

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission – 03 May 2022

**Report Title**

Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Cultural Strategy

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-wide

**Report Summary**

To receive findings and recommendations from the spotlight review on Cultural Strategy which met on 2 February 2022.

**Recommendations**

1. That the briefing be noted and the following recommendations be submitted to OSMB for consideration: -
  - a) That the range of available activities tailored for young residents of the Borough be prioritised for expansion.
  - b) That consideration be given to how best to expand access, especially for young people, to recreational swimming in the Borough, whilst protecting against hazards.
  - c) That the service liaises with CYPS to develop a system to help young carers more easily access opportunities for leisure and culture-related respite.
  - d) With a view to expanding access, that consideration be given to hosting cultural events at alternating and varied locations and venues throughout the Borough where appropriate.

**Background Papers**

Rotherham's Cultural Strategy 2019-2026 – Cabinet 10/06/2019

Cultural Strategy Implementation – Improving Places Select Commission 08/12/2020

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Cultural Strategy**

### **1. Background**

1.1 The Cultural Strategy was agreed by Cabinet on 10 June 2019, and various aspects of the delivery of this strategy have returned to scrutiny for monitoring of implementation progress on several occasions. On 12 August 2020, the implementation was scrutinised at Improving Places Select Commission, and it was agreed by Members in 2021 that since the COVID-19 pandemic, that implementation of the strategy would be prioritised for a spotlight review. In view of the significance of events and culture in wellbeing and education, the purpose of the review was to obtain assurances that the service was responsive to changing needs of communities and to ensure inclusive access to cultural activities in the Borough. This review supports three Year Ahead objectives: “Every Neighbourhood Thriving,” “People are Safe, Healthy and Live Well,” and “Every Child Able to Fulfil Their Potential.” Therefore, the review was convened on 2 February 2022 in a meeting between Members of Improving Places Select Commission, Improving Lives Select Commission, Culture, Sport and Tourism Service Leads, and the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion. The review was undertaken by Cllrs Pitchley, Atkin, Cooksey, Keenan, Griffin, Havard, McNeely, and Sansome.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 Members discussed at length the subject of recreational swimming in the Borough, noting that open water swimming in particular can be a popular and rewarding activity that can also be hazardous. Members discussed ways the service might mitigate risks associated with swimming whilst providing safe ways for residents safely to enjoy Rotherham’s natural resources and facilities for swimming. Lessons in swimming, water safety, and First Aid were suggested as part of an overall expansion in activities targeted for young people and young adults. The response from officers noted that arrangements were in motion for safe open water swimming programmes for summer 2022.
- 2.2 It was acknowledged that many young people in the Borough would benefit from having the opportunity to participate in more safe activities and events that are of interest to them. It was noted that libraries remain a powerful resource within communities that may be even further utilised and promoted, especially in respect of awareness of young people’s interests and coordination of responsive and innovative events and activities.
- 2.3 Specific consideration was given to designing an enhanced recreation offer for young carers to enable greater access to healthy respite. The response from officers noted that currently carers may accompany the person they care for to a range of events for free, and that in view of the importance of respite for young carers, arrangements were in progress with Children and Young People’s Services to expand this offer.
- 2.4 As part of a broader discussion around simplification of discounts for culture and leisure activities in the Borough, the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion also described a current focus of work on determining eligibility for RotherCard

incentives and discounts. The motivation behind this work, the Cabinet Member noted, is to get more people involved and make activities accessible to everyone. Several other specific areas of work were also cited: Civic Sound Week was a free of charge event, as are dozens of activities every day across the library network, which are designed for all ages and demographics. Examples were given at the time of reporting which involved two Harry Potter events in Swinton and Rawmarsh. The Cabinet member lauded the teamwork involved in bringing these events to fruition. A further example, The Rotherham Show, was described as the biggest free-to-access event in the region, which is made possible through external funds and is a testament to the work of the team.

- 2.5 Members also provided specific suggestions including the hosting of Grin & Tonic comedy events at alternating venues if this is found to promote access for residents who are travelling from various areas of the Borough. Members also noted that ensuring clear signage is posted at venues could help give new attendees greater confidence in finding and feeling welcome at the destination venue. Grim & Co was identified as one such venue for clarification in terms of signage. Prioritising engagement with schools, ecumenical organisations, Parish Councils, and funding programmes like Active Dearne was also suggested.

### **3. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 3.1 The timetable and accountability for implementing recommendations arising from this report will sit with the Cabinet and officers. The Overview and Scrutiny Procedurals require the Cabinet to consider and respond to recommendations made by scrutiny within two months.

### **4. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial or procurement implications directly associated with this report.

### **5. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

### **6. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no Human Resources implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 7.1 These have been set out in the main sections of the report.

### **8. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 Members have had regard to equalities implications when considering recommendations and other matters arising from the review.

## **9. Implications for Partners**

9.1 There are no implications for partners directly arising from this report.

## **10. Risks and Mitigation**

10.1 Members have been advised previously of risk assessments and mitigation plans, and these have been taken into account in their consideration of potential recommendations.

## **11. Accountable Officer**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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