

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

The Councils Financial Outturn Report 2020/21 to Cabinet on 19 July 2021 earmarked £2m for a Covid Recovery Fund from the £6.1m underspend position, delegating to Cabinet the authority to approve its use. The fund was created to take proactive steps in order to support local residents as they emerge from the pandemic. The funding is being brought forward to support residents now, to help residents against the backdrop of growing concerns around the cost of living due to inflation and significant increases in energy and fuel bills in particular. The Citizens Advice Bureau reported a 50% increase in the use of their services for financial support, with Advocacy and Appeals reporting a 66% increase in residents seeking support in the across the year from January 2021. In addition, the relaxation of Covid rules allows the Council to consider how best it can help people back into the community

The Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2022/23, approved at Council on 2 March 2022 set out the first use of the Covid Recovery Fund, allocating £371k of the

fund towards 3 one off revenue budget investments for 2022/23, these were.

- Women’s Euro 2022
- Additional Call Handling
- Customer and Digital

This report sets out further proposals for use of the Covid Recovery Fund across the following areas;

- £500k Cash grant scheme to provide support for households with the rising cost of energy bills.
- £300k additional funding to top up the Councils Discretionary Housing Payments fund.
- £100k to support cultural recovery events and opportunities that will enable people to reconnect.
- £50k to facilitate the administration of these proposals.

The remaining funding of £0.679m will be retained within the Covid Recovery Fund so that further support can be targeted at issues that arise as the course of the boroughs recovery from Covid continues.

The Councils approach to the utility proposal will be open to all, so non-discriminatory, allowing people to apply online or over the phone, assisted if necessary. The DHP payments system is already a service that the Councils offer and is merely being topped up, this will just make support more accessible as the service will have more resources to allocate. However, both the Utility proposal and the DHP are most likely to support those people who are on lower incomes. The plans for the Events and CCOC will need to be drawn up at a later date when greater detail can be applied and any equality impacts reviewed in greater detail.

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.

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

n/a

- **Key findings**

n/a

- **Actions**

n/a

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
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Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
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Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a
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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
Judith Badger	Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services	11/03/2022

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	11/03/2022
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	