

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: Wath Library & Public Spaces Redevelopment | |
| Directorate: R&E | Service area: RiDO |
| Lead person: Andrea Brough | Contact: William Rayner |
| Is this a: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |
| If other, please specify: Wath Town Centre Capital Regeneration Project | |

| 2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening |
|---|
| <p>The supported scheme will include the demolition of the existing library building and the creation of a brand-new library to create a modern, inviting, and inclusive community facility. The redevelopment will be designed to open up public spaces between Biscay Way and the High Street and encourage visitors into the town centre.</p> <p>Investment in the surrounding public realm aims to draw people into the town centre, and the redevelopment will include commercial space to support a vibrant mix of businesses in the town centre.</p> |

The existing building, currently scheduled to be demolished by July 2026, was not fit for purpose and did not address the public realm. It was not viable to make changes to the existing building to facilitate the desired uses of the library and meet environmental performance targets.

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?**

An in-depth stakeholder database was prepared to ensure that the consultation and engagement that has been undertaken reached a wide audience. The events and activities were accessible and open to everyone and were advertised and promoted via a number of platforms designed to reach a wide audience.

Public events have taken place in the current Wath library and will continue to do so throughout the lifespan of the development, with no access restrictions. Focus groups will be arranged to capture feedback from, for example, hard-to-reach groups.

Library service users have been considered throughout the design stages to accommodate and provide access for all.

One key element of this project was to provide appropriate temporary premises to ensure service provision continues as much as possible throughout the redevelopment works. The premises on 4 Sadygate meets all DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliance regulations following the addition by the Council of an accessible W/C on the ground floor.

The temporary premises are within 35 metres of the former library and accessible via foot and public transport, with accessible parking nearby.

The temporary library has been successfully operating since June 2025 and continues to provide a full range of services. While the Library Service has had to adjust its offer to suit the smaller building footprint, staff have effectively adapted the programme of events to ensure the temporary premises are used to their fullest potential. This has allowed the service to remain both accessible and user-friendly. To date, no equality-related issues have been reported.

As shown on the planning drawings, the building provides fully accessible, level access throughout the ground floor, connecting directly to the public realm at Montgomery Square. The ground floor includes an accessible WC, a Changing Places facility, and a dedicated parent changing room. The first floor that can be

accessed via a lift also includes an accessible WC. Overall, the new building is fully compliant with all DDA and associated accessibility regulations.

Beyond physical accessibility, the layout and facilities have been developed to support a wide range of community needs. A dedicated Makerspace room will enable hands-on, creative STEM activities for children of all ages, supporting inclusive learning opportunities. A large community exhibition space, capable of accommodating two full class groups, will allow the Library Service to host a wider range of events than previously possible in Wath. This flexible space will be available for hire by local community groups, can be used to display work by local artists, and will help strengthen community participation across diverse groups.

The building will also offer a bookable meeting room for corporate or community use, alongside a large open-plan ground-floor library area featuring over 7,000 books, a dedicated children's zone, and an IT study area. Together, these facilities ensure the new Library delivers an inclusive, welcoming environment for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

- **Key findings**

Consultation has been open to all. It is the intention of the development to improve the town centre with the construction of a new library and community facility, improved public spaces between Biscay Way and the High Street, and new commercial units.

Feedback received highlighted that users wanted to see more of the library itself delivered from the ground floor. Following consideration by the architect, the relevant changes were met and submitted as part of the planning application in July 2024.

Though the library service has had to reduce their offer during the redevelopment period, all the necessary mitigations and considerations have been put in place to ensure there are no issues around accessibility to a temporary premise, as detailed above.

Wath town centre provides important community services, and all and any services which are being provided by private entities within the library such as hirers of the library space have already all relocated or sought other temporary locations to deliver their service for the duration of the construction and works, library staff have supported all groups in ensuring they have located suitable premises to continue to deliver community services.

- **Actions**

Consultation has been carried out in an open and transparent manner, encouraging all stakeholders to share their views and opinions on the redevelopment proposals. Ongoing engagement with the community will continue throughout the duration of the project, and a comprehensive communications plan has been collated, including attendance at key local events such as the Wath Festival and the Christmas Light Switch-On, as well as direct communication through leafleting to residents and

businesses alongside corporate social media updates This ensures the community remains fully informed and involved as the project progresses.

The temporary library provides an accessible, scaled-down facility that continues to offer a full range of services to the community, ensuring this valued local asset remains available throughout the redevelopment period. Accessibility for all users has been a priority, and internal adjustments have been made to ensure everyone can access an appropriate W/C. No further alterations to the temporary premises have been required to deliver a high-quality, inclusive and accessible service.

As part of the development, a commercial unit will be located on the ground floor with direct access from Montgomery Square. This space was originally intended to accommodate a Banking Hub; however, the Banking Hub has since relocated to the Tesco car park and has confirmed it will not be moving into the new library building. As a result, the commercial unit currently has no proposed end user.

A marketing and letting exercise will therefore be required to identify a suitable new tenant. Any future tenant will be sought with a view to providing much-needed, accessible services for the Wath community, helping to complement the library offer and increase footfall within the building.

| | |
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| Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis: | 11/03/26 |
| Date to complete your Equality Analysis: | 11/03/26 |
| Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title): | William Rayner |

5. Governance, ownership, and approval

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

| Name | Job title | Date |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| William Rayner | Project Manager | 10.02.26 |
| | | |

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.

| | |
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| Date screening completed | 10/03/2026 |
| Report title and date. | Wath Town Centre Capital Regeneration Project |
| If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication | For Cabinet May 2026 |
| Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk | 11/03/2026 |