APPENDIX 2

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: Digital Strategy

Directorate: Finance & Customer Services	**Service area:** Customer, Information & Digital Services
Lead person: Steve Langrick, Head of Digital Services	**Contact number:** 01709 822277

Is this a:

x	**Strategy / Policy**		**Service / Function**		**Other**

If other, please specify

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

This is the Digital Strategy for the Council. This strategy sets-out the ambition and direction of travel for the Council and the borough, in respect of its use and investment in digital technology and related capabilities to support the council to achieve its priorities and improve services and outcomes for local residents and business.

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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		

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,

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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?**

The exploitation of technology is not new - it plays a key role in helping the council to deliver and provide efficient and effective access to council services. However, for some, the take-up and use of technology presents barriers. This is more evident amongst those groups who are more elderly, disabled, from BAME and more socially deprived communities. The strategy acknowledges these challenges and highlights the need to focus specific work and investment in this area to reduce these digital inequalities.

- **Key findings**

Digital exclusion findings, whilst not specifically related to Rotherham, do illustrate a continuing improving trend towards inclusion. However, digital exclusion still remains, as can highlighted from these key findings, based on 2018 ONS data:

- Internet non-users amongst adults in Yorkshire and Humber equates to 12%
  ("Internet non-users" refers to those who have never used the internet or last used it more than 3 months ago.)
- Those that don't possess the 5 basic digital skills is slightly below the national average at 19%.
- Over half of all adult internet non-users are over 75 years old
- A little over 22% of the working age economically inactive population is an internet non-user.

The most common reasons for not having internet are:
- a perceived lack of need (64%),
- lack of skills (20%),
- access to (12%),
- cost barrier (8%)
- privacy or security concerns (7%)

In contrast, the recognised benefits from being digitally enabled include:

1. earnings benefits: these relate to increased earnings of between 3% and 10% through acquiring digital skills.
2. employability benefits: this reflects the improved chances of finding work for someone who is unemployed and an increased likelihood that someone who is inactive will look for work.
3. retail transaction benefits: shopping online has been found to be 13% cheaper on average than shopping in-store.
4. communication benefits: basic digital skills can enable people to connect and communicate with family, friends and the community 14% more frequently.
5. time savings: these relate to the time saved by accessing government services and banking online rather than in person, estimated to be about 30 minutes per transaction.

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- **Actions**
1. Equality considerations will form part of our development and implementation of new digital technologies, particularly where these are public facing.
2. Residents will be involved in the design and testing of solutions designed to meet their needs.
3. A focussed piece of work will be undertaken looking at the levels of digital exclusion in Rotherham and a programme of work developed to increase digital inclusion.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	This will be identified as part of setting out the action plan which will be developed to deliver the strategy
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	As noted above
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Phil Rushton, Customer Services Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Langrick	Head of Digital Services	7th December 2020

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	7th December 2020

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Report title and date	Digital Strategy – 15th February 2021
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	15th Feb 2021
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	22nd Dec 2020

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