

Appendix 6

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:

Polling District and Polling Places Review 2023

Directorate:

Finance & Customer Services

Service area:

Electoral Services

Lead person:

Mike Thomas

Contact:

Mike.thomas@rotherham.gov.uk
01709 823 268

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify: Statutory public consultation

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

The Council has a statutory duty to carry out a review of its Parliamentary polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

A polling district is a small electoral area with a clearly defined boundary. A polling place is a building, plot of land or area within a polling district which is designated as the location for polling to take place. A polling station is a room within the designated building, or, for example, a portable building on a designated plot of land.

This review involves public consultation where interested parties can make representations about an electoral area, or polling station. Examples of this could be a proposal to include a newly built housing estate in an existing polling district, which would allow electors easier access to polling.

When carrying out the review, regard must be given to the [Electoral Commission's Polling place reviews](#) guidance, which includes the consideration of accessibility issues.

Following the review, the final recommendations must go to Full Council for approval.

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?**

The review will affect all eligible electors in Rotherham who are registered to vote and are of voting age (18 or over).

The main element of the review relating to equality is the location of polling stations and the accessibility of the premises designated for polling. The primary considerations for a review of this type are set in electoral law:

- The Council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
- The Council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.

It is important to ensure access to the consultation process is available to everyone, and support is provided to those who may require assistance to respond.

The current polling station arrangements have been designated following a polling district review in 2018 ahead of the implementation of new borough ward boundaries that came into force in May 2021.

At each major election, the Returning Officer employs Polling Station Inspectors (PSI's) to visit each polling station. Part of the PSI's duties is to inspect each polling station and provide feedback to the Returning Officer in relation to access for disabled people. We will also be considering complaints/comments received from electors in relation to their polling station which have been made as a result of elections in 2021 and 2022.

We will be publishing a notice of the review which will inform all interested parties of how and when to make representations, and what will happen at each step of the process.

The notice will be published on the Council website and in Riverside House. Direct communication will be sent to inform relevant and interested parties of the review including Borough Councillors, Rotherham MPs, Parish Clerks and community groups and organisations representing stakeholders with disabilities.

Representations will be accepted via online form, email, post or hand delivered to the Electoral Services Office.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings <p>We will be taking into account the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The comments/feedback from polling station inspectors from elections. • Comments/complaints from electors. • The representations submitted during the consultation stage of the review. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions <p>The information above will inform the review, and assist us in identifying areas of particular concern and where possible, consider alternative locations.</p> <p>The Returning Officer will continue to monitor all polling stations after every election annually through the inspections carried out by PSI's and any comments or complaints made by electors.</p>	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	01/08/2023
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	20/11/2023
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Mike Thomas Electoral Services Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Phil Horsfield	Assistant Director, Legal Services	08/08/23
Steve Eling	Policy and Equalities Manager	03/08/23

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	01/08/2023
Report title and date	Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 - 18 September 2023
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 - 18 September 2023 - Publication Date: 4 th September 2023
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	02/08/2023