

# Like Rotherham

## **THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO GO**

Let's transform Rotherham's future through  
culture, leisure and green spaces

**2019-2026**

## **Like Rotherham – Things to do, Places to go**

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 - who are 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.

The 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 7 years and we need your help to make it happen.

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## What is culture?

The word “culture” means different things to different people. It includes beliefs and customs which we share and which influence how we relate to others and our place within the world. When we use it in this document it refers to all the many and varied activities which everyone can take part in, including: sport, the arts - performing arts, music, theatre, dance, visual art, craft, literature, circus, film and digital media, libraries, our natural environment, parks, woodland and countryside, tourism, our heritage, museums and archives, events and play.

## Why culture matters to Rotherham

Culture is life affirming, life enriching and life changing. Research shows that when people take part in culture they have better health, better education and better jobs. Participation brings communities together and creates places to be proud of.

People come across culture at different times in their life and in many different ways. Culture for one person could be a life-long interest, for another a different experience every day.

It can help us get a job, grow and keep healthy bodies and healthy minds. The impact and memories can last a life time – a poem or song learned by heart, a family bike ride, cheering on a team, laughing until you cry at a pantomime, going for a swim, playing the guitar to lull a baby to sleep or snuggling up with a good book.

- *Public Health England report that people who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health*
- *Sport England identifies the value of the sports industry to Rotherham as £69m. Almost two-thirds of this relates to participation in sport and physical activity.*
- *The Cultural Learning Alliance found that:*
  - *Students from low-income families who take part in the arts at school are 3 times more likely to get a degree*
  - *16 year olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life*
- *Underachieving young people who take part in sport see a 29% increase in numeracy skills and a 12 to 16% rise in other transferable skills*
- *Research in the US Medical Journal found that ‘children are smarter, better able to get along with others, healthier and happier when they have regular opportunities for free and unstructured play in the out-of-doors’*

## **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.

*As a result of Hull's year as City of Culture:*

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

- *72% of Rotherham is beautiful green space*
- *99% of users love our libraries, situated within 2 miles of 98% of our communities*
- *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**

Rotherham people 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.

*"Make people aware of all the green spaces! Rotherham is awesome!"*

*"Love Rotherham Show – free things for families are great. Love catching up with old friends, brilliant seeing people, there's something for everyone"*

*"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 makes me feel proud and it makes my parents proud”*

*“It’s important to keep your mind active”*

*“I feel connected to Rotherham”*

*“I like meeting new people as I currently don’t have any friends in the area or people to do activities with”*

*“Health and exercise – feeling good and clear mind”*

*“To learn something new”*

*“New experiences”*

*“Creativity is important because it allows you to express yourself in a different way and aids positive emotional, social and mental health and well-being”*

*“We enjoy the different events Rotherham has. Spending time here encourages our children to develop a sense of pride about their surroundings”*

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

<b>Definition (Active Lives Survey)</b>	<b>Participation rate – national %</b>	<b>Participation rate – Rotherham %</b>
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

So we needed to know more about why people don't take part now and what we could all do to change that.

**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 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”*

*“Food unites people, so I think it would be good if we could have foods from all  
different cultures in Rotherham”*

*“I would like to see fireworks!”*

*More laughing, more dancing*

*“My children love to craft and enjoy free crafts in Clifton Park. It would be great if they  
offered this in more places”*

*“A better comedy scene”*

*“People don’t appreciate the skills and talent that people bring to Rotherham”*

*“More diverse range of cultural activities”*

*“More activities aimed at men”*

*“Better theatre provision in Rotherham offering better choice of arts”*

*“Innovative events”*

## **We want great places to go**

People love the places that Rotherham has to offer: green spaces, parks, attractions, theatre, museum and libraries. However they also want:

### **Different and distinctive places to go**

#### **Places to be accessible**

**– available nearby or easy to get to, with good public transport and parking**

#### **Places to be looked after – safe, attractive and cared for**

**More, better quality, leisure and cultural facilities in Rotherham town centre**

#### **Places to be inclusive**

**offering a warm Rotherham welcome to everyone**

*“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 think there should be an arts centre where everyone 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”*

*“Give the people of Rotherham the facilities they deserve”*

*“We’ve always thought of Rotherham as a shabby place. So let’s go and get our home we love a better face”*

*I’d just like a more inviting town, a town where people want to come*

*“I feel that we live in quite a nice place but it just needs that push to make it better and everyone to know about it”*

*“Places need to be open to people with invisible disabilities”*

*“We need a great performance venue”*

*“We need to make the town centre a social hub, where people come to be entertained and have fun”*

*“There should be tourist attractions in the town centre”*

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

**Our key goal  
is to enable everyone to  
get active, get creative and get outdoors,  
more often.**

**What needs to change for that to happen?**

## Like Rotherham

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

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.

You told us:

*"Unwavering vision is required"*

*"Celebrate success"*

*"Take risks"*

*"Culture needs a big boost"*

*"Inject money and liveliness back into Rotherham"*

*"Young people will run things if you give them the space and the platform to do it"*

*"There needs to be more co-production with communities"*

*"Let us know what is happening"*

*"We need people to help get people to take part"*

*"Too much reputation, not enough imagination"*

*"Use the town's greatest strength of diversity"*

To inspire and encourage more people to take part, we need to celebrate what is good and work together to make Rotherham brilliant.

## **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**

## Like Rotherham: Places to go

### 1. A Vibrant 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**.

### 2. 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**.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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.

## Like Rotherham: Things to do

### 5. 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.

### 6. 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:

**40<sup>th</sup> 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

**40<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 7. 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.

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## **Making It Happen**

### **1. 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.**

### **2. 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

### **3. 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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