

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: The Year Ahead Plan (up to November 2021) – final progress report	
Directorate: Assistant Chief Executive's	Service area: Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead person: Simon Dennis, Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence	Contact: simon.dennis@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The Year Ahead Plan is the Council's plan for operating in and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the plan is to support residents, communities and businesses through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, helping to build resilience whilst also continuing to drive our ambitious plans for Rotherham. It sets out the headline themes and corresponding outcomes and key actions for September 2020 through to June 2021. This original plan ran to June 2021, and an extended Year Ahead Plan, agreed at Cabinet on 21 June 2021, is now in place.

Formal quarterly progress reports are presented in public at Cabinet meetings, with an opportunity for Scrutiny consideration if required. The first public report was presented to Cabinet on 21 December 2020 and reports have then been presented on a quarterly basis on 22 March 2021, 21 June 2021 and 20 September 2021. This screening relates to the fifth and final quarterly progress report to Cabinet, covering progress made to November 2021.

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

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)

COVID-19 is impacting every person across the borough. The Year Ahead Plan sets out the Council's approach to supporting all residents, communities and businesses through these difficult times, which includes those with protected characteristics.

All themes within the Year Ahead Plan will help to address the impacts that COVID-19 has had on all communities.

The Plan also includes a cross-cutting theme aimed at equalities and social justice to ensure all residents have a good quality of life and are able to achieve their potential, by:

- Overcoming unfairness caused by lack of access to economic opportunities
- Seeing an improvement in the life chances and opportunities of disadvantaged communities facing social barriers and affected by poverty and unemployment
- Making sure that services and information are accessible to all and taking action when decisions or policies are unfair or discriminatory
- Developing a positive environment and removing barriers to participation so that residents are able to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and their communities
- Inclusive communities where people feel safe, have a sense of ownership, and feel confident in reporting incidents of abuse or discrimination.

- **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)

Each of the themes within the plan will help to address the impacts COVID-19 has had on local communities by:

Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Providing support to isolated and vulnerable residents affected by the pandemic, including developing a preventative approach to help people avoid food crisis, undertaking initiatives to tackle loneliness and isolation, helping those at risk of abuse and homelessness and supporting vulnerable people into training or work.
- Driving local activity and the delivery of local improvements through the creation of ward plans, the spend of ward budgets and through neighbourhood working.
- Supporting volunteering in the borough by encouraging local people and employees to volunteer and engaging with existing volunteers.

Examples of consideration of equality issues within this theme include:

- Targeted campaigns (with partners) to increase the number of volunteering opportunities / volunteers from communities with protected characteristics through the Rotherham Heroes programme.
- The supported volunteering policy is focused on creating opportunities for the workforce to engage in social action days/events, which will have a direct positive impact on local communities throughout the borough.
- Consideration of ward demographics and consultation with seldom-heard communities as part of developing the new Ward Plans.
- Equalities data continues to be monitored in a number of areas, including through homelessness assessments, crisis food provision and the allocation of ward budgets.

Better Health and Wellbeing

- Strengthening the Council's approach to tackling health inequalities, including promoting and developing the JSNA and developing the new Health and Wellbeing Board action plan.
- Supporting vulnerable and disabled adults to ensure they are protected and able to adapt, including monitoring the impact of the pandemic on demand for adult social care, delivering the Learning Disability Transformation programme and ensuring a carers network is in place.
- Supporting children and young people to achieve their potential, including supporting the educational recovery opportunities and supporting collaborative safeguarding practice for those who are home-educated.

Examples of consideration of equality issues within this theme include:

- A full Equality Assessment was completed around the Local Outbreak Management Plan, which outlined mitigating actions that would be taken.
- Engagement work continues to take place within high-risk places, including targeted work in town centre neighbourhoods, ethnic minority communities and amongst the working age population. This includes regular liaison with local community organisations and targeted messaging in relation to the reduction of transmission risk and in support of the vaccination programme. The Council continues to work jointly with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to continue to promote the Evergreen programme for low uptake and high-risk groups to

enable them to obtain their first or second vaccine dose.

- In addition to these aspects of the plan, a central focus of the better health and wellbeing theme has been work around health inequalities, which has implications for nearly all protected characteristic groups. As part of this, the JSNA update was shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board and has informed a refresh of the board's priorities and action plan.

Economic Recovery

- Supporting people to find jobs and supporting employers so that they can adapt and survive.
- Maximising social value to create more local jobs, apprenticeships, and benefits for local communities.

Examples of the consideration of equality issues within this theme include:

- Three bids totalling almost £60 million were submitted to the Government's Levelling Up Fund in June last year, with the consideration of the impacts on protected characteristic groups built into the proposals. Two bids were approved, securing £39.41m to enhance the town centre regeneration programme.
- Engagement with local people, including protected characteristic groups, has informed the development of the town centre housing programme, and targeted engagement with underserved communities in Eastwood and Templeborough has shaped the Town Investment Plan.
- The Council is now a formally accredited Real Living Wage employer, recognising that all staff are paid a fair wage. Discussions continue on how partners can develop joint approaches to ensure the money they spend has maximum benefit for local people and communities.
- Delivery of library schemes will have a positive impact on the protected characteristic groups, including those with disabilities, by improving the accessibility of libraries in accordance with the Library Strategy.

New Ways of Working

- Increasing self-serve online services, whilst also providing assisted access for vulnerable customers and those who are unable to access services digitally.
- Ensuring the Council's workforce is supported and engaged, including those from protected characteristic groups.

Examples of the consideration of equality issues within this theme include:

- Work is currently taking place to deliver the Rotherham Digital Inclusion Strategy. This has significant equalities implications, as national data finds that digital exclusion is more prevalent amongst the elderly, disabled, and individuals from BAME and socially deprived communities. To help identify the barriers in Rotherham, a third party organisation will be commissioned to engage with residents, communities, businesses, and organisations.
- Work is continuing to further develop the Council's wellbeing programme which was launched in early 2021. There is a dedicated wellbeing page which is accessible from the intranet home page providing details of upcoming events, access to workshops and signposting to the support available.
- To support young people across the borough into employment, the Council successfully applied to be a Kickstart employer in early 2021 and identified 89

available placements that would be suitable as part of this scheme. By 5 January 2022, 47 people had started a Kickstart role, 2 people will start in late January and interviews are about to take place for one further role.

- The opportunity to become a Change Champion has been promoted to staff across the Council, allowing staff to input into the Big Hearts Big Changes programme and act as a critical friend, become an early adopter of new ideas, and collectively help to find solutions to challenges.

Hope and Confidence

- Ensuring ongoing communications with all communities.
- Delivering a programme of events to bring communities together in a safe way and get people more active.

Examples of the consideration of equality issues within this theme include:

- A full equality analysis was completed in relation to the strategic management and maintenance of Rotherham highways.
- The Great Big Rotherham To Do List toolkit was launched in summer 2021 – a fun, engaging, vibrant and comical fold-out guide to remind people of the positive things they're already doing for their mental and physical wellbeing, and to inspire them to try new things. 44,000 copies were distributed.

Cross cutting

A borough based on social justice where all residents have a good quality of life and can achieve their potential:

- The Equalities Annual Report was presented to Cabinet in June 2021, outlining progress to date and issues to address.
- Projects as part the Equality Review have been developed and will be implemented over the coming months, addressing the Equality Framework for Local Government Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) which are the basis for achieving 'Excellent' status for equalities.
- The Council's equality objectives are being reviewed as part of the production of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that will underpin the new Council Plan. Consultation on the new objectives and key actions is currently being undertaken and the new strategy is planned to be presented to Cabinet in April 2022.
- The new Equalities Annual Report will also be presented to Cabinet in late spring / summer 2022 to review progress on equalities over the past year and address future priorities.

Carbon emissions for the Council and the borough are reduced:

- The Council has used social media to help reduce Rotherham residents' energy costs, reducing fuel poverty and domestic emissions. During the pandemic, the Council made active use of social media channels, which has led to 318,725 web hits relating to energy support, as at end December 2021.

The Year Ahead Plan ended in November 2021 and is to be replaced by the new Council Plan for 2022. The development of the Council Plan included consultation with and consideration of the impacts on protected characteristic groups across the borough, and equality remains central to the priorities detailed within the plan. A full equality analysis

has been completed and published for the new Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan.

• **Actions**

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

The actions required include:

- As the new Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan is implemented, all services will be required to complete an equality screening and/or analysis to ensure due regard has been given and that there is an understanding of the effects of a strategy, policy, service or function on those from a protected characteristic group.
- Monitor the equality implications of the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan.
- Implement the equality projects identified as part of the Equalities Review, including projects around the collection and use of data; engagement with communities, along with engagement in public life; embedding equalities into service planning aligned to the new Council Plan process; and engagement and support for Council staff.
- Review and refresh the Council's equality objectives as part of production of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	Previously completed for the Year Ahead Plan extension.
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	Completed on 28/05/21
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Rebecca Woolley, Policy Officer

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Simon Dennis	Acting Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence	19/01/22
Jo Brown	Assistant Chief Executive	

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	10.01.22
Report title and date	The Year Ahead Plan (up to November 2021) – final progress report to Cabinet on 14 February 2022
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	20.01.22
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	