

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: Tree Management Protocol & Guidance Update	
Directorate: Regeneration & Environment	Service area: Culture Sport & Tourism
Lead person: Andy Lee	Contact number: 01709 822457
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
A updated protocol and guidance which covers the management of Council owned trees.

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

The questions above where the service has answered 'no' are explained below:

Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?

The Tree Management Protocol & Guidance is applied universally across the borough, there is no change to the guidance set out in the policy in any particular locality or for any particular group. As the guidance relates to the management of the natural environment rather than engagement with specific communities there is no specific impact any individual or group regardless of protected characteristics.

Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?

The Tree Service will continue to operate within its current industry practices, the protocol and guidance seeks to support and prioritise the current practices rather than materially

change them.

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).

The questions above where the service has answered yes are explained below:

Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?

The Tree Management Protocol and Guidance relates to the management of the Council's tree stock in particularly in urban locations such as highways, parks and residential streets. The service is currently undertaking a full audit of its tree stock but it is estimated that there are between 50,000-80,000 Council-owned trees across the borough in urban settings, therefore there is an impact for residents across the borough.

Could the proposal affect service users?

The service receives approximately 1,500 service requests each year. The aim of the document is to provide advice, guidance and support for members of the public and Elected Members and for service officers in responding to these requests.

Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?

Given the volume and diversity of service requests the protocol and guidance is likely to attract public interest as it will govern how service requests are responded to on a number of issues. An analysis of service requests over the last three years has been undertaken to identify the key issues raised by members of the public in service requests. Each issue has been provided for in the protocol and guidance and a series of FAQs on each has been developed as an appendices with the intention for this to be developed into a user-friendly area of the Council's website.

Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?

The Protocol & Guidance is designed to support the management the Council's tree stock and will therefore affect how the Tree Service is organised to respond to service requests from members of the public and Elected Members.

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

The Tree Management Protocol & Guidance will be made publicly available with a series

of Plain English user guides which can be translated and provided in easy-read formats to ensure that they are accessible to all sections of the community. Provision has been made within the Protocol & Guidance to support groups where there are vulnerabilities to resolve particular issues. For instance, although the general guidance is not to undertake works to healthy trees there is an acknowledgement that for some residents (e.g. elderly, people with physical disabilities, residents who suffer from debilitating illness that may leave them house bound) the natural environment can in some cases have an adverse effect on their health and quality of life. These include where trees encroach on to property and create trip hazards or block light to living spaces for those who are house bound. The Protocol & Guidance seeks to find a more compassionate resolution to issues in this instance to ensure the protection of the natural environment is effectively balanced with quality of life for our more vulnerable residents.

- **Key findings**

Whilst the Tree Management Protocol & Guidance is concerned with the safe management of the Council's tree stock and recognises the positive impact of trees on health and wellbeing, it also recognises the need to balance the protection of the natural environment with the quality of life for residents who live in close proximity to trees and seeks to find pragmatic approaches to resolving service requests.

The Protocol & Guidance will be applied universally across the borough and therefore does not impact disproportionately on any particular group or individual, but provision has been made within the guidance to support residents with vulnerabilities.

- **Actions**

The service will undertake the following actions:

- Develop a series of user-friendly Plain English guides and FAQs to support residents with common concerns.
- Work closely with colleagues in Community Safety and Neighbourhoods to identify and offer additional support to vulnerable residents.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	30 th November 2023
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	30 th November 2024 - Review
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Kevin Burke – Tree Service Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Andy Lee	Green Spaces Manager	30 th November 2023

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	30 th November 2023
Report title and date	Tree Management Protocol & Guidance Update
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	N/A
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	30 th November 2023