

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 20 July 2020

**Report Title**

Rotherham Show 2020

**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**

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The report sets out the implications for Rotherham Show 2020 of the Covid-19 pandemic and proposes alternative arrangements.

**Recommendations**

1. That approval be given to the cancellation of the 2020 Rotherham Show in its traditional form.
2. That approval be given to the development of an alternative programme of events and activities which can be safely delivered in its place.
3. That approval be given for the Production Board to continue to plan for the safe delivery of Rotherham Show in 2021

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Equalities Screening

**Background Papers**

None

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

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Rotherham Show 2020**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Rotherham Show 2020 is currently scheduled to take place on 5 and 6 September 2020 and is a key 'Amazing Event' identified in the borough's Cultural Strategy.
- 1.2 Building on last year's 40th, which received very positive reviews from the public and partners, this year's Show would expect to attract around 80,000 people.
- 1.3 In keeping the Government guidelines, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of all major events, including the Great Yorkshire Show, Notting Hill Carnival and Edinburgh Fringe Festival. From information provided by other Council's events are being cancelled in Barnsley and Doncaster with no large-scale mass gatherings currently planned until the Christmas period.
- 1.4 Officers have been working with the Rotherham Show production board to consider the implications for this year's Show.

### **2. Key Issues**

In considering the implications for this year's Rotherham Show, officers and the Production Board have had to take account of:

#### **2.1 Health and Safety for the public, workers and volunteers**

Current modelling would suggest that, although the peak of the crisis has been sooner and smaller than first anticipated, the length of the Covid-19 pandemic is also predicted to be longer. As of 25 June, there have been 307 deaths as a result of Covid-19 registered in Rotherham. Whilst death rates and infections have reduced, the expectation is that the virus is likely to persist until a vaccine is available and there is still a risk of a second surge. The cancellation of mass gatherings and events, combined with social distancing, are just two of the measures introduced by Government to control the infection.

In its traditional form, in order to be a success, the Show requires:

- a large number of visitors to engage – between 60,000 and 80,000
- a high-level of physical interactivity: performers spending months in each other's company, rehearsing and perfecting their shows; staff and volunteers working together to install the infrastructure, making the site ready, often within tight deadlines; children participating in hands-on arts activities, charities toting for donations; audiences singing and dancing; the sharing of food and drink; old friends and family greeting one another and enjoying one another's company.

At present, the very things that make the Show a success are a risk to public health.

## **2.2 Legal Implications**

At present, Government regulations prohibit large groups gathering and this prevents the hosting of major events and mass gatherings. The government recently set out its plans for recovery which would see cultural attractions and events likely to be reintroduced in Phase 3 which is currently predicted to start after 4 July. These attractions still need to operate within strict social distancing guidance. In addition, the government has pledged to monitor the spread of the virus, delaying or reversing elements of the recovery plan as required.

As things stand, the Council is not empowered by law to allow the delivery of Rotherham Show.

Beyond the fact that the Coronavirus Act currently does not allow for mass gatherings, the other legal implications relate to the procurement of suppliers.

Some elements of the show were already secured such as marquee, security, and technical supplies. The Council will need to honour the deposits paid for these services.

## **2.3 Financial Implications**

Rotherham Show costs in the region of £200,000 to deliver. The funding comes from a variety of sources including: Culture Sport and Tourism revenue budget; grant funding, from sources such as Arts Council of England; trading income, from pitch rentals, catering contracts and carparking fees; sponsorship from local businesses; in-kind support from the cultural, voluntary and community sectors.

This year, Arts Council England (who last year provided a grant of £78,000) have informed the Council and other organisations that they are prioritising emergency support to National Portfolio Organisations and individual artists: as such, they are not in a position to accept grant applications for activities such as the Show. Other partners, whose income has been affected by the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, are not now in a position to contribute. Given that some contracts, such as catering, depend on an anticipated volume of customers, it has not been possible to offer prospective suppliers the certainty they are seeking in order to make a competitive tender.

If the Show does not go ahead, the contractual obligations referred to in the section above, total £3114.50. These can be met from approved budgets in Culture Sport and Tourism.

## **2.4 Quality of Experience for the Public**

If the Show were to continue, many of the traditional attractions would be affected, from the trading and community fundraising stalls to interactive children's activities to performances and events. It would not be possible to welcome 80,000 people to Clifton Park or any other location in a single weekend and to manage the social distancing needed to prevent the spread of the virus.

## 2.5 **Reputational Impact**

The Programme Board advised that there could be a reputational impact from continuing with the show, derived from the show not being able to deliver to the quality and scale as the previous year. Furthermore, there is a need to balance public disappointment in a cancelled or reduced offer, with the potential criticism that public safety is compromised if the Show goes ahead at all.

## 3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

### 3.1 Officers have been working with the Production Board to consider the following options:

- Continue with planning the delivery of the 2020 Show
- Deliver a reduced-scale Show or postpone to later in the year
- Cancel the 2020 Show and offer the public an alternative programme of projects and activities

### 3.2 **Option 1: Continue with planning the delivery of a 2020 Show**

The Production Board advised that it would not be possible to plan a Show to the scale and quality of previous Shows without clarity of the legal framework, the public safety requirements or confirmed funding from partners. In addition, for performers and other suppliers, many of whom are shielding or furloughed, it has not been possible to go into production without breaking Government guidelines. Even with the current proposed easing of restrictions in July, there would not be the planning time available to deliver the Show safely. Compliance with social distancing would significantly change the kinds of activities which could be delivered, limit the numbers which can be accommodated in a single location and compromise the experience for the public.

### 3.3 **Option 2: Deliver a reduced scale Show or postpone to later in the year.**

A major feature of Rotherham Show is its scale and popularity. In bringing together hundreds of people to make it happen, and attracting in the region of 80,000 visitors, its magic relates to Rotherham's diverse communities coming together as a mass gathering in a single location. Attendance at the Show is heavily weather-dependent, so delaying the Show to later in the year would result in reduced numbers willing to participate, as well as compromise the kinds of activities which can be delivered.

### 3.4 **Option 3: Cancel the 2020 Show and offer the public an alternative programme**

This is the recommended option, in recognition of the fact that if it is not possible to create an event that is recognisable as Rotherham Show or that can bring people together safely at scale, then it is better not to compromise the reputation which has been built up over the last forty years. Although the recommendation is to cancel this year's show, partners recognise that, in the absence of the Show and in recognition of the extraordinary experience of the pandemic, there is a need for an alternative programme of projects and activities which will:

- Enable people to express and make sense of the experience of the last few months
- Create memorials/ways to remember those who have lost their lives
- Provide hope and support for grieving families, complementing clinical counselling services
- Combat loneliness and bring communities back together safely (either online, or in socially distanced household groups)
- Support, and celebrate the contribution of, staff, key workers and volunteers
- Revitalise morale, pride and confidence in Rotherham (supporting economic recovery)

In the meantime, the Production Board can continue to meet in order to plan for the 2021 Rotherham Show.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

##### **4.1 Rotherham Show Production Board**

A multi-agency Production Board was formed in March 2020 to oversee the development of the Show. The group includes local voluntary and community sector organisations, artists, officers of a range of Council departments and people representing sectors of the community with protected characteristics. The group made the recommendation to the Council in April that, given the need to protect public safety, the 2020 Show should be cancelled.

##### **4.2 Rotherham Events Safety Advisory Group**

Additional consultation took place with the Rotherham Events Safety Advisory Group at a meeting on 2 June 2020 which included South Yorkshire Police, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, the Hospital and officers in Emergency Planning, Community Safety and Public Health. The group endorsed the proposal to cancel and suggested that it was important for the Council to take a lead, setting an example to organisers of other major events, and prioritising public safety.

##### **4.3 Covid-19 Emergency Response partnerships**

The proposal to cancel has been discussed with and endorsed by the relevant emergency response working groups and partnerships which include representation from the emergency services, Rotherham Hospitals Trust, the CCG, public health, the business community and the voluntary and community sector.

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

##### **5.1 Subject to approval, the timetable is as follows:**

- July/August 2020 – development of alternative programme and delivery of key communications to inform the public
- 5 and 6 September – installation to mark the dates of Rotherham Show and launch alternative programme

- September-December – delivery of programme of events, installations, and resources to support community recovery and celebration.
- September 2021 – delivery of Rotherham Show

5.2 This work will be led by officers in Culture Sport and Tourism, led by the Head of Creative Programming and Engagement, working closely with:

- Corporate Communications and Members on the public communications campaign
- The multi-agency Production Board on the planning of Rotherham Show 2021
- The Creative Recovery Working Group to develop and deliver the alternative programme planned for September to March.

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

6.1 The gross cost of last year's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show was £191,000. Income amounted to £172,500 with the difference found from Culture Sport and Tourism approved budgets.

An appraisal of the options finds that Option 1 is untenable for viability reasons. Even if the same level of show was planned for it is known external funding has been re-directed to other priorities and therefore the Show would prove financially unviable. Option 2 is discounted for non-financial reasons. Option 3 is the more viable option but will require firm proposals to be brought forward and agreed.

6.2 The procurement implications for this report have been identified in the main body of this report.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 There are no material legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

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

8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications of the proposed recommendation.

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

9.1 The Show traditionally provides a diverse range of activities and events specifically targeting children, young people and vulnerable adults. Whilst the Show cannot be delivered this year, the alternative programme will take account of the needs of all sectors of the community and particularly those with protected characteristics.

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

- 10.1 The Equalities Screening is attached at Appendix 1. As part of the work to improve the impact of the Show in employing, involving and engaging people who have traditionally been less represented as performers, suppliers, partners and audiences, the Production Board includes sectors of the community with protected characteristics.
- 10.2 Although the cancellation of the Show will be disappointing for all of our communities, there will be an Equalities Impact Assessment of the alternative programme. Furthermore, cancellation of this year's event gives more planning time to enable better inclusion and representation of all of Rotherham's diverse communities in the 2021 Show: people with protected characteristics are now directly influencing the direction of travel through the Production Board.
- 10.3 The Council has a Community Reference Group which is Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance and has representatives from different protected characteristic groups. This group will also be consulted on initial proposals and support the engagement of target neighbourhoods (alongside the Neighbourhoods Service) and communities of interest. Faith representatives will also help to co-design some of the creative content.

## **11. Implications for Ward Priorities**

- 11.1 Whilst Rotherham Show takes place at Clifton Park in Boston Castle ward, organisations and audiences take part from across the borough.
- 11.2 The Head of Neighbourhoods is part of the working group for the alternative programme. In addition to increased online activity, which people can engage with wherever they live, a number of the projects are intended to take place in different parts of the borough, making them more accessible to people located in the north or south.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 A diverse range of partners are involved in the Production Board including: Gullivers, Grimm and Co, Khula Arts, Voluntary Action Rotherham, members of the Community and Faith Leaders Forum and other community representatives. This group recommended that the Show should be cancelled and agreed to work with the Council to develop a Show for 2022.
- 12.2 Many voluntary and community sector organisations traditionally use the Show for local fundraising. Officers will continue to work in collaboration with Voluntary Action Rotherham to provide advice and support where possible.
- 12.3 A working group to develop the Creative Recovery Programme has been created which includes partners from Voluntary Action Rotherham, NHS, Rotherham United Community Sport Trust, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Association and departments from across RMBC.



### 13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1. The risks have been set out in Section 2 above. The recommendation to cancel Rotherham Show recognises:

- Reputation and public confidence in the Council: The public may be deeply disappointed that the Show will not take place this year. However, consultation with partners suggest that the public understand that the reasons for cancellation are beyond the control of the Council, that public health is the right priority at this time and also that the public is unwilling to engage in cultural events and mass gatherings which risk their chances of contracting the virus at present.
- Mental health and wellbeing: national research conducted by University College London suggests that the pandemic has had a significant impact on mental health. The Show is an important annual boost to morale and civic confidence.

13.2 The proposal to develop an alternative programme of projects and activities, as set out in section 3.3, combined with proactive communications will help to mitigate the above risks.

13.3 Although the alternative programme will not be able to recreate the spectacle of the annual Rotherham Show, it will offer other opportunities to engage residents, to respond appropriately and safely to the unprecedented experience of the pandemic and lockdown, as well as capture the spirit of the Show by bringing people together in new and different ways.

### 14. Accountable Officers

Leanne Buchan, Head of Creative Programming and Engagement  
Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

|  | <b>Named Officer</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|--|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive  | Sharon Kemp          | 26/06/20    |
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services<br>(S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger        | 26/06/20    |
| Head of Legal Services<br>(Monitoring Officer)                       | Stuart Fletcher      | 26/06/20    |

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