

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> November 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Proposed closure to the public of Rotherham Arts Centre Studio Theatre provision, Art Gallery and Regimental Museum</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

In order to facilitate the relocation of services from the Central Library and Arts Centre to Riverside House and other locations, it is proposed to cease programming performances at Rotherham Arts Centre Studio Theatre from 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2011 and to cease programming and close Rotherham Art Gallery after the final programmed exhibition in June, 2011.

## **6. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that no further bookings are taken for performance work at the studio theatre from 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2011.**

**It is recommended that no further exhibitions be programmed at Rotherham Art Gallery after the end of June, 2011.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

Front line and support services within the Central Library and Arts Centre will be relocated during 2012. Prior to this all the thousands of items in collections and archives will need to be assessed and prepared for moving, along with all other materials in the building. There are limited spaces available of sufficient size and which can be secured to enable this work to take place. It is proposed to close both the Studio Theatre and Art Gallery to facilitate this programme.

The closure of the Studio Theatre is to enable staff in the Archives and Local Studies Service to create a temporary work room and storage area to catalogue all 'unknown items' before the entire collection is transferred to the new ancillary home for the collection.

To cater for current 'non performance' uses, it has been agreed that the current studio theatre will be split into two sections allowing the Arts Centre to retain income from half of the current studio theatre as a meeting room space and allowing the retention of key customers for a further year until the closure of the building.

The closure of Rotherham Art Gallery is to enable staff within the Museums Galleries and Heritage Service to begin to pack the Service's stored collections and the collections displayed at the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum.

The smaller exhibition spaces (Corridor Wall and Craft Case) will remain available to exhibitors at Rotherham Arts Centre. Clifton Park Museum Café will also be used as a space for exhibitors to display flat art during the period of Art Gallery closure.

## **8. Finance**

The closure of the Studio Theatre will create additional financial pressures for the Theatres Service which as yet has not been fully assessed. However, every effort will be made to relocate performances to the Civic Theatre where appropriate – work on this is already underway. The Service will also assess options for retaining room bookings (i.e. non-performance) in the reduced size Studio Theatre.

The additional financial pressures will impact on 2011/12 budget. A further report will be presented to the Cabinet Member once the extent of the budget pressures and options to contain them have been assessed.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Risk to the safety and care of collections and archives if sufficient attention is not given to cataloguing, preparing, conserving and packing items.

Risk to the Accredited status of the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum and Rotherham Art Gallery. The Museums, Galleries & Heritage Service is currently working informally with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to minimise the

risk of loss of Accredited Status. Once the future location of these services is determined we will begin formal negotiations.

Financial risk from loss of custom to the gallery and theatre will be minimised by relocating performances and exhibitions to alternative locations e.g. by working with local partners, colleagues in other services and working to offset against service efficiencies.

Reputational risk and reduced visitor figures - It is hoped by using ancillary spaces and by maximising programming opportunities visitor figures to Theatres will not be significantly affected though some reduction in reported usage is inevitable. It is hoped this will be rectified in 2012-13 with the opening of Riverside House and possible other performance options.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The move of these services to Riverside House supports corporate plans and priorities, particularly with regard to the economic regeneration and development of the Town Centre as a vibrant place to visit. It will support the aim:

- Achieve Rotherham Town Renaissance by enhancing the role and function of the Town Centre and ensuring that it acts as a hub for social, economic and cultural activity for the wider area.

Whilst the withdrawal of services could impact negatively on attendance and customer satisfaction this work is essential to ensure a timely, considered move from the Arts Centre.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Not applicable

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