

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 09 June 2025

**Report Title**

Cultural Strategy

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

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

Chris Siddall, Head of Sport, Leisure & Strategic Partnerships  
01709 822478 or [Chris.Siddall@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Siddall@rotherham.gov.uk)

Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director Culture, Sport and Tourism  
01709 254795 or [Polly.Hamilton@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:Polly.Hamilton@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

Rotherham's Cultural Strategy was produced in collaboration with members of the public and partners from across the cultural, leisure, green spaces and tourism sectors in 2019. This was the first strategy produced by the Local Cultural Partnership Board since it was established in 2018. The Strategy will culminate at the end of 2026.

This report provides an update on the progress made by the Board in delivering against the Cultural Strategy over the past 6 years. It also sets out the proposed process for the renewal of the Strategy, including related consultation.

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the achievements of the current Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2026.
2. Note that the Cultural Partnership Board will develop a new Cultural Strategy for 2027 – 2034.
3. Note the proposal to undertake consultation in support of the creation of a new strategy.

## **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 The Rotherham Cultural Strategy 2019 - 2026  
Appendix 2a Equalities Screening Part A  
Appendix 2b Equalities Analysis Form Part B  
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

The Cultural Strategy Cabinet Report, April 2019

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

None

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Cultural Strategy

### 1. Background

- 1.1 On the 20 May 2019, Cabinet endorsed Rotherham's first Cultural Strategy in over 10 years. This document subsequently set the direction for the sector across the Borough with the intention of demonstrating the role that culture, sport and tourism could play in shaping Rotherham's future.
- 1.2 Within the Strategy, the definition of culture includes the natural environment, parks, woodland and countryside, sport, the arts (including performing arts, music, theatre, dance, visual art, craft, literature, circus, film and digital media), tourism attractions, libraries, heritage, museums and archives, events and play.
- 1.3 At the time of writing the Strategy, Rotherham was approximately 10% behind the national average for participation in physical activity, the arts, museums and libraries. Consequently, the Strategy set out an overarching goal to *'get more people active, creative and outdoors, more often'*, in order to address lower participation numbers in cultural activities and because of the benefits of participation to improving social, health and economic outcomes. Physical activity levels amongst adults are now 8.6% under the national average and 7.3% behind the Yorkshire and Humber average, demonstrating modest improvement over time. Six years later, the data sample size has been reduced on the current Active Lives Survey and some organisations question its validity. Furthermore, data is no longer collated in the same way for Arts engagement so it is not possible to compare like-for like.

As part of the renewal process, the Cultural Partnership Board will explore the feasibility of recreating the Active Lives survey as was conducted in 2019 to provide a comparable set of figures. If this is not possible, then there is a significant range of alternative metrics now in use, within the control of local partners, which enable us to explore trends and evidence progress.

- 1.4 The Strategy was categorised into 7 "Game Changers" in order to simplify its target work areas and provide structure for its achievements. These are:
1. A Vibrant Heart
  2. Amazing Events
  3. Adventures In Rother Valley
  4. A Great Place for Wentworth and the Dearne Valley
  5. Vital Neighbourhoods
  6. Turning Passion into Profession
  7. Children's Capital of Culture

### 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Successes in delivering against the Strategy targets are mapped against each of the Game Changers as follows:

## 2.2 A Vibrant Heart

2.2.1 The Strategy aimed to create a rich and diverse cultural offer in the Town Centre, including a cinema, public art and events. It committed to looking at options to improve the central library, exhibition facilities and theatre. In delivering against this aim, achievements include:

- Grimm and Co. opened their new **Emporium of Stories** building in March 2024.
- Securing Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation status for **Rotherham Museums** from 2022- 27, along with a new temporary exhibitions programme, new family learning activities and an improved café offer at Clifton Park Museum and **VAQAS** (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) since 2024.
- The opening of a **new cinema, The ARC**, in September 2024 in collaboration with RIDO.
- Town Centre public realm developments with a focus **on play, active travel and family living**, including James Capper's Camellia sculpture, commissioned by Gallery Town.
- £2.4m Upgrade to exhibition galleries at **Magna** via Levelling Up Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund.
- £550,000+ investment into **Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium** with improvements to the track, floodlights, main building, hammer cage and car park.
- The **new town centre library** development is well underway and due to open in 2026.
- Phase 1 Feasibility Study for **New Centre for Performing Arts** completed May 2022.
- **Clifton Park** has achieved Green Flag Status each year, work has begun to improve the water splash play facility, 3 new tennis courts have been constructed and the park provided a vital resource for residents during the covid- 19 pandemic.
- **Rotherham Leisure Complex** has increased its offer through engagement with the Holiday Activity Fund, sustained its clinical pathways for people with health conditions and become more energy efficient with the installation of solar PV panels.
- **New studio space for artists** is in development via ROAR at Hope Studios, Grove Road.
- The redevelopment of the **Rotherham Civic Theatre** business model and **£350k refurbishment** of its front of house space with a new 100-seat Studio Theatre in development. The theatre welcomes **70,000 visitors per year** across a varied programme of family theatre, music, drama and dance and has introduced a range of inclusion and accessibility offers such as Tuesday and Thursday Stories offering providing accessible family storytelling workshops including a weekly SEND session and Pay What You Can ticket availability.

## 2.3 Amazing Events:

2.3.1 The Strategy outlined its ambition to work with commercial, community and major events organisers to create more ambitious events which bring the town together, make people proud of who they are and bring people into Rotherham. Achievements include:

- Hosting the **Women's Euro 2022** with 97% of tickets sold for 4 matches hosted, a full cultural and heritage programme that gained national and international acclaim alongside a "best in the country" volunteer programme. 24,000 visitors came to 4 town centre fan parties and the event's economic impact report noted a £5.3m benefit to the local economy.
- **Rotherham Show** celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2019 and reached 100,000 visits during the 2021 event. Customer satisfaction currently stands at 95% (2024).
- **Yorkshire Day** 2020 moved to 2023 due to Covid- 19. An exciting programme took place in August involving Mayors from across the county.
- **Rotherham Valley Country Park** celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023 with a programme of events.
- Clifton Park hosted **The Reytons'** concert in July 2024, the largest outdoor event hosted there since T-Rex in 1971. The event officially sold out and attracted an audience of over 18,000. The concert was deemed a huge success with hundreds of positive comments on social media, bringing £1m to the Rotherham economy and a further £1.3m to South Yorkshire.
- A plethora of new town centre events have evolved, with cultural sector partners working together, co-produced with children, young people and other target communities. These include the **Signals Music Festival, UPLIFT Urban Festival, WoW Festival, Otherham** and **Roots Carnival**. These new events have grown year on year since 2022 and now attract a combined figure of an additional 44,394 visitors this past year (2024/25).
- The continuation and growth of "**One Voice**" which is the school's annual singing concert, this year with over 3000 students involved.
- **Tour of Britain** cycling stage in September 2024.
- **National Hovercraft Championships and Open Water Swimming Championships** at Rother Valley Country Park and Thrybergh Country Park respectively.

## 2.4 Adventures In Rother Valley:

2.4.1 The creation of new high-quality experiences for residents and visitors in the South of the Borough was the main focus for this element of the strategy. Gulliver's Valley Resort, the introduction of major new camping and caravan facilities at Waleswood, the revitalisation of Rother Valley Country Park and the development of the historic canal network have all made significant progress to date.

#### 2.4.2 Achievements include:

- The opening in 2020 and expansion of the **Gulliver's Valley Resort**, employed 40 FTE and seasonal of 105 people, followed up by the opening of **SkillsStreet** in June 2025.
- The opening of **Waleswood Caravan and Camp Site** in April 2019, achieving 5\* reviews, AA Silver Pennant and Top 100 campsites, bringing 34,734 bookings for 97,020 nights since opening with the latest annual figures for 2024/25 standing at 15,079 adults, 4,041 children and 524 infants. The site greatly enhances the leisure, hospitality and tourism economy in South Yorkshire.
- The development of a new **Mountain Bike Trail** at Rother Valley Country Park.
- Securing £5.5m for new café & visitor facilities at **Rother Valley Country Park** via the Government's Levelling Up Fund, improving hospitality, parking and play facilities at this important regional attraction.
- Contribution to the development of new strategic business case for **Chesterfield Canal**. The plan highlights the infrastructure/attraction possibilities for the canal, the potential income streams and what can be done to ensure sustainability.
- Paying visitor numbers have **risen at Rother Valley Country Park by 123.9%** since the start of the Cultural Strategy in 2019. The figures have risen from 59,046 to 132,221 people.

#### 2.5 A Great Place for Wentworth and the Dearne Valley:

2.5.1 The strategy aimed to support the development of a nationally significant new tourism product in the North of the borough where Wentworth Woodhouse would create a rival to Chatsworth and a new hub for cultural tourism which will benefit the whole borough. Achievements include:

- The development of a £110m masterplan for **Wentworth Woodhouse**, including attracting 123,553 annual visitors in 2023/24, enlisting 386 volunteers.
- Continuation of the legacy of **WE Great Place** through the **WE Wonder festivals**, creating and hosting quality events for families such as the **Vintage Car Rally**, "**Wentfest**", **Grand Prix Cycling Event**, **Rotherham 10k** road race and **RHS Flower Show** in 2025.
- The conservation and development of **Keppel's Column**, reopening this important landmark to the public after 60 years of closure, removing it from the national 'Heritage at Risk' register in the process.
- Completing the conservation of **Waterloo Kiln**, site of Rockingham Pottery works.
- Improvements to the **stable block** at Wentworth Woodhouse with the receipt of £4.6m grant funding from the Government's Levelling up Fund.
- The re-opening of the **Camelia House** at Wentworth Woodhouse.

- Investment from Historic England of £2,465,503 between 2020-2025 into Waterloo Kiln, Keppel's Column and Wentworth Woodhouse.

## 2.6 Turning Passion into Profession:

2.6.1 The strategy committed partners to working 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. In addition, aspirations to work through ROAR to grow the creative community – giving artists more reasons to stay and work in Rotherham were outlined.

2.6.2 By 2026 a target to create 1,500 new volunteering opportunities, 100 new apprenticeships and 1,500 new jobs in the creative, digital, cultural, leisure and tourism sectors was set. The strategy also aims to encourage all schools to take up the Mile a Day Challenge (estimated all primary and SEN schools took part at least once, with 60% making the activity “regular” at the height of its interest), Arts Mark and outdoor learning. To date, the target has been met for apprentices and work is ongoing to establish the number of volunteer opportunities that have been offered and jobs created over the span of the Strategy from 2019. 21 schools have achieved Arts Mark, 6 are registered and a further 20 school are “working towards” the award.

2.6.3 The achievements to date include:

- Worked through **ROAR** and **Flux Rotherham** to grow Rotherham's creative community, with activities such as Ferham Festival, Musical Storytelling and numerous artist commissions.
- Developed new **artist development programmes** through Imagine Rotherham, Children's Capital of Culture and events commissioning.
- Enabled 148 young people to attain **Arts Award**.
- Delivery of **Skills Street** at Gulliver's Valley resort. This project is an immersive and innovative world-of-work experience developed to widen career aspirations for children, young people, and adults across the region and inspire the next generation to work.
- Development of a hospitality and visitor experience training facility at **Wentworth Woodhouse**.
- SYMCA-supported research into creative & cultural industries.
- Delivered 12 **Kickstart apprenticeships** within Arts and Heritage Services at the Council.
- Placed **skills and talent development** central to **Children's Capital of Culture 2025**, enabling 121 young people aged 16 – 25 to find employment with some of our area's most exciting cultural organisations. Of the former trainees, 70% went onto further employment or training. Across the latest cohort, host organisations have made 7 trainee contract extensions, and a further 4 trainees have gone on to be offered new alumni roles within the programme. Additional paid opportunities include: 9 Young Artist Residencies across a range of disciplines, and 2 visual art internships being delivered in collaboration with Rush House, to support care experienced Young People.

- The Children's Capital of Culture **Creative Learning** programme has been designed to increase children and young people's access to arts and culture, embed creativity in teaching and learning and raise awareness of creative careers. Key projects have been over-subscribed with **86 schools applying** for 66 places. **136 schools have been recruited** to engage, with just 1 school who has not yet signed up to a project. Activities taking place in 22 out of 25 wards to date.
- The Culture, Sport and Tourism team at the Council continue to build their volunteer programme and in 2024, 105 volunteers provided over 8,000 hours, worth £91,000 of support across events and Green Spaces.
- £5.9m investment into Maltby Learning Trust creating a centre for training, apprenticeships, and start up support for the leisure and hospitality sector.
- **Rotherham Music** have refocused its offer to focus on increased opportunities for performance and progressions which has included: growing its annual One Voice schools singing event to support **1,329** pupils taking part over two days; Developing a national partnership with Royal Ballet and Opera House enabling **600** children from **15** schools to take part on the development of the Rotherham Opera; Spin out progression projects as a result of the annual Signals Festival including Rotherham Young Creative Open Mic sessions at Rotherham Civic Theatre and the annual "LaunchPad" Conference.

## 2.7 Vital Neighbourhoods:

2.7.1 The focus of this Game Changer was to work in a more collaborative way with communities and voluntary organisations, ensuring people in every part of the borough have opportunities to engage. With sustainability and empowerment as a driving factor, the adoption of a strengths-based approach to work has led to a fresh direction of delivery at a local level.

### 2.7.2 Achievements include:

- The development of the **FLUX** initiative – a £2m Creative People & Places Programme funded by The Arts Council. In 2023/24 the programme had 11,400 active participations and 28,094 audience members. This figure rose in 2024/ 25 to 15,859 active participations and a 50,654 audience.
- **Built 3 new libraries**, including a community-led library in Brinsworth, and replacement neighbourhood libraries in Swinton and in Thurcroft. A further library is planned for Wath in 2027.
- **Refurbished a further 11 neighbourhood libraries**, with new furniture, décor and improved IT.
- c£2m million has been agreed/ invested as part of the Council's capital programme on **Children's Playgrounds**.
- Delivered **Arts & Health pilot programme** for 55+ through COVID Recovery.
- Creation of **Hope Fields** as a memorial to those who died in the Covid- 19 pandemic.



- Created the **Thurcroft Troll** – public art and ‘**TrollFest**’ community event
- Currently **4 Green Flag** status parks at Clifton, Ulley, Greasbrough and Rother Valley.
- The borough has been identified as one of 53 new “Place Partnerships” by **Sport England** nationally and in February 2025 received a development award of £455,000 over 2 years to expand working knowledge of the sport and physical activity landscape.
- In 2021 Rotherham was identified as one of 54 Priority Places by **Arts Council England** leading to increased investment to support more people engaging in creative activities.
- £8m was secured via the **Levelling Up investment agenda**, round 1, for Country Parks.
- Improvements to town centre cycle lanes and infrastructure to support **Active Travel** to the value of £120m between 2022- 2027.
- Established the annual **Rotherham 10k race**.
- Achieved **QUEST outstanding**, the Sport England recommended Continuous Improvement Tool for leisure facilities and sports development teams, designed to measure how effective organisations are at providing customer service, in all our Leisure Centres (with Maltby achieving QUEST+).
- Football Foundation investment into the **Active Through Football** project led Rotherham United Community Sports Trust as part of the “Moving Rotherham” programme.
- Over **1,000 young people have engaged with “Fun Palaces”** - The annual celebration of culture sees local communities come together to co-create free creative and cultural experiences and activities in the heart of their neighbourhoods, enabling people to showcase their skills and hobbies across Culture, Sport and Tourism services.
- **Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)**- An annual SRC celebration event was introduced in 2022. In 2024 over a thousand children across Rotherham were invited to celebrate completing the challenge at Magna Science Adventure Centre.

## 2.8 Children’s Capital of Culture:

2.8.1 Children’s Capital of Culture is a title bestowed upon Rotherham by its children and young people. 2025 has commenced with a year-long festival of imagination, creativity and community, devised, developed and delivered in partnership with children and young people from Rotherham. This has arguably been the game-changer which has brought the Cultural Partnership Board together to jointly deliver to a shared activity programme.

2.8.2 The festival year is delivering:

- A range of cultural activities, including exhibitions, events, performances, festivals, gigs, art installations, murals and more.
- Targeted activities with schools, a skills and talent development programme, family learning and creative health activities.
- A ‘spotlight’ programme to showcase existing activities for children and young people delivered by a range of partners.

- Activities across all 25 wards.

### 2.8.3 Achievements include:

- Supported **121** paid traineeships for 16-25 year olds in the cultural and creative industries.
- Supported **132 artists development opportunities** for 'Young Artists in Residence' to gain practical skills across creative disciplines.
- Delivery of Arts Awards programme in collaboration with hosts supporting **235** young people completing at a range of levels from explore to Silver. **25** young people currently undertaking Gold level.
- Over **279,950** audience engagements (visitors) from January 2023 to date. this has also included **33,157 active participations** in activities and workshops/ events.
- The programme has **1,168** regular/ repeat participations.
- **15,000** participations in the February 2022 launch festival.
- Working with **120 schools and colleges with 7,559 actively participating pupils.**
- **74%** of these were from Rotherham, **18%** were from the rest of South Yorkshire, and **8%** were from other locations.
- Working with **304** artists and organisations to make these activities happen.
- **30%** of these artists and organisations were from Rotherham, **33%** were from the rest of South Yorkshire, and **26%** were from other locations.

## 2.9 About the Cultural Partnership Board

- 2.9.1 Beyond the considerable achievements of individual organisations, the success of the strategy to date has been in the main, down to the joint working between partners. The Cultural Partnership Board consists of the following partners: ARC Cinema, Arts Council England, Flux Rotherham, Grimm and Co, Gulliver's Valley Resort, Places Leisure, RNN Group, ROAR, Sense, Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire Sport Foundation, and representatives of networks such as Rotherham Creative Network, Moving Rotherham and Rotherham Headteacher's Forum, as well as senior officers from Culture Sport and Tourism, School Effectiveness and Public Health. The board also includes freelance representation, in recognition of the large proportion of the sector which is made up of sole traders and micro-businesses.
- 2.9.2 The Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working. The Vice Chair is Helen Jones, Director of Flux Rotherham.
- 2.9.3 On 29 July 2024, Cabinet approved the proposal to delegate governance of Children's Capital of Culture to the Cultural Partnership Board. This has worked well and demonstrates the collective value of the Board and its members.

2.9.4 It is worth acknowledging that Arts Council of England have been a consistent partner from the outset, both through part-funding the creation of the strategy and through active participation in meetings.

## 2.10 Funding Delivery of the Strategy

2.10.1 The strategy document noted that the Cultural Partnership Board would need to make the best use of resources, reacting positively and swiftly to changing needs and demands, securing new investment from funders who share the Borough's vision.

2.10.2 To date, external investment secured includes:

- Increased Arts Council England investment from £136,470 in 2017/18 to £2.8m in 2024/25.
- £2m in ACE Creative People & Places investment.
- £19.2m LUF for leisure economy development.
- £3.3m from Sport England.
- £2,549,454 contributing to total project costs of £3,586,330 (126 different projects) from The Football Foundation.
- Increased average annual investment from Historic England from £19,688 prior to 2019, to £448,251 from 2019 to 2024 – securing a total of £2,689,503 in that period.

In addition, organisations within the Cultural Partnership such as Wentworth Woodhouse, Gullivers and Grimm and Co have brought in significant inward investment, contributing to jobs and growth and driving up opportunities to participate.

## 2.11 Areas of Focus

2.11.1 The delivery of the strategy has required a focus on some key areas. In summary:

2.11.2 Creating an Effective Board: as the partnership board was a new entity, it took some time to mature. The balance of strategic leadership/decision-makers vs operational knowledge of the sector was discussed for some time. The group grew in size to a point where maintaining a focus at meetings could be difficult, as was ensuring all parties had value out of attending. In 2022, membership was reviewed and the board was streamlined with representation of the freelance sector and ethnic minority communities increased. Since this review the Board has operated in a more strategic and focussed manner.

2.11.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy: As the report highlights, great strides have been made in widening access and increasing opportunities for people to participate in cultural activity, but measuring impact and capturing the full range of achievements has proved to be a difficult task. Board members measure outputs in a variety of ways, have different operating models and funding streams. Aligning this work to provide comprehensive, and holistic data and intelligence in a consistent format has not been

achieved. This is an ongoing task for the facilitators of the Board and will be an essential part of the planning process for the new Cultural Strategy from 2026.

2.11.4 Scope of the Strategy: although the Strategy was initially intended to comprehensively cover the full range of cultural, leisure, sporting and environmental sectors, this has not been fully achieved.

- The Moving Rotherham board reports to both the Cultural Partnership Board (and the Health and Wellbeing Board) and the physical activity and sport sector needs the continued focus that the Moving Rotherham Board can provide.
- A new Creative Health Board was established for Rotherham in 2024, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Creative Health South Yorkshire (as part of the wider Integrated Care Partnership).
- Representation of the environmental sector was not sufficiently consistent: consequently, a bespoke Green Infrastructure Strategic Partnership is in development to take forward priorities related to nature recovery and conservation.
- Following publication of the new Destination Delivery Plan for South Yorkshire, the South Yorkshire Visitor Economy Partnership is being established along with neighbouring local authorities, SYMCA and private sector partners.

2.11.5 Updates on all of the above will continue to be provided to the Cultural Partnership Board.

## 2.12 Renewing the Cultural Strategy

2.12.1 Renewal of the Strategy will need to begin before the end of 2025 in order to provide sufficient lead in to create a new strategy before the end of 2026. In light of the progress made in delivering the strategy to date, the Cultural Partnership Board members are of the view that the renewal process for the new Strategy will be straightforward due to the achievements set out under each of the 'Gamechangers' in sections 2.2 to 2.8, and the metrics established for the current Strategy, particularly in areas of joint working such as Children's Capital of Culture. This suggests that the Cultural Partnership Board and its related networks have the knowledge and expertise to produce a credible update. This will avoid the need for significant additional resource to pay for consultants. Nevertheless, a range of options for the renewal of the Cultural Strategy are set out in section 3 below.

2.12.2 The proposed timetable for the renewal of the Strategy is set out in Section 5.

## 2.13 Proposed Consultation Process

2.13.1 The proposed consultation process is as follows:

2.13.2 Finalise the scope of the review with the Cultural Partnership Board and Policy, Performance and Intelligence Team.

2.13.3 Undertake a Stakeholder consultation workshop bringing together representatives from across the sector, with a focus on existing strategy, gaps and new opportunities/issues, as well as Rotherham Together Partnership members, Youth Cabinet, SYMCA, and national partners such as Arts Council England, etc.

2.13.4 Utilise the Equalities Action Plan to identify key stakeholder groups with protected characteristics and deliver targeted and bespoke consultation workshops (or whatever is most appropriate).

2.13.5 Produce a draft Strategy and consult in accordance with the Consultation Toolkit.

2.13.6 Finalise the Strategy in conjunction with the Cultural Partnership Board and provide a report to Cabinet.

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

3.1 Options for the renewal of the Cultural Strategy are as follows:

3.1.1 Option 1 – Don't renew the Cultural Strategy

This option would mean that The Cultural Partnership Board would not have an overarching framework for development. It would position the Borough less favourably in relation to securing external funding with which to drive forward improvements. It could significantly reduce the amount of funding secured from Arts Council England.

3.1.2 Option 2 – Commission an independent review and strategy development process.

This would involve identifying funding in the region of £20K - £40k and procuring an independent consultancy to produce the strategy on behalf of the Cultural Partnership Board. Beyond the expense, the additional risk with this option is the possibility that the partners involved in its delivery have less ownership of the final strategy.

3.1.3 Option 3 – Work with existing partners

This option utilises the existing Cultural Partnership Board and networks to:

- a. Collectively review the strategy
- b. Consider current best practice, with the support of the Council's policy and performance team, in conjunction with Arts Council England and other national agencies.

- c. Co-produce a needs assessment, vision and priorities for the future
- d. Write a new strategy and consult on the draft.
- e. Develop an evaluation framework which all partners agree to support.

This option would require significant officer support to deliver, however it is in line with the Council's commitment to 'strengths-based working'.

Additional funding would be required to design and produce the strategy to ensure it is of sufficient quality to share with prospective funders, with a view to securing a contribution from a range of partners, including Arts Council England.

- 3.2 Option 3 is the recommended option because it is the most affordable option and it will enable the Cultural Partnership Board to build on the success of the current approach.

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

- 4.1 The proposed process for renewal of the Cultural Strategy has been discussed with members of the Cultural Partnership Board and Arts Council England.
- 4.2 This has shaped the options and proposed process.

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

- 5.1 The proposed timetable for its renewal is as follows:
  - Initial review and needs assessment workshop – September-October 2025
  - Targeted consultation activity – November – February 2026
  - Draft Strategy produced by end March 2026
  - Consultation on draft Strategy – April – May 2026
  - Analysis of results and production of final Strategy – June – July 2026
  - Approval of final Strategy via Cultural Partnership – August 2026
  - Report to Cabinet – September 2026 – to endorse the new Cultural Strategy
- 5.2 Accountability for implementing this decision is with the Assistant Director Culture Sport and Tourism.

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

- 6.1 As per 3.1.3, the recommended option currently has no funding identified. Costs are anticipated to be covered through a mixture of grant funding and partner contributions.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

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

- 7.1 There is no statutory requirement to consult in respect of this Strategy. However, considering previous practice, the expectation of the public and in order to ensure that the Strategy properly addresses the wishes and priorities of the residents of the Borough, it is appropriate for consultation to take place as proposed.
- 7.2 As such, in order for the consultation process to be considered legitimate, it should be done at formative stage, provide sufficient information to allow “intelligent consideration”, provide adequate time for a response, and “conscientious consideration” should be given to the consultation response before a decision is made (as set out in the High Court case of R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning). These criteria are met in respect of the proposed consultation.

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

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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

- 9.1 Delivery of the strategy has supported the widening of participation for children and young people and vulnerable adults.
- 9.2 The delivery of the Children’s Capital of Culture 2025 programme has provided significant opportunities across the borough for participation and engagement with leisure and culture to take place. The ongoing legacy of the programme post-2025 will be considered as part of the process for the development of a new strategy.

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

- 10.1 The key mission of the Cultural Strategy, is to “*get more people, more active, creative and outdoors, more often*”, and this is central to the commitment to human rights and equalities
- 10.2 An Equalities Analysis has been completed and there is much good practice locally, highlighting ways in which people with protected characteristics are prioritised and able to participate in cultural activities.
- 10.3 The increased amount of cultural activity across Rotherham over the past 6 years, often co-produced with people with protected characteristics, has led to widening engagement. This work is ongoing and the new Strategy will build on this.
- 10.4 Both an Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) and an Equality Analysis Form (Part B) have been completed and are attached as Appendix 2.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change are contained in Appendix 3, Climate Impact Assessment.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 The Cultural Partnership Board is currently made up of a wide range of partners including Yorkshire Sport Foundation, Arts Council England, ROAR (Rotherham Open Arts Renaissance), Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, FLUX Rotherham, Gulliver's, Grimm and Co and RNN Group.

- 12.2 There are a number of individuals contributing knowledge in relation to: freelance artists, Inclusion, BAME/Global Majority Communities. Partners have remained committed to support delivery of the strategy and attend regularly.

- 12.3 The Cultural Partnership Board has representation on the wider Rotherham Together Partnership Group and feeds into the Health and Wellbeing Board. Periodically the Chair presents an update to the Rotherham Together Partnership.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Insufficient resources with which to deliver a new Strategy: officers in Cultural Sport and Tourism will work with officers in the Policy, Performance and Improvement team, along with partners on the Cultural Partnership Board. Arts Council England have been approached for support for funding.

- 13.2 Insufficient timeframe to deliver the new Strategy: the first strategy was delivered over a 20 month period because it had been over 10 years since Rotherham's last Cultural Strategy. By beginning in September, some contingency has been embedded within the renewal programme.

- 13.3 Lack of buy-in from partners: the previous strategy utilised co-production and the intention is to build on this with the renewal process, starting with a workshop to bring partners together to review the current strategy, set out the process and agree the consultation process. By embedding delivery partners within the process, there is the opportunity to embed engagement in the final output. Importantly, there are pre-existing positive relationships with the Cultural Partnership Board and related networks.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

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 OBE	23/05/25
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	21/05/25
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	22/05/25

*Report Author: Chris Siddall, Head of Sport, Leisure and Strategic  
Partnerships 01709 822478 or Chris.Siddall@rotherham.gov.uk*

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