

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: Revision of District Heating Charges 2023-24	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 10 May 2023	
Directorate: ACH & PH	Service area: Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott	Contact number: Extn 22494
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input 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 (e.g. service user, managers, service specialist)
Paul Elliott	RMBC	Manager
Mark Edmondson	RMBC	Manager
Chris Stacey	RMBC	Manager

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)
 This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The purpose is to seek approval to revise the price of District Heating for 2023-24 given the significant reduction in the price of utilities to the Council since the price was agreed by the Council on 1 March 2023.

It is also proposed that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing and Assistant Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree revised pricing should there be a further reduction in the cost of operating the service.

This will make it more affordable for tenants to heat their homes which will be of greater benefit to particular groups such as disabled, unemployed, families with young children and pensioners.

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

The Council currently owns circa 20,000 homes, 544 leasehold homes and 3,375 garages with a turnover from rents and other sources approaching £89m per annum (excluding the sale of new properties). This includes approx. 1260 properties in the council’s district heating scheme.

The Census population of Rotherham in 2021 is 265,800, an increase of 8,200 (+3.2%) compared with the 2011 Census, with around half living in and around the main urban area of Rotherham. The remainder live in smaller towns such as Wath, Dinnington and Maltby, and in numerous large villages and rural communities, all of which have their own distinct identities

The 2021 Census further shows that Rotherham had 113,900 households, compared with 108,300 in the 2011 Census, an increase of 5,600 or 5.2%. In 2021, 17.7% of Rotherham’s population were under 15 years, whilst 25.8% were aged 60 or over. The population of Rotherham aged 60 or over is slightly higher than the England figure of 24.2% and the Yorkshire and Humber figure of 25%.

Rotherham’s young population (under 15) increased from 46,000 in 2011 to 47,100 in 2021 (a 2.4% increase). This increase followed a 6% fall from 48,900 in 2001 to 46,000 in 2011. Whilst the school age population has increased, the number of children aged 0-4

has decreased from 15,738 in 2011 to 14,600 (a 7.3% reduction) which reflects the impact that the pandemic has had on the birth rate.

Rotherham's older population (over 60) has increased from 61,500 in 2011 to 68,600 in the 2021 Census, an 11.5% rise (51,700 in 2001). Rotherham's population is ageing broadly in line with national trends and the percentage aged over 85 increased from 2.1% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2021.

120,600 Rotherham residents are in employment whilst 106,000 people have workplaces in the Borough, giving a net outflow of 14,700 workers. One in five workers who live in Rotherham are employed in Sheffield and another one in five work elsewhere outside Rotherham.

Rotherham has a similar age profile to the national average and in common with the national trends, the population is ageing. Central Rotherham has a younger population than average whilst the more suburban and rural areas, mainly in the south of the borough, have older age profiles.

Rotherham's Black and minority ethnic (BME) population was 8.1% in 2011 and is now estimated at around 11%. The central area of Rotherham is far more ethnically diverse than the rest of the Borough. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani & Kashmiri (4% of the population), followed by the Slovak & Czech Roma (1.5% of the population). Rotherham also has smaller Black African, Indian, Chinese, Irish and Arab communities, all with between 500 and 2,000 people.

The 2011 Census showed that 56,588 (22%) of Rotherham's population had a long term health problem or disability and 11.3% said their day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term conditions (8.3% nationally). In November 2016, 30,306 Rotherham residents (11.6%) claimed Disability Living Allowance (16,680), Personal Independence Payment (6,100) or Attendance Allowance (7,516).

Most neighbourhoods in Rotherham offer a good living environment and 78% of adults are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Despite improvements overall, some areas of Rotherham are affected by high economic and social deprivation. Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, which showed 19.5% of residents living in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Central Rotherham forms the main area of high deprivation although there are also pockets in Maltby, Rawmarsh, Dinnington, Thurcroft, Wath, Swinton and Aston. The main forms of deprivation affecting Rotherham are low levels of qualification, poor health, high rates of disability and high worklessness, notably long term sickness.

The HRA budget which feeds into the HRA Business Plan responds to the above concerns by continuing to invest in Tenant Involvement Services and capacity in the housing management teams.

<p>Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?</p> <p>No data is collected in respect of gender reassignment and religion and belief protected characteristics.</p>	
<p>What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?</p>	
<p>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Drop in sessions were held across all District heating schemes throughout March 2023</p>
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Meetings with M3 managers and emails seeking feedback into the rents, charges and HRA Budget throughout April and May 2023</p> <p>The proposals have been developed with support from Council Officers and input from the Strategic Leadership Team, Cabinet Member for Housing and Leader of the Council.</p>

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

<p>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)</p> <p>The proposed reduction in the cost of district heating will be beneficial to all service users as it reduces the cost of district heating. That said the reduction will have a greater benefit to groups that have their homes heated to a higher temperature or on lower incomes such as:</p> <p>Unemployed Single parents Families with young children Disabled Pensioners</p> <p>These groups will benefit more as they have less disposable income and/ or use more heat so will benefit more from the cost reduction as this is charged as a price per unit of heat used.</p>
<p>Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?</p> <p>The proposed reduction in the cost of district heating whilst beneficial to all service users as it reduces the cost of district heating it will still be expensive when compared to previous years. At the revised price of 15.94p per kwh the cost will be more than double to 2022-23</p>

price of 7.2 p per kwh. As a result there will continue to be challenges for the following groups to afford the price charged:

Low income households
Families with young children
Pensioners
Disabled tenants

As a result of challenges in affording the cost of heat / energy and wider impact due to the increased cost of living the same groups will benefit from government support such as cost of living payments and disability payments to help with the increased cost of living, pensioners will also receive assistance via a winter fuel payment of up to £500.

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

Vulnerable people are offered and provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community.

A key priority is the ongoing work mitigating the impact of general financial pressures tenants face. The Council is committed to minimising any effects on tenants and to do this through continuing early intervention and arrears prevention.

Our efforts will continue to be in supporting tenants to continue to pay their rent/ district heating; by offering additional support to vulnerable tenants to help with money, benefits and debt advice. Support available in Rotherham includes:

- RMBC Tenancy Support Service – provides practical support on all tenancy related issues including debt and budgeting. The team have access to funds to support people in crisis i.e. no gas/electric. Tenants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit
- Age UK Age Related Benefit Advisory Service – provide support and guidance to residents age 65 and over to claim all age related benefits to maximise income. They all provide holistic support in other areas of concern i.e. fuel poverty/home insulation etc
- RMBC DHP Fund- residents with rent arrears can apply to the RMBC Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for assistance to clear or reduce their debt subject to criteria
- ESF/RMBC Pathways and Inspire Employment Projects – provide support and assistance to people looking to access training and employment in order to better their financial situation. The team also have access to funding to help people in crisis i.e. no food/heating. Participants must be actively working with the team to receive financial benefit

APPENDIX 3

- RMBC Household Support Fund – will be used to support vulnerable people through help with energy costs with a grant of £250 to those with a disposable income of less than £150 per month.
- RMBC Advocacy and Appeals Team – providing people with practical support to maximise their income by claiming any benefits they are entitled too. The Team can assist with application and also with mandatory reconsideration and appeals/tribunals.
- Foodbanks – provided through Liberty Church, the Trussell Trust and Rotherham Foodbank. Vulnerable tenants can be supported through the provision of free food parcels in times of crisis. Referrals have historically been made through the RMBC Community Hub
- Social Supermarket – Rotherham Minster and VAR supporting residents through the provision of a social supermarket that allows members to pay £3 a week for a maximum of 3 months to allow them to shop in their store. This service transitions people from foodbank dependency and promotes empowerment through teaching budgeting skills
- Rotherfed ‘Making your money go further’ project – This project works with communities to deliver bespoke advice on how tenants and residents can save money and survive on a limited income.
- Citizens Advice Rotherham – providing advice and guidance to all residents on money management and debt solutions enabling clients to resolve the cycle of debt.

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)

It is not envisaged that the proposals will have any negative impact on community relations.

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: Revision of District heating charges 2023-24
Directorate and service area: ACH & PH – Housing Services
Lead Manager: Paul Elliott
Summary of findings:
The reduction in the price of district heating will assist all groups but have a greater benefit to low income groups, disabled, pensioners and households with children. These groups will continue to be provided with tenancy support which is tailored to individual needs to help them sustain their tenancy and live in the community.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Monitor the demographics of tenants in rent arrears (incl District heating) on a bi-annual basis	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	03/2024
Monitor the impact the price reduction has on the take up of tenancy support services by affected groups.	A,D,S,GR,RE,SO,RoB	03/2024

***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**

APPENDIX 3

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
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	

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	23/05/23
Report title and date	Revision of District Heating Charges 2023-24
Date report sent for publication	26/05/23
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	23/05/23