

REPORT AUDIT TRAIL**CONSULTATION**

*This is important as it shows that consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of the report and provides a quick reference point for specific comments, whilst the report will not be publishable if these areas have not been completed by the named persons below. **You must liaise with and receive sign off from the relevant Cabinet Member(s).***

Name/Position	Portfolio/Ward/ Directorate	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in para:
Councillor Saghir Alam	Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	
<i>Judith Badger</i>	Assistant Chief Executive	Click here to enter a date.		
<i>Natalia Govorukhina,</i> Finance	Finance and Customer Services	29/07/25	06/08/25	Comments added to section 6.
<i>Stuart Fletcher,</i> Legal Services	Legal Services	29/07/25	04/08/25	Comments added to section 7 and required amendment pointed out in paragraph 3.1 as well as to the wording of the report recommendation
<i>Rebecca Boyle,</i> Human Resources	Assistant Chief Executive's Office	29/07/25	04/08/25	Comments added to section 8.
<i>Louise Hayter,</i> Procurement	Finance and Customer Services	29/07/25	31/07/25	Dates referring to July – September need updating in sections 2.1 and 5.1 as per Appendix 1, August – September. Added in Para 6.2.
Equalities	Assistant Chief Executive's Office	28/07/25	29/07/25	Screening completed and approach to equality assessment agreed.
<i>Other officers below</i>		Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	

REPORT APPROVAL TRACKING			
Equalities Your report will not be authorised for submission to Cabinet by your Strategic Director if you have not undertaken and included an initial equalities screening. All equalities analysis documents should be sent to Equality@rotherham.gov.uk for feedback prior to being included as appendices.	Initial Screening completed and included with report	YES	29/07/25
	Full Assessment completed and included with report	NO	
Carbon Impact Assessments Carbon Impact Assessments are to be appended to the associated cabinet reports. Carbon Impact Assessments should be sent to climate@rotherham.gov.uk for feedback prior to your report being sent to your Strategic Director for approval.	Carbon Impact Assessment completed and included with report.	YES	06/08/25
Background information MANDATORY: Insert headings for a few main public documents you have used or referenced to write this report. This is a legal requirement. For Cabinet reports, insert hyperlinks . Do not list private documents.	Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and objectives 2022-25		
Appendices If appendices are essential to the understanding of the report, list titles here. Ensure that appendices have proper titles. List any appendices relevant to the decision being taken first with the Equality Analysis documents coming next and the Carbon Impact Assessment being listed as the last Appendix for all reports.	Appendix 1 Consultation proposal Appendix 2 Equality screening Appendix 3 Climate impact assessment		
Cabinet Member Approval You should retain an email confirming the Cabinet Member approval for your records. Strategic Directors should not authorise reports unless Cabinet Members have given sign off	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	
Report Authorised by Strategic Director	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	
Report Authorised for publication by Chief Executive	YES/NO (delete as appropriate)	Click here to enter a date.	

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 31 July 2025

Report Title

Consultation to refresh the Inclusion Strategy

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-wide

Report Summary

This report seeks to exercise the delegation to the Assistant Chief Executive to undertake consultation related to the refresh of the Inclusion Strategy for the Council.

Recommendations

1. To approve the undertaking of consultation to support the refresh of the Inclusion Strategy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Consultation Plan

Appendix 2 Part A Equalities Screening

Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Plan for Inclusion Consultation Consultation to refresh the Inclusion Strategy

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council is currently considering how to refresh its Inclusion Strategy (currently the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy). As part of this refresh, it is good practice to consult with communities and groups that will be impacted. This report and its associated appendices set out the key issues around this consultation.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Public consultation is planned for August to September 2025 in order to meet the overall requirement to submit the refreshed Inclusion Strategy to the Council's Cabinet in November 2025.
- 2.2 The detailed proposal for the consultation process is attached at appendix 1. This aims to better understand the views and experiences of, in particular, individuals who may face barriers to inclusion or to accessing services, including advocacy groups or organisations representing such individuals. It also includes engagement with internal staff networks to gain insight into their experience of working at the council and, more broadly, their perspective on issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion. Recent, relevant consultation responses such as to the Council Plan consultation will also be factored in.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 **Recommended:** Public consultation and engagement is essential to enable residents and stakeholders to contribute to the development of any strategy. Therefore, the undertaking of in person and online formats working in partnership with relevant stakeholders is recommended.
- 3.2 **Not recommended:** The Council may choose to develop and implement the proposals without consultation. This option does not allow residents to shape the Inclusion Strategy and would exclude groups who would be impacted by the strategy. It is therefore not recommended.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 This report seeks approval to undertake consultation. Feedback from the consultation will be compiled into a summary report that will inform the development of the Inclusion Strategy.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The Inclusion Strategy is currently scheduled to be submitted to November's Cabinet meeting. The consultation is scheduled to take place from August to early September.

5.2 An August officer decision on this consultation proposal will enable the consultation to commence within the appropriate timescale.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

6.2 It should be noted that the engagement of third-party suppliers by the Council to support the consultation must be undertaken in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (dependent on the route to market selected) and the Council's own financial and procurement procedure rules.

6.3 The consultation costs can be met from within budget in the Policy, Performance and Intelligence service.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The recommendation to consult on the Inclusion Strategy is appropriate, in order to inform the Inclusion Strategy, and is consistent with the Council's continued compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty in particular. Further considering previous practice, the expectation of the public and in order to ensure that the Inclusion Strategy properly addresses the views and priorities of the residents of the borough, it is appropriate for consultation to take place as proposed.

7.2 As such, in order for the consultation process to be considered legitimate i.e. fair and meaningful, it should be done at a formative stage, provide sufficient information to allow "intelligent consideration", provide adequate time for a response, and "conscientious consideration" should be given to the consultation response before any decision is made (as set out in the High Court case of R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning). These criteria are met in respect of the proposed consultation.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 As part of the consultation process, engagement with internal staff networks will be undertaken to gather insights into employees' lived experiences of working at the Council. This will include perspectives on equality, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace.

8.2 The feedback obtained will help inform the refreshed Inclusion Strategy, ensuring it reflects the views of staff and supports a more inclusive organisational culture. It will also provide valuable input into future workforce planning, policy development, and training needs.

8.3 The outcomes of the consultation may lead to recommendations for changes in HR policies, practices, or initiatives aimed at improving inclusion and equity across the organisation.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Specific consultation with children and young people will be carried out as part of this consultation.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 An initial equality screening assessment has been completed and is attached as appendix 2.

10.2 This consultation seeks to assist in the refresh of the Inclusion Strategy. As such, it is an essential part of enabling the Council to develop its approach to equalities and human rights.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 A carbon impact assessment has been completed and is attached as appendix 3.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 This consultation exercise will engage the voluntary and community sector, utilising their networks and expertise. This approach ultimately aims to strengthen the Council's relationship with partner organisations.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 To mitigate the risk of the consultation failing to engage with members of the public within the identified boundary area, a range of methods for engagement have been considered. Both online and public consultation methods aim to ensure a wide range of individuals will have an opportunity to contribute their views. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to identify how those with protected characteristics can be included in the process.

14. Accountable Officers

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

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