

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 15 October 2025

Report Title

Children's Capital of Culture Family Learning Commissioning Community Grant

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Council's Museums, Arts & Heritage Service has been commissioned by the Cultural Partnership Board to deliver a programme of family learning activities as part of the Arts Council England Place Partnership Funding for Children's Capital of Culture.

The family learning programme includes targeted interventions bringing care homes and early years settings together and two rounds of open grants to support grass roots community organisations to deliver family learning programmes locally. An open call round one application phase approved 12 applications, with a remaining £14,098 left to allocate. This report focuses on the second-round applications.

For round two, closed applications were invited from 7 organisations that strongly met the criteria from round one but were unsuccessful and whose project could be delivering in autumn/winter 2025/6. These organisations were invited to resubmit their application following feedback from round one with a revised budget and project plan.

The closed call for this round of family learning grants received 2 applications, of which both met the criteria and are recommended for approval.

Recommendations

1. To award two Family Learning Grants within the £2,500 - £5,000 category with a total value of £6,100 to support community event organisers to undertake activities in their locality.
2. To allocate £1,000 for two community network events in December and March to bring grant recipients together to share knowledge and skills.
3. To allocate the remaining £6,998 to commission targeted community projects that fill gaps in the programme around equality, diversity and inclusion as identified and proposed by the panel.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Museums, Arts & Heritage Equalities Action Plan

Appendix 2 Family Learning Grants Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Children's Capital of Culture Family Learning Grants

1. Background

1.1 In October 2024 the Children's Capital of Culture successfully secured a £1.2m grant from Arts Council England's Place Partnership Fund. The grant was to support activities during the Festival Year and a finale Closing Programme. The nature of the grant terms and conditions required a consortium approach and as such partners were identified to undertake elements of the programme delivery including:

- Flux Rotherham to deliver the Gallery Town programme
- Grimm & Co to deliver the Festival of Stories programme
- Yorkshire Sport Foundation to deliver the UPLIFT Skate & Arts Festival programme alongside RMBC Events
- Wentworth Woodhouse to deliver the Creative Health programme
- Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage to deliver the Family Learning programme

1.2 Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage received a total allocation of £127,500 to support the delivery of the Children's Capital of Culture Family Learning programme across the following areas:

- £15,000 to support the development of a Family Learning Consortium to guide the decision making related to this area of the programme
- £50,000 commissioning fund to support local organisations to deliver Family Learning activities as part of the programme during festival year
- £25,000 commissioning fund to support local organisations to continue delivery of Family Learning activities in 2026
- £37,500 to continue the Museum's successful Curiosity of Memories programme bringing care homes and early years settings together to explore heritage and family learning.

1.3 This report relates to the delivery of the second round of Family Learning Grants as part of the £25,000 to support local organisations to continue delivery of Family Learning activities in 2026.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Grants Programme Criteria

2.1.1 The published criteria for the grants was shared widely online and on social media, with flyers and an open drop-in grants surgery for groups wishing to submit proposals. There were four categories of grant included:

- Under £1,000
- £1,000 - £2,000
- £2,500 - £5,000
- £5,000 - £10,000

The categories were set to allow groups of all sizes and experience to apply.

2.1.2 In order to access the grants, the proposed activity must deliver creative and play based activities and programmes for intergenerational families. To be eligible for the grants, groups must:

- Be based in Rotherham or be able to demonstrate a genuine connection to the borough
- Host the proposed activity within the borough
- Deliver the proposed activity between June 2025 and March 2026
- Deliver a minimum of four workshops, weekly, monthly or as required
- Deliver new activity (retrospective activity was not eligible for funding and the grants do not fund regular programmed activities that already take place)
- Work with intergenerational families supporting more than one generation across the planned activity
- Involve children and young people in the development and design of the planned activity
- Be able to demonstrate how the activity improves the health and wellbeing of families

2.1.3 In addition to the above criteria as the Family Learning Grants are offered as part of the Children's Capital of Culture Festival Year the activities proposed by groups must also align with one of the four programming themes for the Children' Capital of Culture festival year which include:

- **You're Not From New York City, You're From Rov'rum:** supporting young people to have agency and create change, building pride in Rotherham as their home.
- **Who We Are, Where We Come From:** enabling children and young people to develop a sense of community and belonging through the arts and culture, enhancing their mental health and critical thinking.
- **Plug In & Play:** increasing opportunities for play in digital and physical spaces, as well as fostering physical activity and participation in sport.
- **The World Beneath Our Feet:** enabling children and young people to engage with nature and their local environment and take action to combat climate change.

2.2 Grants Programme Decision-Making

2.2.1 As part of the funding allocation, £15,000 was ringfenced to the development of a Family Learning Consortium which brings together arts and cultural organisations providing family learning programmes, early years practitioners, representatives from the Council's Children and Young People's Services and youth representation. The consortium was established in January 2025 and is chaired by Elaine Burke, a specialist health and arts consultant working with a wide range of clients locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. She has a clinical background as an art psychotherapist in the NHS (child, adolescent and family mental health specialism), and established and led a unique arts and health service based in public health across Hull and East Yorkshire. A

Family Learning Assistant has also been recruited to support with the administration of the grant programme and support organisations with delivery.

2.2.2 The consortium partners also include representatives from:

- Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage
- RMBC Family Hubs
- Children, Young People & Families Consortium
- Grimm & Co
- Voluntary Action Rotherham
- Age UK
- Clifton Learning Partnership

2.2.3 The Family Learning Consortium worked together to design the criteria for the grants programme and form a decision-making panel to assess the grants against these criteria. This report contains their recommendations for grant awards.

2.3 **Grant Awards: Round 1**

2.3.1 In July 2025, Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director Culture Sport and Tourism approved 12 grants across 7 wards which were recommended by the Family Learning Consortium Panel.

2.3.2 The original proposal was to hold a commissioning programme for £50,000 in 2025 Festival Year and £25,000 in 2026. As the programme has taken a while to establish the first round of the commissioning fund will run over 2025/6 therefore £60,902 has been allocated in the first round leaving £14,098 for the second round of commissioning.

A training event for grant recipients to receive support with event planning, recruiting artists and creating risk assessments was attended by 13 participants from 5 funded organisations in September.

2.4 **Grants Awards: Round 2**

2.4.1 Due to the timescales of the funding, the panel took the decision to not have an open call for the second application round. Unsuccessful applicants from round one would be invited to reapply to round two. There were 14 applications that did not receive funding in round one. Four did not meet the criteria and three had either received funding from other sources or had activity that was specific to delivery in the summer. Therefore, 7 organisations which met the criteria and did not receive alternative funding, were invited by the panel to resubmit their application. This provided these organisations the opportunity to reflect on feedback provided by the panel and resubmit an application with an updated budget and project plan. In September, the panel received 2 applications for consideration. Both applications were recommended for approval by the Family Learning Consortium Panel.

2.4.2

Ward	Organisation	Project	Activity	Grant Value
Rotherham East	Unity Boxing Centre CIC	Creative Knockout	4 family-based activity days within several community settings. These will include family-based boxing and creative workshops.	£4,000
Rotherham East	REMA - Future stars Toddler group	MLB - Move, Laugh, Bound	Project will provide a creative, playful experience that allows parents and children to bond in a fun and stimulating way.	£2,100
Total				£6,100

2.4.3 As there is still £7,998 left to allocate and not enough time to do another open call application, the panel put forward recommendations on how the remaining budget should be spent before March 2026.

Grant network events	<p>Two network events for grant recipients to develop skills, knowledge and partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> December event for celebration and networking. March event – final showcase and legacy planning <p>The success and demand from the training session in September highlighted how important it was to offer opportunities for communities to come together and develop skills and relationships with each other.</p>	£1,000
Commission projects	<p>Commission targeted family learning projects that meet the funding criteria and fill gaps within the programme. These projects would be delivered between October 2025-March 2026. The panel identified that these would focus on any of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion and equality – protected characteristics focused on disability and sexual identity. 	£6,998

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wards which had not received funding from the grant programme <p>The panel would approve these commissions and allocate the funding accordingly.</p>	
	Total	£7,998

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Do Nothing – Without the grants programme the Museums, Arts & Heritage service would not be able to deliver a Family Programme to the scale and diversity required by the Arts Council England funding as set out in the original bid proposal. In addition, many of the groups supported would not have the capacity to deliver grass roots activities to the scale and quality proposed in the programmes above.
- 3.2 Offer Grants to Recommended Recipients and confirm the proposed allocation of final funds – The package of support outlined in this report will allow community groups to deliver tailored and targeted family learning activities across the borough. The activities supported will bring a programme of regular activities bringing generations together to build connections and cohesion. This option delivers against the requirements of the Arts Council England Grant.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Family Learning Grants programme was first advertised as a borough-wide opportunity allowing all communities the opportunity to participate.
- 4.2 The final selection of proposed grant recipients has been proposed by the Family Learning Consortium which is chaired independently by Elaine Burke and has representatives from across cultural organisations and children and young people’s services.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Applications for the Family Learning Grants programme has now closed with applicants informed of the outcome, subject to final approval.
- 5.2 The programme will be administered, managed and monitored by the Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage Service.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The recommendation proposes the award of grant agreements and grants fall outside the scope of procurement legislation and therefore there are no direct procurement implications. Where there is a requirement to procure activity to support the further work utilising the remaining grant allocation, this must be procured in compliance with the Council’s Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

6.2 The grant awards proposed within this report are within agreed budgets for the Children's Capital of Culture. The first round was budgeted at £50,000 but grants awarded were £60,902. The £25,000 budget for the second round was adjusted down by £10,902 to £14,098 to accommodate this.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The distribution of grants as set out in the report is consistent with the terms of the funding from the Arts Council England Place Partnership Fund as well as being consistent with previous Council policies and plans. A grant agreement will be put in place with each event organiser ensuring delivery of the relevant project and protecting the Council's interests in respect of matters referred to within the report such as insurance and safeguarding and any other potential risks.

7.2 The grants are being made to community organisations in respect of the projects set out within the report. As such the grants are not being given to enterprises, nor are they conferring an economic advantage on the relevant organisation, therefore there are no subsidy control issues

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications as a result of this proposal.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The Family Learning Grants programme is focused on supporting a programme of intergenerational activities fostering better relationships, understanding and health and wellbeing for the children and their families.

9.2 The Family Learning Consortium includes five youth representatives who have been part of the decision-making process via the Children's Capital of Culture programme.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 An Equalities Impact Screening has been completed for this programme and can be found at Appendix 1.

10.2 Both Rotherham, Museums, Arts & Heritage and Children's Capital of Culture have established Equalities Action Plans which have been used to guide the creation of the programme and to determine the criteria for the grants.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix 2.

11.2 The events and activities supported by the grants are relatively small in scale and therefore their impact is considered to be low.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The proposed events are delivered by community groups and organisation with support facilitated by the Council. The recommended proposals in this report are of benefit to community partners across the borough.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Insurance and risk assessments – The responsibility for the safe management and delivery of all activities lies with the organiser. Although the Council is facilitating financial support to groups as part of the programme, each group is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate levels of insurance and risk assessment are in place.
- 13.2 Safeguarding – As part of the application all proposals were asked to provide details of the safeguarding provision in place for each activity. This was assessed by the panel who are experienced in safeguarding protocols and measures. The responsibility for ensuring safeguarding protocols are in place and followed remains with the group organiser.

14. Accountable Officers

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