwise be unable to get to a library.
- Adapt the service to the changes of technology to meet the needs of the people of Rotherham including those with protected characteristics.
- Focus on children from lower-income families and increase social isolation and loneliness across all ages.
- Play a vital role in reaching out to every single person in the Borough regardless of age, gender or social and economic background.
- Play a part in reducing social isolation and maintaining good mental health, using the Five Ways to Wellbeing as a framework for activities; Supporting Adult Social Care and Housing in providing safe, trusted community-based places for service users and increasing opportunities for independent living
- Libraries will be easily accessible. Offering ease of access for people with disabilities. They will be well used, with up-to-date facilities and be responsive to changing requirements, using available technology and resources effectively
- Encouraging applications from those with protected characteristics for volunteer roles, apprenticeships and library roles.

In addition, targets are set out as part of the library strategy which feeds into addressing these gaps including;

- Increase reading for pleasure amongst young people by 25%

- Increase the number and range of activities and groups by 10%

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

Rotherham libraries intend to undertake a thorough analysis of community feedback, which will enable us to implement appropriate solutions with the resources available to us.

This equalities analysis will inform the action plan and the steps we will take in order to improve engagement with those sectors highlighted throughout this report.

Rotherham libraries have a huge part to play in improving community relations, and since the consultation and engagement begun in 2019, this area of work has formed much of the work we have done.

The service is keen to work closely with other areas within the Council to ensure that community relations are at the forefront of the service offer moving forward, and as such, we will endeavour to cross cut with other service strategies, such as the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy and the Building Stronger Community agenda. Building stronger communities underpins the Council's "One Rotherham" values and behaviours for its workforce, which help define how it works in the best interests of the Rotherham public.

Libraries can make a worthwhile and valued contribution to these areas by:

- Utilising Library buildings within the heart of communities to encourage usage and build up community spirit.
- Giving emphasis across Libraries that Rotherham is a shared community, which values decency, and provides opportunities so that no one is left behind, for example the digital services on offer that can be tailored to those with protected characteristics.
- Promoting the importance of strong, successful and cohesive communities, encouraging use by all. Relocating the Town Centre Library will have a positive impact on this area and draw back the community lost when it relocated from the Civic quarter.
- Working with partners to be proactive in providing opportunities to bring people together, fostering positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and facilitating the range of community voices and resident-led neighbourhood initiatives.
- Supporting and increasing digital inclusion

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Library Strategy 2021-2026
Directorate and service area: Regeneration and Environment, Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs
Lead Manager: Zoe Oxley
Summary of findings:
<p>The Libraries & Neighbourhood Hubs Service will continue to fulfil the statutory requirement, however the revised 5 year strategy will take account of public consultation as a key element of the Library Review process. The core Library offer as contained in the Strategy will align with nationally agreed universal offers and delivery of the Library Strategy must take account of service efficiencies and budget limitations. As part of this piece of work, the Assessment of Local Need will also be refreshed to ensure that Service outcomes are in line with the Rotherham demographic. The stock Policy has recently been renewed in line with this.</p> <p>The Service seeks to ensure that an action plan is developed and maintained as the service evolves, to address areas for improvement, and where we need to widen access and make our customer base more diverse. This will link into the wider strategic agenda of the Council.</p> <p>As well as having an exceptionally high rate of customer satisfaction, currently the Service is engaging well with the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Females borough wide• White British people• Those who do not declare themselves as disabled

- The following age groups: 4-11, 26-40, 41-65 and 65 and over

A robust action plan has been developed to address the areas where following analysis, we are falling short in terms of engagement. It is envisaged that the Service will work with the wider Council and community/voluntary partners to focus on this utilising cross cutting agendas including Thriving neighbourhoods, Health and Wellbeing agenda, Building Stronger Communities vision and the Creative Recovery Programme.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the ability to deliver the key actions detailed within the Library Strategy and associated action plan have been heavily restricted.

Action/Target

Key area for analysis/protected characteristic	Why?	Actions	Target date (MM/YY)
Males of all ages, borough wide	Across the borough, females make up the majority of the registered/active Library users. This is the case in every area of Rotherham, with some areas having double the number of females using the service than males. This was also reflected in the results of the consultation and engagement carried out as part of the analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify joint working opportunities with other Council departments, Places Leisure, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, Streetpride and Green Spaces • Consult with male users/non-users to establish barriers to accessing the service • Work with male Library staff to deliver activities to encourage active involvement of males • Review the demographics against services at each location to ensure it is the right fit for that community • Approach community groups with active male involvement and learn from their good practice • Work with HR to consider how to improve 	March 2023

		recruitment practice in order to encourage more applications from men.	
BAME	The % of BAME service users is slightly disproportionate to the overall population in Rotherham, the service would like to increase the number of individuals and families utilising libraries across the Borough but particularly in communities where there is a significant BAME population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with organisations such as REMA and CLP, and train staff, to better understand the needs of BAME individuals • Relocate the Town Centre Library closer to Eastwood/Clifton where the BAME population is higher than other areas of the Borough, and tailor the service offer to meet these needs • Ensure stock is fit for purpose and inclusive of BAME interests and languages (adults and children) • Work with HR to consider how to improve recruitment practice in order to encourage more applications from BAME people 	April 2021 – March 2023
Disabled People	The number of registered and active service users is low across the borough. The service seeks to better understand why this is and explore if there are any barriers that Libraries present currently which are contributing to this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore joint working opportunities with Adult Social Care, Housing and VCS and train staff to better welcome disabled people within libraries • Consult with disabled users/non-users to understand if there are any barriers to accessing services. • Liaise with voluntary groups to find out why disabled people of all ages are reluctant/not accessing Libraries • Review the service offer against the needs of disabled service users • Review all Library locations to ensure all sites are easily accessible and DDA compliant. • Work with HR to consider how to improve 	March 2023

		recruitment practice in order to encourage more applications from disabled people	
Ages 0-3, 12-17 and 18-25	Libraries are falling short in terms of registering and retaining people in these age groups. It is widely known across Libraries that these groups are specifically hard to engage with, and as such a big piece of work is required to address this issue and plug the gap in engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out benchmarking with other LAs and learn from areas of excellence • Explore joint working opportunities with Early Help and RoSIS, RNN Group and VCS. • Deliver capital improvements to Kiveton Library to enable co-location with Early Help. • Work as part of the Children's Capital of Culture partnership to improve the quality and reach of the library activities programme. • Hold focus groups with teenagers and young adults to explore potential barriers/interest • Carry out further work in schools to promote Libraries and reading for pleasure • Review stock levels and how appropriate this is for these age groups • Work with Health Visitors and Children's Centres/local nurseries to encourage 0-3 into Libraries. • Work with HR to consider how to improve recruitment practice in order to encourage more applications from young people 	April 2021 – March 2023
Investigate the needs and aspirations of people holding other protected characteristics:	We have identified the immediate priorities for the Library Service but recognise the limitations of our current data. We need to establish mechanisms for	<p>Agree priorities for intervention in collaboration with other Council departments and VCS partners: in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender reassignment, • sexual orientation, • faith, 	July – Sept 2022

	obtaining better quality intelligence on sectors of the community with other protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civil partnerships and marriage, • pregnancy and maternity • socio-economic groups • parents, single parents and guardians, • carers, • looked after children, • unemployed and people on low incomes, • ex-offenders, • victims of domestic violence • homeless people. <p>Develop an agreed set of tasks for inclusion in the Y2 action plan and ensure integration in the 2022/23 budget planning process.</p>	
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6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Zoe Oxley	Acting Assistant Director. Head of Business Transformation and Operations	08/10/2021
Cllr D Sheppard	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion	15/10/2021

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis 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 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 Equality Analysis completed	08 th October, 2021
Report title and date	Service update of the Library Strategy 2021 – 2026 and Action Plan 2020-2022 for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs.
Date report sent for publication	To be confirmed
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	15 th October 2021