

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

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.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics 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. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Wath Library Redevelopment	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 11th March	
Directorate: Regeneration & Environment	Service area: Regeneration
Lead Manager: William Rayner	Contact: William.rayner@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a: <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
William Rayner	RMBC	Project Manager
Catherine Davies	RMBC	
Lorna Vertigan	RMBC	Head of Regeneration

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

The overarching aim of the redevelopment is to tackle the deprivation and inequality faced in the town centre of Wath by maximising the opportunity for local growth in the civic, commercial, and cultural sectors. By re-establishing the town centre as a destination for socialising, learning, and enterprise, we will increase footfall to sustainable levels, and restore a sense of pride of place amongst the communities. Redevelopment of the site will improve connectivity and showcase what the town has to offer.

Delivered through a landmark mixed-use development in Wath, there will be fresh incentives to visit the town centre to shop, relax, learn and play in high quality, convenient and connected facilities. The project aims to deliver:

- Development of a state-of-the-art library building.
- Improved public realm.
- Redesign of the site to enhance connectivity and visibility of town centre offer, and address perceptions of security.
- Provision of a new commercial unit in prime location on the market square to attract new businesses.
- Improvements to the civic centre facilities for learning, working, and making.
- Improvements to the car park.

The redevelopment will deliver facilities of a modern standard, with sustainable and inclusive design. It will also tackle persistent anti-social behaviour issues through the enclosure of the resident accessible housing external staircase and passageway which currently runs between the library and the adjacent residential and commercial block, which is housed by RMBC tenants and managed by Housing services.

This programme will be delivered with funding from the Capital Regeneration/ Government funding. The programme aims to transform prominent sites within Rotherham’s principal settlements for growth. The scheme aims to deliver high quality place making to restore the cultural heart of the town centres, increase footfall, boost the local economies, and restore a sense of pride amongst communities.

Following Cabinet approval to accept the grant and proceed in August 2023 and approval to progress the scheme at Cabinet in July 2024, the Council has developed the scheme's feasibility and design. The redevelopment has been designed to enhance user experience between Biscay Way and the High Street to encourage visitors into the town centre.

Since June 2025, the Library service has decanted the existing Library building into a temporary site 35 metres away at Montgomery Square and has been successfully operating 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.

A contractor for the scheme has been appointed and is currently demolishing the old library building, and works are expected to take place until July 2026, with construction of the new library scheduled to begin in November 2026 and continue until December 2027.

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

Wath upon Dearne (Wath) is a small town in the north of the borough, within the lower Dearne Valley. It has a population of 16,964 and comprises of council estates, terraced housing, suburban areas and new developments, which make it typical of the Borough, data provided from 2021 census.

Wath is an ex-coal mining town and suffers from a legacy of inequality and deprivation which can be evidenced across a wide range of indicators. Using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019), Wath is in the most deprived 10% of communities nationally. This is also true when considering specific inequalities such as: Employment; Education, Skills and Training; Health; and Income Deprivation affecting Children.

Education attainment at GCSE level is significantly below the national average, which reduces opportunity for high-skilled, high-paid careers. Progression into Level 4 and above qualifications is severely impacted, with just 15.5 and 14.2% of the population having higher level qualifications, compared to a national average of 27.4%.

As part of the planning and design process, consultations were held with the public, local business and stakeholders to ensure that the design for the new library is fit for purpose, accessible and addresses anti-social behaviour. These consultations were key in ensuring that the new library is fit for purpose for generations to come.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

No gaps identified.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

As part of the wider scheme, engagement with the community will be undertaken at regular intervals throughout the project implementation. A detailed comms plan has been collated for the duration of the scheme.

Regular meetings are held with ward members, neighbourhood coordinators and library service staff, providing a forum for issues within the community regarding the project to be raised or dealt with.

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Two public engagement sessions and specific sessions with Wath Comprehensive School were undertaken in 2024 as part of the design development. Feedback received highlighted that users wanted to see more of the library itself delivered from the ground floor as well as increasing accessible toilet and changing room facilities. Further sessions were then undertaken to show the public how their feedback had been considered. the relevant changes were made and submitted as part of the planning application in July 2024.

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.

Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

As part of the wider scheme, there has been extensive engagement with Members in the formulation of the scheme. This has taken the form of monthly ward updates, as well as the regular Regeneration update meeting with the Leader.

The project also reports into the Regeneration Programme Board, Capital DLT and Capital Programme Board on a regular basis through the Regeneration Programme Dashboard.

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

By replacing a tired building that acted as a blight on the high street that acted as a barrier in the town centre with a welcoming community space and public realm, the area gains natural surveillance and a stronger sense of security, helping older people, disabled residents, women, young people and minority groups feel more confident and able to access local facilities equally. Reducing ASB and improving safety around the new library has been a key driver of this project and ASB mitigation measures have been factored into the design to make the community feel safer when in the town centre.

As illustrated on the planning drawings, the building has been designed to support equitable access for all users, including those with protected characteristics. It provides fully accessible, level access throughout the ground floor, with a direct connection to the public realm at Montgomery Square. Facilities include an accessible WC, a Changing Places facility, and a dedicated parent changing room. The first floor, which is accessible via lift, also contains an accessible WC. The design is fully compliant with DDA requirements and all relevant accessibility regulations, ensuring that people with disabilities can use the building independently and safely.

Beyond physical access, the internal layout and range of facilities have been developed to meet the needs of a diverse community. A dedicated Makerspace room will support inclusive, hands-on STEM learning for children and young people, including those who may benefit from alternative learning environments. A flexible community exhibition space, sized to host two full class groups, will enable the Library Service to deliver a wider range of cultural and educational activities. This space will also be available for local groups and artists, strengthening participation and representation across different ages, backgrounds and community identities.

The building additionally provides a bookable meeting room for community or corporate use, alongside a spacious, open-plan ground-floor library area. This includes more than 7,000 books, a dedicated children's zone, and an IT study area.

Additionally, a commercial unit will be located on the ground floor with direct access from the shopping precinct Montgomery Square. A marketing and letting exercise will be undertaken 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 generate community cohesion.

Together, these elements create an inclusive, welcoming environment that supports people of all ages, abilities and protected characteristics, ensuring equal opportunity to access learning, culture and community activities.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

None identified

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

The service delivers significant positive impacts by improving accessibility, expanding opportunities and removing barriers for people across all protected characteristics in accessing library services in Wath. The new library provides level access throughout, a Changing Places facility, accessible WCs on both floors, and lift access, ensuring equitable use for people with disabilities and reducing barriers that previously limited independent access. The open, flexible internal layout supports a wide range of learning, cultural and social activities, helping people from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, faiths and family structures to participate fully.

Enhanced facilities, including an expanded book stock, children's zone, IT study area, Makerspace for hands-on STEM learning and a community exhibition space, all seek to promote digital inclusion, lifelong education and cultural engagement.

By replacing an old, underused building with a modern, active, well-used public facility, the scheme helps reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour (ASB) and improves natural surveillance in the area. A vibrant community presence throughout the day increases feelings of safety for local residents, while the removal of blight and vacant buildings on the high street signals investment, confidence and uplift in the local area.

It is also anticipated that any new tenant for the commercial unit will offer much-needed, easily accessible services that will benefit residents across Wath and strengthen the role of the library as a community hub. This added provision aims to complement existing library activities, increase footfall, and support greater community cohesion by creating a welcoming place where people can access multiple services in one convenient location."

These improvements create more opportunities for positive interaction between diverse groups, strengthen representation of local voices and support community cohesion. By providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment, the service reduces social isolation, supports families, encourages intergenerational use and ensures that all residents can access high-quality community resources without discrimination.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

The new library will have a positive impact on community relations by providing a larger, inclusive, accessible space where people of all ages, backgrounds and protected characteristics can come together to read, learn, participate and socialise.

Its welcoming design will have fully accessible facilities and flexible rooms for events, exhibitions and community activities to create shared opportunities for interaction and collaboration for the Wath community for generations to come.

By offering cultural programmes, educational resources, digital access and spaces that local groups can use and shape, the library helps strengthen mutual understanding, supports representation of diverse community voices and fosters a stronger sense of belonging across the whole community.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Wath Library Redevelopment
Directorate and service area: Regeneration and Environment
Lead Manager: William Rayner
Summary of findings:
The redevelopment of Wath Library will provide a positive impact on those with protected characteristics.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Ongoing Oversight of Equalities issues as the scheme progresses	All	12/27
Ongoing public/stakeholder engagement	ALL	12/27

***A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups**

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Simon Moss	AD R&E	8/04/26
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	09/04/26

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis 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 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 Equality Analysis completed	11/03/26
Report title and date	Wath Library Redevelopment
Date report sent for publication	In accordance with May Cabinet Timescales
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	11/03/26