

Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

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.

Directorate: Finance and Customer Services	Service area: Finance
Lead person: Rob Mahon	Contact number: 01709 254518

1. Title:

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

On 25 March 2021 the Government announced a new COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) of £1.5 billion. However, Government only released guidance on how the relief could be utilised on 15 December 2021. In this guidance Government confirmed that the fund was to be made available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates, such as through Governments Extended Retail Relief scheme. The Council's allocation is £4,851,486 and is available to provide businesses with business rates relief for the financial year 2021/22. It is a discretionary fund and so the Council must design a scheme that utilises the grant fund to provide discretionary business rates relief.

The Council's proposed scheme will provide business rate relief of 50% of the business rates bill up to a maximum of £6k of relief. Where a business meets the eligibility criteria that the Council proposes within this report, the business will have its business rates bill re-issued, taking account of the rates relief awarded. The Council scheme will open for applications from the 1st March 2022 through to the 30th

April 2022, allowing businesses to come forward and register their interest.

The Councils scheme has restrictions applied to it by Government and locally agreed restrictions, however, following that its open to any businesses that meets the criteria to apply.

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, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		X
Could the proposal affect service users?		X
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		X

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 prior to carrying out an **Equality Analysis**.

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 and use the prompts for guidance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you considered equality and diversity? 	
n/a	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings 	
n/a	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 	
n/a	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Judith Badger	Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services	27/1/22

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	27/1/22
If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	