



THINGS TO DO PLACES TO GO

**LET'S TRANSFORM ROTHERHAM'S FUTURE THROUGH
CULTURE, LEISURE AND GREEN SPACES**

Rotherham Cultural Strategy 2019-2026

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This is Rotherham's first Cultural Strategy in over 10 years. It has been created by the people of Rotherham, over 20 months of workshops, debates and consultation.

The strategy process has been led and facilitated by Like Rotherham – a local Cultural Partnership Board - working together to make sure that as many people as possible who live here can take part in high quality cultural, leisure and sporting activities. We want Rotherham to be the best it can be.

In order to create this strategy the Cultural Partnership has operated under the guidance of the COMPACT, an agreement between government and the voluntary and community sector (often referred to as civil society), which sets out a way of working that improves their relationship for mutual advantage. It considers areas such as involvement in

policy design, service design and delivery, funding arrangements, promoting equality and strengthening independence and places communities and civil society at the heart of decision making.

This Strategy is for anyone who cares about making Rotherham a better place to live, work and visit. It will shape the future for Rotherham. It will help decision makers and influencers prioritise what really matters and focus investment where it is needed most.

It is a call to action. We have seven years and we need your help to make it happen.

WELCOME TO ROTHERHAM

WHAT IS CULTURE?



Culture is hard to define, it is like air.

We all use it, often more than we realise and without thinking.

We need it to sustain us, to improve our health and wellbeing.

However, we all experience it differently.

Some of us take in more than others.

Sometimes this a choice.

At others we have restrictions that are beyond our control placed upon us.

How we breathe in culture is deeply unique and personal to each individual.*



The word “**culture**” can sometimes seem confusing because is often used in very different ways. It is important therefore to clarify what we mean by culture and how we intend to use it in this document. Typically when people talk about culture we think of the arts, dance, literature, cinema, theatre, poetry and music. But more fundamentally culture is an **innate part of our lives** and who we are: it includes our beliefs and customs, how we dress, the language and accent we speak with, how we relate to others, and how we understand our place within the world. Meeting friends and relatives, celebrations, social events, sharing food and ideas, the objects of beauty and personal meaning we place in our homes - these are all important parts of culture. Of course these vary greatly depending on one’s community and history - in this sense culture is **deeply woven into the fabric of our heritage, beliefs and values**.

In the context of this document we also use the term “culture” to include green spaces, sport and outdoor activity. To clarify this point: we might argue that a forest is not a cultural space in itself, but how and when we visit the forest, what we do there and so on, is determined by our cultural context.

Finally is important to note that in the context of this document the term “culture” is not used to attribute value to a particular kind of cultural activity or to marginalise any others. Similarly, the suggestion that some activities are “cultured” and others are not **is rejected**. In this sense to advocate for culture does not mean favouring any one cultural activity over any others: street theatre, the symphony orchestra, community led interventions, food, music, play, a poetry recital - although different, are seen as having equal importance within a collective cultural life. This document’s focus on culture therefore **recognises and promotes the importance and value of cultural diversity** and the many traditions that exist within the borough.

*Shakoor Adalat, Chair of Rotherham Muslim Community Forum

**THIS MAKES CULTURE
IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US.**

WHY CULTURE MATTERS TO ROTHERHAM?

An active cultural life **enriches and transforms our communities**, our town and ourselves. Research shows that people who take active participation in cultural events have better health, education and employment. In this way participation **brings communities together** and creates places to be proud of. Furthermore, evidence irrefutably shows that an active cultural environment stimulates economic growth and regeneration.

In Rotherham culture is already our key strength: within our town over **100 languages are spoken**, and our residents trace their histories from all over the world. This puts our town on par with some of the largest, most thriving and most visited cities on the planet. Our town’s unique **cultural diversity** is therefore fundamental to our future growth and collective well-being. We will **celebrate and champion** our town’s cultural identity and expression at every opportunity, embedding cultural diversity into everything we do in the promotion of an open and accessible borough that fosters genuine community inclusion and ownership

CULTURE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We have seen the difference that investing in culture and helping more people take part can make, in places like Hull, Coventry and Liverpool.

8 in 10 participants stated that being part of a project made them feel happier

Rotherham already has a wealth of beautiful green space, parks, woodland 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, the Children’s Shakespeare Festival and Rotherham Show.

As a result of Hull’s year as City of Culture:

- 90%** • More than 90% of residents engaged in at least one cultural activity
- 71%** • 71% of residents said they would speak positively about Hull
- 800** • There were nearly 800 new jobs in the creative and visitor economy sectors



- 72%** • 72% of Rotherham is beautiful green space
- 99%** • 99% of users love our libraries, situated within 2 miles of 98% of our communities
- 4,000,000** • In 2018 -19, there were more than 4 million visits to our parks, libraries, Civic Theatre, Clifton Park Museum, sports and leisure centres

WE HEARD ABOUT THINGS THAT PEOPLE LOVE

People from Rotherham are **passionate about culture!** During the development of this Strategy, many local people, businesses and organisations told us why culture was important to them and their ambitions for the future. People who work and volunteer in the cultural sector told us what they needed to help them make more of a difference. Other local and regional partnerships told us what we could do to work together to achieve aims which were important to all of us, including improving health and wellbeing, the local economy and creating thriving, vibrant places.

We have gathered together thousands of comments which tell us more about what people who live and work here love doing now and why, what they'd like to do but couldn't, what was stopping them and what they'd like more of in Rotherham.

We heard about what people like to do to **get active, get creative, get outdoors and get together as families, friends and communities.**



"LOVE ROTHERHAM SHOW – FREE THINGS FOR FAMILIES ARE GREAT. LOVE CATCHING UP WITH OLD FRIENDS, BRILLIANT SEEING PEOPLE, THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE"

"MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF ALL THE GREEN SPACES! ROTHERHAM IS AWESOME!"

"SHARE THE AMAZING STORIES ABOUT ROTHERHAM'S HERITAGE AND PEOPLE AS FAR AND AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE"

"THE TOUR DE YORKSHIRE WAS GREAT FOR PULLING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER"

"EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO BE CREATIVE"

"THE CENTRE IS NICER THAN PEOPLE THINK"

"I LIKE DRAWING AND MAKING THINGS WITH MY IMAGINATION"

In the Views of Rotherham consultation, we learned that culture really matters.

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

WE LEARNED ABOUT WHY PEOPLE TAKE PART

We learned that people take part to get and keep healthy, to learn new skills and improve job prospects, to meet new people, to have fun and to relax.

"I LIKE TO LEARN THINGS FROM OTHER PEOPLE" "IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE" "I FEEL CONNECTED TO ROTHERHAM"

However, even though thousands of people in Rotherham take part in lots of activities each year, participation by adults in Rotherham is lower than average.

DEFINITION (ACTIVE LIVES SURVEY)	ARTICIPATION RATE NATIONAL %	PARTICIPATION RATE ROTHERHAM
Spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or craft	34.67	27.43
Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity	52.22	41.44
Used a public library service	35.01	27.49
Attended a museum or gallery	46.5	34.83
Active population (150 minutes+ per week)	61.8	51.3
Fairly active population (30-149 minutes per week)	12.5	11.7
Inactive population (less than 30 minutes per week)	25.7	37

It is important to understand why local and engagement in arts, culture and green spaces is lower than the national average. We asked people for their thoughts on this and how this situation could be improved.

We learned that talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not.
We learned that people want more, different things to do.



People enjoy taking part in a wide variety of activities from sailing to singing, crafts to cricket, and writing stories to wheel-chair tennis. However people also want:

- More variety, so that we can exercise
- More choice about what we take part in and the opportunity to try new things
- More "wow", better quality, more original, unusual and "quirky" activities and events
- A warm welcome for everyone, people on their own, in groups or with family and friends
- Activities to be free or low cost, so that more people can take part
- More information about what's happening, when and where - so that we all know what is going on

"WE REALLY NEED STUFF TO HAPPEN HERE"

"MY CHILDREN LOVE TO CRAFT AND ENJOY FREE CRAFTS IN CLIFTON PARK. IT WOULD BE GREAT IF THEY OFFERED THIS IN MORE PLACES"

"FOOD UNITES PEOPLE, SO I THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD IF WE COULD HAVE FOODS FROM ALL DIFFERENT CULTURES IN ROTHERHAM"

WE WANT GREAT PLACES TO GO

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE FOR OUR GOAL TO HAPPEN?

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

Lots of people have stories to tell about Rotherham. Perhaps more than any other strategy, the Cultural Strategy, with its focus on harnessing people's talents and passions, has the power to help us to make sense of our past, to tell our story in our own way, and to change our future.

However, our focus should not just be on raising awareness of what already exists but working towards building capacity to create new, exciting

and innovative cultural provision, to support and nurture the creative talent that exists here and encourage the growth of this sector, to build confidence, creating a culture of experimentation and collaboration.

During the consultation, our young people, in particular, encouraged us and challenged us to see Rotherham through their eyes as a place of great potential, a place where they want to live and work.

People want to take part and we need to work together to make this happen

**"YOUNG PEOPLE WILL RUN THINGS
IF YOU GIVE THEM THE SPACE AND
THE PLATFORM TO DO IT"**

**"UNWAVERING VISION IS
REQUIRED"**

**"WE NEED PEOPLE TO HELP
GET PEOPLE TO TAKE PART"**

WHAT WILL WE DO? 7 GAME CHANGERS

1. A Vibrant Heart
2. Adventures in Rother Valley
3. A Great Place for Wentworth and the Dearne Valley
4. Vital Neighbourhoods
5. Turning Passion into a Profession
6. Amazing Events
7. Children's Capital of Culture

**"TOO MUCH REPUTATION,
NOT ENOUGH IMAGINATION"**

**"USE THE TOWN'S GREATEST
STRENGTH OF DIVERSITY"**

OUR KEY GOAL

**IS TO ENABLE EVERYONE TO
GET ACTIVE, GET CREATIVE
AND GET OUTDOORS,
MORE OFTEN!**



THINGS TO DO

AVIBRANT HEART

We will create a rich and diverse cultural offer in the town centre, including a cinema, public art and events. We will look at options to improve the **central library, exhibition facilities** and the **theatre**, complementing the wonderful **New York Stadium, Grimm and Co, Magna**, historic buildings, thriving leisure centre and award-winning **Clifton Park and Museum**.

ADVENTURES IN ROTHER VALLEY

We will create new, high quality experiences for residents and visitors alike in the south of the borough, with 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**.



A GREAT PLACE FOR WENTWORTH AND THE DEARNE VALLEY

We will establish a nationally significant new tourism product in the north of the borough, where the astonishing Wentworth Woodhouse, now a charitable trust, will create a rival to Chatsworth and a new hub for cultural tourism which will benefit the whole borough. We will continue the legacy of the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership and the WE Great Place programme to celebrate our beautiful landscape and historic environment.

VITAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

We will work with communities, volunteers and partners to develop our libraries, leisure centres and parks as well-used and much-loved local spaces and neighbourhood hubs.

From Aston to Dinnington, Waverley to Wath, we will explore opportunities to revitalise our buildings, landscape, waterways, heritage sites and landmarks, woodlands and places for play.

We will improve and develop routes for walking, running and cycling, encouraging residents and visitors alike to explore and appreciate our green space, canals and waterways.

We will encourage people to adopt the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' to utilise participation in culture, leisure and green spaces as a way to be happy, positive and enjoy life.





THINGS TO DO

TURNING PASSION INTO A PROFESSION

Engaging in the arts, heritage, sport and green spaces can build confidence and skills for life and for work.

We want Rotherham residents to contribute to the success of our economy and our nation – on our stages, screens, sports pitches and in industry. We will work with schools, colleges and RNN Group to increase the numbers of young people progressing to higher level qualifications in culture, leisure and sport based programmes and work through ROAR to grow our creative community – giving artists more reasons to stay and work in Rotherham.

By 2026, we will create 1500 new volunteering opportunities, 100 new apprenticeships and 1500 new jobs in the creative, digital, cultural, leisure and tourism sectors

We will encourage all schools to take up the Mile a Day Challenge, Arts Mark and outdoor learning.

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MORE OFTEN.**

AMAZING EVENTS

Great events can bring us together, reduce isolation and create magical shared experiences. We need to work together to tell people about Rotherham's stories of engineering excellence, pushing the boundaries and living green

We will celebrate:

- 40th birthday of Rotherham Show in 2019
- Yorkshire Day in 2020
- Women's European Football Tournament (UEFA) in 2021 including a wider festival in support of women and girls participation
- 40th birthday of Rother Valley Country Park in 2023

We will work with commercial, community and major events organisers to create more ambitious events which bring us together, make us really proud of who we are and bring people to Rotherham.

CHILDREN'S CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Our young people are excited about their future and the future of Rotherham. We want to work with them to make Rotherham a place where everyone gets active, creative and outdoors, together.

By 2025 Rotherham will be the world's first Children's Capital of Culture, a place people want to visit, where everyone can enjoy Rotherham through the eyes, ears and actions of children and young people.

We will support our young people in their ambition to create an amazing programme of events and activities for everyone.

Together we will make all of Rotherham's cultural destinations, libraries, leisure centres and green spaces child-focused, family-friendly and safe for everyone, young and old.

MAKING IT HAPPEN



WORKING TOGETHER

We believe that culture should be for everyone and that the more involvement we all have in decision-making, the more likely we are to participate. Nobody can deliver transformation alone. We need to work with all our communities, our businesses, schools, those who take part now and those who would love to, to make Rotherham a better place for everybody. The Cultural Partnership Board will continue to meet, and work through:

- **Local Cultural Education Partnership** – to strengthen partnerships between cultural organisations, schools and the world of work.
- **Rotherham Activity Partnership** – to make physical activity a way of life
- **Visitor Economy Group** – to bring local attractions together to boost tourism

We will work to embed co-production principles in all that we do.

BETTER PROMOTION OF OUR OFFER

We will improve the promotion and marketing of venues, activities and events to increase awareness of what's available, when and where

We will work with the media and Rotherham Pioneers to celebrate our achievements and share positive stories about our creative, cultural, sporting and green space sectors. We will ensure more people can use digital technology to find out what's on.

We will play a leading role in the region, and work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and others to make Sheffield City Region the next UK City of Culture in 2025

FUNDING OUR 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. This Strategy will help demonstrate how individual projects fit in to the wider plans for Rotherham. Many of the things we need to do can happen without further investment, using no cost or low cost solutions. It is much more about collaboratively making the very best use of our existing resources, skills and assets and ensuring that the sector becomes increasingly strong.

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.

Our new strategy is an important step in making Rotherham 'investment-ready', helping us to secure new investment from funders who share our vision.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This Strategy will be accompanied by a detailed action plan, which is owned, monitored and managed by the Cultural Partnership Board.

This board will also work with other local bodies in the Rotherham Together Partnership to make sure that the role of culture is embedded within their own Strategies – demonstrating the important role that culture, physical activity and green spaces play in health and wellbeing, community cohesion, economic growth and the lives of every individual who lives and works in the borough.

In turn, this will get everyone working towards getting more people active, creative and outdoors, more often.

Conversations about this Strategy will continue and we would really like to hear your views.

GET INVOLVED AND KEEP INFORMED

- If you're happy to show your support for Rotherham, promote what we have and celebrate our successes
- If you would like to work or volunteer in the sector to help people to create amazing events, exhibitions and events
- If you would like to be part of the Cultural Partnership Board and its working groups
- If you would like to comment on this Strategy or let us have your views about what's important to you
- If you want to know more about what will happen next and our detailed actions plans



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