

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: Library Strategy

Directorate: Regeneration and Environment

Service area: Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs

Lead person: Zoe Oxley

Contact: 01709 334283

Is this a:

☒ **Strategy / Policy**
☐ **Service / Function**
☐ **Other**

If other, please specify

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

The screening document supports the Cabinet report “Review of the 2021 - 2026 Library Strategy and proposal to undertake consultation for the 2027-2032 library strategy/future service delivery model”. The report will be presented to Cabinet in December 2025. Its purpose is to review performance against the 2021–2026 Library Strategy, summarise key achievements and challenges, and seek approval to undertake a public consultation on the development of a new Library Strategy for 2027–2032 and a future service delivery model for Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs.

The previous Rotherham Library Strategy 2021–2026 provided the framework for the

delivery and development of library services across the Borough. The strategy set out an ambitious plan to modernise library buildings, strengthen community partnerships, increase digital inclusion, and provide cultural and learning opportunities for residents. It supported the Council's key strategies including the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy, Cultural Strategy, Economic Growth Strategy, Customer Access Strategy, and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, as well as national priorities through the Libraries Connected Universal Offers.

The service envisages that a refreshed and modernised strategy for 2027 to 2032 will deliver a fresh approach to how services are delivered over the next 5 years and ensure that every corner of the borough has to opportunity to have their say about how we do this, to guarantee that no community is left behind and those who are the hardest to reach are included.

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?	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 explain the reason

N/A

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?**

An Equality Analysis has been produced and the appropriate approvals received. During the production of the new Library Strategy, a wide range of organisations and individuals will be included, and this will be reflected in the Equalities Impact Analysis. The library strategy consultation for the 2027-2032 will draw from a variety of sources with representation of people with protected characteristics. In addition, many of the organisations involved work directly with people from a cross section of the community so will represent their views.

- **Key findings**

The Service seeks to ensure that an action plan is developed and maintained as the service evolves, to address areas for improvement, and where we need to widen access and make the customer base more diverse. This will link into the wider strategic agenda of the Council. As well as having an exceptionally high rate of customer satisfaction, currently the Service is engaging well with the following key areas, including those with protected characteristics: Females borough wide, White British people, those who do not declare themselves as disabled and the following age groups: 4-11, 26-40, 41-65 and 65 and over. Further work is required in order to engage better with the following; Males of all ages, borough wide, BAME, Disabled People, Ages 0-3, 12-17 and 18-25.

The Service will create an action plan as part of the EIA to address these. It will be maintained as the recommendations evolve and highlight where we may need to widen access and involve other partner organisations. The delivery of the action plan will have a positive impact on many local groups and improve engagement across the under represented areas.

- **Actions**

A robust action plan is to be developed to address the areas where following analysis, the service is falling short in terms of regular engagement. It is envisaged that the Service will work with the wider Council and community and voluntary partners to focus on this utilising cross cutting agendas including the Thriving neighbourhoods strategy, Cultural Strategy, Health and Wellbeing agenda, Building Stronger Communities vision and the Creative Health Programme.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	December 2025 onwards
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	TBC
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Gina Szumski, Operational Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Polly Hamilton	Assistant Director, Culture Sport & Tourism	28/10/25

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	24/10/25
Report title and date	Review of the 2021 - 2026 Library Strategy and proposal to undertake consultation for the 2027- 2032 library strategy/future service delivery model 15/12/25
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	15/12/25
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	28/10/25