

A Draft Cultural Strategy for Rotherham 2018 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this draft Cultural Strategy for Rotherham.

It has been developed by Rotherham's Cultural Partnership Board, an organisation which was formed during 2018 and which brings together people and agencies that care passionately about Rotherham's future – including artists, designers, local businesses, voluntary organisations, regional agencies, and Rotherham Council.

Everyone has come together to create a Cultural Strategy for Rotherham that aims to transform our town and borough into a better place to live, work and visit.

We need your help to make this happen.

We would really like to hear your views on this Draft Strategy and your ideas for making it better:

1. Can you suggest any improvements?
2. Do you think we've left anything out?
3. What do you think are the most important things we should do?
4. Do you agree with our vision for Rotherham?
5. Do you support our key goal – to enable everyone to get active, get creative and get outdoors, more often?
6. What is brilliant about culture in Rotherham and where could it be better?
7. What can you or your organisation do to support the ambitions and actions of the Strategy?
8. What do you think success for the Strategy will look like?

Please email us at info@likerotherham.org to tell us your thoughts.

Thank you!

Councillor Sarah Allen
Chair, Rotherham Cultural Partnership Board

WHY CULTURE MATTERS

Culture encompasses our natural environment, parks, woodland and countryside, sport, the arts (including performing arts, music, theatre, dance, visual art, craft, literature, circus, film and digital media), tourism attractions, libraries, heritage, museums and archives, events and play.

In the 2016 Views of Rotherham consultation, local people told us that culture matters to Rotherham:

- 82% saw well looked-after parks and public spaces as a priority
- 75% felt that having local places to go, such as museums and parks, is important
- 72% valued a good range of things to do for teenagers
- 67% thought that a bigger range of low cost leisure activities is important

Culture matters to Rotherham, not simply because people want things to do and places to go, but because culture has the power to make a significant impact on wider strategic priorities important to Rotherham's future. It has the power to shape how we think and feel about each other and where we live.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The development of a Cultural Strategy is an important next step in shaping Rotherham's future and delivering the vision set out in "The Rotherham Plan: a new perspective 2025".

The Strategy sets out Rotherham's aims for culture, leisure and green spaces. It describes how we will develop our local assets and resources, making the best use of what we have got and building agreement about our priorities for development, supporting the case for external funding and investment.

This Strategy will build understanding about how engagement with the arts, sport and natural environment can improve people's personal growth, health and wellbeing and sense of purpose. It will set out how enabling more people to participate, to get active, get creative and get outdoors, will not only make sure that everyone feels part of and proud of our community but also helps to strengthen our economy.

The Strategy is also an important way for us to build on Rotherham's unique identity, as expressed through our cultural habits and engagement. Rotherham has a wealth of beautiful green space, parks and countryside which are wonderfully accessible from our doorsteps. It has an abundance of places to participate in sport, music and leisure pursuits – many of which sprang from our industrial roots in the form of miners' halls and working men's clubs and pubs, and which still offer a rich mix of entertainment today. There is a year-round programme of events and festivities which bring people together – from Wath Festival, to the Festival of Angels, to Rotherham Show.

The millions of visits a year to Rotherham's cultural, sporting and leisure places, events and activities are just the start - this Strategy underpins our ambitions for the economic development of the borough, strengthening our identity, building pride and helping to transform perceptions of those who live here, those who view us from a distance and those who want to invest in our future.

Rotherham's achievements in culture, creative industries, sport and green spaces are an important way for us to celebrate success, and showcase what makes Rotherham a great place to live, study and do business in. Beyond Rotherham's great location and connectedness to the rest of the UK – it's also what we offer to families, students, businesses and others who may want to make this beautiful borough their home, where they can be confident that their passions and talents will be nurtured.

In recent years, just as our industries and communities have changed, so have our cultural habits and aspirations. Digital technology has both opened up our world and yet reduced our engagement with our own neighbours. Reductions in public sector investment have resulted in fewer opportunities for people to take part. There is less variety of affordable, quality activities and events available to them and fewer people to encourage and enable them to participate. This has significant consequences. It diminishes the talent pool which could mean that there are fewer people from Rotherham who will have the opportunity to turn their passion and talent into a sustainable career or business. It constrains the wider social, civic, health and educational benefits which are attributed to participation in culture, sport and green spaces and increases pressure on health and social care services.

This strategy is a call to action to local people and to local, regional and national partners to come together to make sure that our cultural life is given the opportunity to flourish. Because a flourishing cultural life will grow a flourishing community and a thriving economy.

Because culture matters to Rotherham.

OUR VISION

We believe in Rotherham, our place, whose stories we are proud to tell.

We want to enable our cultural, leisure and tourism sectors to make a brilliant contribution to life in Rotherham – growing us as individuals, helping to create a flourishing community and nurturing a thriving economy.

By 2025, we want to have inspired more people to become more active, more often, to take part regularly in the arts and to enjoy the benefits of our natural landscape, parks, museums and attractions.

Rotherham will be a place where everyone has a story to tell about our astonishing heritage of industry, innovation and the creative and sporting achievements of our people.

OUR KEY PRINCIPLES

In delivering this strategy, partners are committed to the following principles. We will:

- Appreciate, support and celebrate what's already great and unique about Rotherham
- Be imaginative, excited by new ideas and seek to innovate in order to improve the quality of what we do and how we do it
- See Rotherham through the eyes and ambition of our children and young people and create with them a place we're all proud of
- Celebrate our diversity and work hard to make sure everyone can get involved
- Be great partners, recognising the value of collaboration
- Prioritise investment where we can make the most difference

ROTHERHAM'S CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Nobody can deliver transformation alone. The voluntary, independent, public, commercial, professional, educational and private sectors, individual artists, sportspeople, producers, participants and champions all play significant roles. Regional and national sector specific organisations have crucial parts to play as critical friends, sources of expertise, guidance and potential investment.

In 2018, Rotherham's Cultural Partnership Board came together. This new board has developed this draft Strategy and will lead on its delivery, strengthening linkages with the Rotherham Together Partnership and its related boards and plans.

The Cultural Partnership Board is working with a wide range of organisations, including: the Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham, (Rotherham's Cultural Education Partnership), the emerging Rotherham Activity Partnership, the Business Growth Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Youth Cabinet, and the Different But Equal Board, and is keen to further strengthen partnerships across the culture, leisure and tourism sectors.

RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

Organisations, individuals and businesses across the sector, including Rotherham Council, already make significant investment in the cultural growth of Rotherham. In addition a number of external agencies have helped, or are helping, to fund cultural activity, including Arts Council England, Sport England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

There are likely to be significant changes during the life of the Strategy, not least in the use of new technology, which could impact on the way people access cultural, leisure and sporting activities. We will need to make best and flexible use of resources, reacting positively and swiftly to changing needs and demands.

The Strategy is not about necessarily spending more money. Many of the actions identified can happen without further investment, using no cost or low cost solutions. It is much more about collaboratively making the very best use of the wealth of existing resources, skills and assets and ensuring that the sector becomes increasingly resilient.

The Cultural Partnership Board will work together to build a sustainable and flexible funding model which will make better use of resources, will strengthen Rotherham's position as "investment ready" and present a joined-up approach to securing external support and funding.

TAKING PART

Research shows us that when people participate in sport, physical activity, libraries, the arts, heritage and green spaces, they have better health, better education and better jobs. Participation brings our communities together and helps to grow our economy. However, participation in Rotherham is lower than in most of the rest of the UK. **Therefore our key goal is to enable everyone to get active, get creative and get outdoors, more often.**

We want to make sure that everyone living in, studying in and visiting Rotherham enjoys a healthy, thriving and vibrant cultural life. We want to inspire more people to take part in culture, leisure, green spaces and sport. We want people who do take part to do so more often and to have a great time.

People come across culture at different times of their life and in many different ways. It may be from worry, concern, loneliness or boredom; from interest, curiosity, ambition or passion. Culture for one person could be a life-long interest, for another a different experience every day. No matter, the impact and memories can last a life time – a poem or song learned by heart, laughing until you cry at a pantomime, snuggling up with a good book, playing the guitar to lull a baby to sleep, a family bike ride on the beach, a stroll in the park, winning a race or cheering on a team.

Everybody knows when it happens, that feeling of being in the moment, of being part of something great – but one of the challenges for the sector is to capture that moment and be able to share what it means and the impact it has, in order to fulfil our aim to inspire more people to take part. We need to quantify the buzz.

There are many ways of being involved in culture; for example, as

- a supporter: such as a volunteer, a member of a “Friends” group, or a fundraiser
- a deliverer: such as a lifeguard or a librarian, a museum assistant or an events manager
- an attender: going to a football match, visiting a gallery, walking in the park
- a maker: such as a gardener, artist or choreographer
- a guide: such as a swimming coach, a creative media lecturer, or someone who runs a flower arranging class
- a leader: such as the Arts Council, Sport England, an elite performer or passionate advocate

And taking part; for example, as

- someone who enjoys a directed walk in the local park, completes the Couch to 5k programme, runs a marathon
- someone who learns to ride a bike, joins a cycling club, competes in the Tour de Yorkshire
- someone who reads a book, joins a readers’ group, becomes an author

To inspire and encourage more people to take part, we will:

- Find out more about who is getting involved, who isn't and why
- Find creative solutions to removing barriers to participation
- Work together to signpost people to the right opportunity for them
- Build in accessible ways to encourage and support people to take part more often
- Celebrate what is brilliant and work together to make improvements

NURTURING AND GROWING OUR ASSETS

Culture is life affirming, life enriching and life changing. It's the simple pleasure of entertainment, the joy of inspiration and the challenge of ambition. Taking part helps us to learn more about ourselves and the world around us, tests our preconceptions and gives us new and fresh perspectives. It is clear that culture in its broadest sense underpins the Rotherham Plan's vision for Rotherham in 2025: "a place where people want to live, work, study, invest or visit. We want to develop a competitive, sustainable economy that builds on our strengths in advanced manufacturing, culture and innovation, and we want local people to live healthy, fulfilling lives in a place where local assets are used to their full potential."

For that to happen we need to put a brilliant infrastructure in place which connects our high profile, nationally admired, amazing places with our well-loved, vital, local neighbourhood spaces. We need to celebrate everything from Wentworth Woodhouse and Gulliver's to local libraries, leisure centres and parks. We also need to fill the gaps – develop a culturally rich town centre, take care of and develop our beautiful natural and built heritage, create and deliver a wonderful cultural offer for children, young people and their families.

Rotherham already has some great cultural assets and they are getting better:

- 82% of Rotherham residents see well-looked after parks and public spaces as a priority
- 72% of Rotherham is beautiful green space
- 99% of users love our libraries, situated within 2 miles of 98% of our communities

- In the north, Wentworth Woodhouse will become a destination for the nation
- In the south, Gulliver's Valley Resort brings thrills to the region
- In Rotherham centre, we will build a cinema and work together to create new space for the arts

To build and improve our cultural assets, we will:

- Review our cultural, sporting, natural and built heritage assets to understand where investment is needed most
- Do all we can to develop local skills, talents and businesses, bringing in new, additional and sustainable investment
- Listen well to ensure that we take good decisions and make sure we can show what's getting better, prioritising those areas where we can make the most difference
- Work hard together to build vibrant, dynamic, high quality cultural experiences for the place we love
- Use technology to create a Rotherham which is a fun, surprising, place, which will attract new audiences and provide a platform for technology based creative industries to showcase their talents
- Improve support for organisations and businesses across Rotherham who are working hard to deliver sporting and cultural opportunities, events and tourist attractions

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National

In March 2016, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published The Culture White Paper, the first white paper for culture in more than 50 years. The paper has four areas of focus:

- Everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers no matter where they start in life
- The riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country
- The power of culture can increase our national standing
- Cultural investment, resilience and reform

The White Paper set out the value of culture in terms of:

- The intrinsic value: the enriching value of culture in and of itself
- The social value: improving educational attainment and helping people to be healthier
- The economic value; the contribution culture makes to economic growth and job creation

The White Paper set out Government's commitment to ensuring that culture is an essential part of every child's education, both in and out of school. It also set out that culture is integral to the identity of local areas and has the potential to transform place.

Furthermore, the Government is keen that more partnerships are formed between national and local levels to put culture at the heart of place-making.

“Great art and culture for everyone”, published by Arts Council England in 2010 and updated in 2013, sets out a vision and 10 year strategic framework for the development of arts, museums and libraries.

Sport England’s strategy “Towards an active nation”, published in 2016, aims to make sure everyone can experience the benefits of sport and physical activity, regardless of age, background or ability.

Historic England’s corporate plan 2018-21 sets out actions they will take to support their role of helping people care for, enjoy and celebrate England’s spectacular historic environment

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ “A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, published in 2018, sets out goals for improving the environment within a generation.

Fields in Trust’s “Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces”, published in 2018, provides a robust economic valuation of parks and green spaces in the UK as well as valuing improvements in health and wellbeing associated with their frequent use.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: National Planning Policy Framework – Draft Revision, published in 2018, (Chapter 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities), talks about the importance of access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities

The Creative Industries Federation’s “Industrial Strategy: a blue print for growth”, published in 2017, demonstrates the role the creative industries play in the modern economy and how a UK industrial strategy can use them to deliver growth.

Regional

The Sheffield City Region is located at the strategic heart of the country. It is comprised of the nine local authority areas of Barnsley, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Doncaster, North East Derbyshire, Rotherham and Sheffield.

There are currently nine sector groups, including two which relate to culture:

- Creative and Digital Industries
- Sport, Leisure and Tourism

The Sheffield City Region's Mayor recognises the importance of culture to the region and, prior to his election in May 2018, outlined plans to put forward a Sheffield City Region of Culture bid to celebrate the best of the region. The development of Rotherham's Cultural Strategy will enable us to build partnerships with the wider city region on projects and issues of shared interest, strengthen Rotherham's role within the City Region and make the case for investment.

Rotherham will be a lead player in Sheffield City Region's bid to be the UK City of Culture in 2025.

Local

The development of a Cultural Strategy is an important next step in shaping Rotherham's future and delivering the vision set out in "The Rotherham Plan: a new perspective 2025", particularly supporting the game-changing activities relating to:

- A place to be proud of: restoring faith and optimism in the borough, transforming perceptions and rebuilding Rotherham's reputation and encouraging ambition
- Skills and employment: building talent, educational achievement and skills; growing creative, leisure industries and the visitor economy
- Town centre: supporting regeneration and place making
- Building stronger communities: growing better neighbourhoods, strengthening community cohesion, building empathy, reducing isolation, improving quality of life and enabling personal growth
- Improving people's health and well-being: encouraging physical activity, strengthening emotional resilience and positive mental health

The four themes for a "child friendly Rotherham" are closely aligned with the cultural planning process:

- A vibrant borough with age-appropriate, fun things to do; supporting their engagement in culture, sport and the outdoors
- Places in Rotherham to be safe, clean and welcoming
- Children and young people have a voice and are listened to
- Opportunities to bring together and celebrate Rotherham's diverse communities

The Cultural Strategy is contributing to the development and delivery of a range of other plans and initiatives, including:

- The Rotherham Story and its key themes of Engineering Excellence, Living Green and Pushing Boundaries
- Rotherham Economic Growth Plan and the town centre masterplan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2016-19
- Building Stronger Communities Plan 2017
- Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19

DEVELOPING TALENT, GROWING BUSINESS

We want everyone in Rotherham to have the opportunity to turn their passion into a profession.

Because we want Rotherham residents to contribute to the success of our economy and our nation – on our stages, screens, sports pitches and in industry

By 2025 we will create 500 new volunteers, 50 new apprenticeships and 1500 new jobs in the creative, digital, cultural, leisure and tourism sectors

Rotherham's proud industrial heritage of steel making, coal mining, pottery and glass-making is well known and celebrated. Innovation and engineering excellence is in our DNA – shared with the world in the Rotherham plough, the Bailey bridge and the screw down tap. These historic inventions continue to find expression with the Advanced Manufacturing Park and wider Waverley development in the south west of the borough, aiming to deliver 4,000 new homes and 3,400 jobs over a 20 year period. Despite the decline of our traditional industries, employment has grown in recent years and the number of jobs in Rotherham has increased to a record 117,000. Rotherham is now the fastest growing city-economy in Yorkshire and the eighth fastest growing economy in the UK.

Adult qualification levels are below average, notably higher skills, reflecting Rotherham's industrial legacy. However, most pupils attending Rotherham's schools have good attainment, with GCSE performance above the national average. The University Centre Rotherham, which opened in autumn 2018, will offer degrees and professional training qualifications in a range of subjects, including creative, digital and visual arts, expanding creative horizons for a new generation of students.

Many communities were built up around industry, which shaped leisure and cultural activities and gave us our bands, choirs, amateur dramatic societies and sports clubs which brought people together and shaped our local identity, sense of belonging and civic pride.

Like many places, Rotherham's town centre has experienced particular challenges. However the regeneration of Forge Island, the conservation and redevelopment of our beautiful natural and built heritage and the continued resilience of a number of independent businesses gives reason for optimism. Our historic buildings are finding new life as shops, bars and hotels. Culture, leisure and creative industries have a major role to play in revitalising our town so that Rotherham can compete with its neighbours and once again become a bustling, thriving and attractive place.

In the south of the borough, the development of the brilliant Gulliver's Valley Resort, the introduction of major new camping and caravan facilities, the revitalisation of Rother Valley Country Park and the development of the historic canal network will create new, high quality experiences for residents and visitors alike.

In the north, the astonishing Wentworth Woodhouse, now a charitable trust, provides Rotherham with a nationally-significant new tourism product. This monumental stately home, adjacent to the beautiful Dearne Valley, the historic towns of Elsecar, Wath and Swinton, will create a rival to Chatsworth and a new hub for cultural tourism which will benefit the whole borough.

All of this is set within the lush, verdant landscape that makes up a whopping 70% green space of our borough, making Rotherham one of the most attractive and liveable places to reside, study and do business.

We will:

1. Develop new products, supporting business growth:

- Open and promote Gulliver's Valley Resort, a brand new inland resort and theme park designed especially for families
- Open a caravan park at Rother Valley Country Park to encourage more overnight stays
- Develop Wentworth Woodhouse as a heritage attraction, business location and hub for cultural tourism
- Consider ways to develop a rich and diverse cultural offer within Rotherham town, including the redevelopment of Forge Island
- Increase the numbers of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations in Rotherham
- Work with Gallerytown, Rotherham Open Arts Renaissance, Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham Planning Service, local developers and other partners to commission high quality new artworks to improve our public realm

2. Create new employment opportunities

- Work together to create an additional 1500 jobs in sport, leisure and culture by 2025
- Work with local partners to encourage more commissioning and employment opportunities for local artists, creatives, sports, leisure and environmental organisations and professionals

3. Develop workforce skills

- Work through the local cultural education partnership and the district activity partnership to encourage schools to support engagement in arts, design, physical education and outdoor learning
- Provide opportunities to improve literacy, digital skills and job readiness within our libraries and neighbourhood locations
- Increase the range and numbers of cultural apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities, creating 50 new apprenticeships and 500 new volunteers by 2025
- Encourage take up of sector specific higher level qualifications
- Encourage take up of sector specific customer care training to ensure a warm Rotherham welcome to all our visitors

4. Develop Rotherham Town Centre

- Encourage the development of a new cinema on Forge Island
- Work with partners to create a new cultural hub to increase engagement, provide a home for local creative businesses and increase footfall within the town centre
- Develop new public art to improve the attractiveness of the urban environment
- Improve signage and encourage better navigation of the cultural and leisure offer within Rotherham
- Continue to support the delivery of imaginative events which act as a draw and support the wider retail, food and hospitality sectors

BUILDING PRIDE, CELEBRATING OUR UNIQUE IDENTITY

We want all our residents to really like Rotherham. By 2025, we want other places to want to be like Rotherham.

We will:

- **Develop our events and activities programmes to make them unique to Rotherham, celebrating our heritage and our local stories**
- **Grow tourism to encourage more local people and visitors to enjoy the cultural life of the borough**
- **Work with the media and Rotherham Pioneers to celebrate the achievements and share positive stories about our creative, cultural, sporting and green space sectors**
- **Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and others to make Sheffield City Region the next UK City of Culture in 2025**

Rotherham's narrative is changing. It undoubtedly has its challenges but despite, or perhaps because of, these challenges, Rotherham people remain staunchly proud of their heritage and culture. From the stunning countryside of the rural south, to the treasures of Clifton Park and Museum, from Rotherham United's magnificent town centre stadium to the grandeur of Wentworth Woodhouse in the north, Rotherham has many new stories to tell.

The identity Rotherham shows to the world has in recent times been challenged in a fundamental way. Those challenges spread loud and clear throughout the borough and people were galvanised to act. There is now a strong and pervasive determination to reclaim a new Rotherham, with a refreshed identity as a vibrant, multicultural, hard-working, fair and harmonious place which promotes equality, challenges intolerance, embraces diversity and celebrates its achievements.

Rotherham has numerous heritage, sporting and cultural attractions, including; the unique Grimm and Co, a famous children's Shakespeare Festival, astonishing heritage landscapes and sites, thriving sports and leisure centres, award winning parks, a well-attended and much loved Civic Theatre, great sports clubs, fantastic days out at Magna and the Butterfly House, a rich and varied music scene and a host of quirky local festivals. We need to make more of and promote our great assets, whilst working hard to seek investment to be better.

Our green spaces, wildflower verges, local and country parks and tree lined streets are rightly much loved by local residents. This view was shared loud and clearly in the Views from Rotherham consultation in 2015. Visitors to Wentworth Woodhouse, Boston Castle, Magna and Clifton Park Museum, with its small wonders and big stories, can explore and experience the wonder and joy of their own and shared heritage. Our award and prize winning sports clubs, champions and professionals give us cause to celebrate and cheer.

As the cultural and leisure offer in the town centre and its surroundings grows and develops and as exciting developments both in the south of the borough, centred around Gulliver's and Rother Valley Country Park, and in the north, where Wentworth Woodhouse finds new life as a creative and cultural hub, all become reality, Rotherham residents will be proud to welcome in regional, national and international visitors.

We will:

1. Promote our offer

- Produce a destination management plan and create a new destination management organisation in order to develop the visitor experience and welcome, connecting our cultural offer with the wider food, drink, retail and accommodation offer
- Work with the SCR Tourism Forum and Welcome to Yorkshire on shared promotional opportunities
- Celebrate the achievements of local cultural, leisure and tourism organisations and individuals
- Work with the wider business community to strengthen opportunities for partnership and encourage sponsorship and employee engagement activities

2. Develop a high quality and innovative culture, sport and green spaces sector

- Build on the Great Place: Elsecar and Wentworth project and work with Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust to develop a nationally and internationally renowned cultural and creative hub
- Build on the Gulliver's and Rother Valley Country Park developments to create a cohesive, high profile and high quality cultural and leisure offer in the south of the borough
- Deliver a programme of high profile sporting and cultural events, including Yorkshire Day 2020
- Work with the Football Association on a bid to host the Women's UEFA 2021, along with 8 other locations in England
- Develop borough wide programmes to capture local imagination and build local pride, including supporting the ambition for all schools to take part in the Mile a Day Challenge and Arts Mark
- Work with children and young people to deliver their Manifesto for Reimagining Rotherham and supporting their participation in culture, sport and the outdoors

3. Celebrate and develop Rotherham's unique identity

- Work collaboratively with Rotherham Pioneers and the Rotherham Ambition Board to develop and deliver the Rotherham Story and its themes of living green, engineering excellence and pushing boundaries
- Work through the Cultural Partnership Board and its networks to ensure that our events and activities strengthen and celebrate our collective Rotherham identity
- Work with community partners to celebrate our diverse heritage and build our joint identity

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

We will continue to build an amazing programme of events to bring people together, making sure that everyone has a fair opportunity to get involved

We will celebrate:

- **The 40th anniversary of Rotherham Show in 2019**
- **Yorkshire Day in 2020**
- **Women's European Football Tournament (UEFA) in 2021**

We will create more opportunities to celebrate our diverse heritage, our collective Rotherham identity and to imagine our shared future.

Rotherham has a vibrant and diverse mix of people, cultures and communities. Its 110 square miles feature a range of small villages, urban towns and rural environments, with 70% being open countryside. Many communities share the challenges of deprivation, particularly those which were most affected by the decline in the traditional coal and steel industries.

Most of the borough's 260,800 residents live in urban areas. Outside of the town centre there are a number of substantial populations and local villages, each with a clear sense of its own heritage, tradition and ambition. People who live there will often describe themselves as from a particular village rather than "from Rotherham". Local neighbourhoods, also, have evolved their unique identities. The warmth and friendliness of local people is commented on both by those who live here and those who visit. Getting on well with your neighbours, enjoying coming together to work on things that are important locally, having local places to go and things to do in safe, clean, green spaces all matter, wherever you live.

The population is increasingly diverse, with around one person in 10 from a minority ethnic group, the largest communities of which are Pakistani/Kashmiri and Slovak/Czech Roma. Our cultural events and activities need to be attractive and accessible to everybody, giving families, neighbours and friends opportunities to come together and enjoy each other's company, challenge preconceptions and tell great stories.

The culture, sport and leisure sectors offer a multitude of ways to enjoy being together, from street parties to carnivals, village fetes to music festivals. Rotherham Pride, International Women's Day, the "Love is Louder" campaign and Armed Forces Day, amongst many others, bring communities together to reflect and to share experiences. Rotherham Show is almost 40 years old and its special mix of entertainment, live music, the Diversity Festival, activities and local flavour has been enjoyed by tens of thousands of local residents and visitors.

Community led projects are making a huge difference across the borough. Passionate and hard working organisations such as Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherfed are working with volunteers and communities to build the local sense of belonging and community spirit. The annual Big Volunteer Walk celebrates and says a huge thank you to the huge number of Rotherham people who volunteer their time every day.

Volunteers play a significant role within the cultural sector – coaches, "Friends" groups, litter pickers, musicians, conservationists, reading helpers, fundraisers, befrienders, organisers and deliverers of many, many different activities and events. Volunteering gives you opportunities to hear other people's stories, learn something new, remember what really matters and see that small actions can have an enormous impact.

We will:

- 1. Support the delivery of low cost, accessible activities reflecting the diversity, traditions and festivals of our communities**
 - Refresh and revitalise Rotherham Show
 - Support a year-long programme of activities in the town centre aimed at bringing people together
 - Actively promote opportunities to bring communities with different backgrounds together
 - Celebrate role models from within the sector and within our different communities
 - Bring together and share the stories and heritage of Rotherham's different communities

- 2. Create opportunities for volunteering within the sport, leisure and cultural sector**
 - Establish community engagement roles across the sector to provide a front door for local individuals and communities
 - Enhance the role of libraries as well used neighbourhood hubs
 - Work together to develop the infrastructure to support the creation of 500 new volunteering roles within the sector
 - Work with local neighbourhoods as they develop their local plans to ensure that we are aware of local needs and can aim to make the biggest impact where it matters most

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We will work with our children and young people to deliver their Manifesto for Reimagining Rotherham and supporting their participation in culture, sport and the outdoors

We will:

- **Encourage all schools to take part in the Mile a Day Challenge and Arts Mark, reaching 100% by 2025**
- **Work with schools and Rotherham College to increase the numbers of young people progressing to higher level qualifications in culture, leisure and sport-based programmes**
- **Increase the range of outdoor activities for young people through our parks and green spaces**
- **Increase reading for pleasure amongst young people by 25% by 2025**

Rotherham aims to be a place where children are listened to, cared for and given every opportunity to have a full, happy and productive life. Our young people are creating a vision and ambition for Rotherham which sees itself as a place that people want to visit, live, work and study in. Our Cultural Strategy will be led by Rotherham's children and young people – the cultural entrepreneurs, sports people, performers, artists and cultural champions of the future.

Many of Rotherham's children and young people are excited about their future and the future of the borough. The Young Inspectors act as our critical friends, helping us improve what we do. The Youth Cabinet has a strong track record of making a difference and its current manifesto stresses the importance of positive work experiences and volunteering, along with emphasising the support young people need to improve their mental wellbeing. The Different But Equal Board is bringing together and harnessing the energy of a wide and diverse range of voices to ensure that we listen and act. Our schools and colleges are encouraging and supporting young people to enjoy and explore culture, arts and sport.

The passion children and young people have for culture, sports and our green spaces shows itself in their ambitions for Rotherham. The amazing Grimm and Co have worked with young people to co-create a Manifesto for Rotherham's future which puts leisure, green spaces, sport and culture at its heart. The joy and excitement young people show – whether that be when taking part in Rotherham's brilliant children's Shakespeare Festival, exploring their favourite books in the Summer Reading Challenge, bringing the past to life through magical events at Clifton Park Museum, enjoying the fun of water, grass and the great outdoors in our parks or our young athletes enjoying the challenge of Mega Active – is an inspiration to everyone.

To achieve their full potential, all children and young people, including those who are Looked After, need to be safe, to be healthy and well, to have the knowledge they need to take decisions right for them and the skills and experience to get the most from the world of work. Our safe and welcoming spaces are places to learn, to explore, to be creative and to enjoy making and being with their friends. Our parks, green spaces, sports clubs, leisure centres and play areas provide opportunities to get healthy and enjoy the world around them.

Young people are wonderful advocates and will bring their families, friends and those who care for them to experience all that culture, leisure, green spaces and sport in Rotherham can bring. They encourage and challenge us to see Rotherham through their eyes as a place of great potential, a place where they want to live and work.

We will:

1. Listen to, learn from and respond to the ambitions of children and young people

- Work with our children and young people to deliver their Manifesto for Reimagining Rotherham
- Maintain a strong and productive network through the local cultural education partnership (Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham)
- Work with the Youth Cabinet to develop the work experience programme to ensure that it responds to the challenges young people face as they enter work for the first time
- Work with the Different But Equal Board to ensure that all young people feel that there is a culture, leisure or sport offer which is right for them
- Develop a programme of customer based assessment with the Young Inspectors

2. Work with young people to co-create, co-deliver and co-evaluate our culture, sport and leisure activities, events and programmes, ensuring that they deliver impact where it is needed most

- Create and deliver an offer which engages children, young people and their families, supporting their participation in culture, sport and the outdoors
- Support the ambition for all Rotherham primary schools to be taking part in the 'run a mile' initiative
- Develop a programme of "first time activity" with children and young people to encourage more to take part
- Co-create a programme of high quality events and activities designed to enable all children and young people to enjoy time together with each other and with the people important to them
- Work collaboratively to increase reading for pleasure amongst young people by 25%

3. Develop, retain and attract young people with talent

- Offer cultural apprenticeships to 10 young people each year
- Provide opportunities for young people to experience work within the sector
- Support schools to achieve sector specific quality marks
- Support young people to obtain sector specific awards
- Encourage young people to progress to higher level qualifications in culture, leisure and sport based programmes

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Participating in the arts, being physically active, and getting outdoors – particularly in the natural environment – all contribute to making us happier and healthier

We will:

- **Establish a new Activity Partnership to plan, promote and co-ordinate programmes to encourage physical activity**
- **Improve and develop routes for walking, running and cycling – encouraging residents and visitors alike to explore and appreciate our green space, canals and waterways**
- **Increase the involvement of older people, disabled people and other vulnerable sectors in order to reduce the demand on health and social care services**

Good health is the foundation of living a fulfilling life, making the most of our abilities and engaging in the world around us. It is not just about feeling physically fit but feeling good about ourselves and being able to live our lives well. Unfortunately, too many people in Rotherham are not enjoying the best of health.

Being active, spending time outdoors, getting together with friends and neighbours, volunteering, learning something new and taking notice of the world around us can all make a difference to our health and well-being. Encouraging people to be physically active also has wider benefits, developing safer, stronger communities, reducing anti-social behaviour and increasing skills and employment.

Everyday activity, such as gardening and a stroll in the park; active recreation, such as dancing, swimming and active play; structured sport, such as playing hockey or competitive cycling all make enormous contributions to our physical health. From fun runs to 10ks, ballroom dancing to bell-ringing, wheel chair tennis to Zorbing, finding the right activity for you opens up a new world of friendship and shared learning.

A significant proportion of both adults and children leaving primary school are overweight and obese. Ageing healthily starts early in life and, with one in five people in Rotherham under 15 whilst one in four are over 60, there is both a challenge and an opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits which establishing a life time habit of taking part in leisure and sport provide, improving health now and preventing ill health developing in future. More people taking part, more often will help us all live healthy and fulfilling lives, whatever our age.

The benefits of eating well and increasing the amount of time we spend physically active are generally perhaps better known and understood than the impact which taking part can have on our sense of wellbeing and good mental health. We may find out what it feels like to work as a team, think creatively, increase our confidence, concentrate better, make friends and find out we can be better at something than we ever thought we could. On average, mental health problems affect one in four people at some point each year, leaving many of us feeling vulnerable, lonely or depressed. Rotherham's beautiful and inspiring green spaces, its huge network of arts, crafts, sports and social groups, its libraries, and museums, all provide welcoming, safe, accessible opportunities for interaction, creativity, making our own choices and learning more about ourselves and the world – encouraging us to take that first step to a more fulfilling life.

We will:

1. Address barriers to taking part

- Promote our joint offer, to increase awareness of what's available, when and where
- Provide a range of no cost or low cost opportunities to take part in culture, leisure and sporting activities
- Develop a wide and varied programme – to give people the widest possible choice
- Encourage people to experience and try out activities for the first time

2. Encourage participation at all levels

- Build in opportunities and innovation to improve everyday health within our workplaces, green spaces, cultural buildings and in places people go to the most
- Motivate and support the least active to take the first step to becoming active
- Create opportunities for families and friends to take part in leisure, sport and cultural activities together, particularly during school holidays
- Work together to provide pathways to excellence, inspiring those who are already active to develop their skills and ambition
- Develop walking and cycling as ways to encourage incremental participation and as large scale events

3. Improve the local sports and physical activity infrastructure

- Develop a new Active Partnership for Rotherham, promoting and increasing the use of sport, leisure, countryside and green spaces to increase physical activity
- Support clubs providing sports, dance and physical activity to grow membership and sustain provision
- Encourage cycling, walking and running by ensuring good access to green space, canals and riversides and footpaths.

4. Give everyone opportunities to improve and maintain good mental health

- Use the 5 Ways to Wellbeing as a framework for our event programme, encouraging everyone to be active, connect with others, give to others and take notice of the world around them
- Reduce isolation and loneliness by providing safe, welcoming spaces for people to come together and enjoy each other's company

CONSULTATION

Prior to and during the development of this Draft Strategy, a significant amount of consultation has already taken place, including responses gathered during the Views of Rotherham consultation in 2016, the development of the Town Centre Masterplan, the place-shaping work within the Rotherham Story, the 2017 Lifestyle Survey, and the Rotherham Cultural Education Partnership's consultation which culminated in the Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham.

For example, in the Views of Rotherham consultation:

- 82% saw well looked-after parks and public spaces as a priority
- 75% felt that having local places to go, such as museums and parks, is important
- 72% valued a good range of things to do for teenagers
- 67% thought that a bigger range of low cost leisure activities is important

Consistently, during consultation, our children and young people have expressed their passion for Rotherham, their creativity and imagination in proposing a positive, vibrant vision for where they live and their determination and willingness to influence its future. They told us:

- We would like to have a cinema in Rotherham because then we would be able to spend more time with family and friends. Watching films also makes you more imaginative!
- We would like there to be festivities based on other people's religions, cultures and traditions
- We think there should be an arts centre where anyone can go to learn different things, such as singing, acting, dancing, or painting. There would be regular performances at the arts centre and they would be accessible to everybody
- Rotherham should have a communal garden, because gardening teaches people to respect and look after the world, and treat it with greater importance. It is also therapeutic and relaxing
- Everyone should be able to go walking in the woods, because it helps you appreciate nature, become aware of your surroundings, and have fun
- We'd like a café where people can gain work experience

Members of the Cultural Partnership Board have met with individuals, partners, stakeholders, the voluntary sector and businesses to listen to and capture their views. This has included a number of discussions and workshops with community based organisations and young people.

During the coming months, the Board will continue to engage with people and organisations across the borough. The Strategy will be available at www.likerotherham.org and will also be available in print via Council and partner outlets

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Are you interested in working with us to create a new, dynamic, healthy and happy Rotherham?

- If you're happy to show your support for Rotherham, promote what we have and celebrate our successes
- If you're already spending some of your time helping out with cultural activities, or you feel this is something you'd like to do
- If you would like to be part of the Cultural Partnership Board and its working groups
- If you enjoy taking part in culture and sport or are working in the sector and would like to work with us to create amazing events, exhibitions and activities
- If you would like to comment on anything in this Strategy or let us have your views about what's important to you

Email us at info@likerotherham.org or contact us via Council and partners outlets

Follow us on Twitter: @LikeRotherham