

FLUX
ROTHERHAM

CREATING
SHARING
CONNECTING

BUSINESS PLAN 2026-29

The Strategic Vision



fluxrotherham.org.uk



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**CREATIVE
PEOPLE
AND
PLACES**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Vision

FLUX is the Arts Council England funded Creative People and Places Programme for Rotherham. Building on our achievements in Phase 1 (2019-2026), FLUX Rotherham is entering our next phase with a proven track record of delivering inclusive, relevant and high-quality arts programmes.

This FLUX business plan (2026-2029) sets out **a clear framework for how we will sustain and develop our impact**. This means; continuing to deliver meaningful cultural experiences rooted in the lived experiences of Rotherham's residents, working dynamically alongside an aligned network of partners and collaborators, and responding to the evident demand for FLUX events and activities that we have nurtured over the last five years.



Our business plan is in service to a **10-year vision** that by 2030, **Rotherham will be established as a cultural democracy**. This ensures that every resident has frequent and accessible opportunities to experience high-quality culture while exploring and expressing their own creative ambitions, heritage, and identity.

To achieve this, we are on a mission to **co-create a cultural movement** that celebrates diversity, nurtures personal growth, and creates lasting connections between people. The FLUX mission is underpinned by four core values that support the conditions and relationships essential for community creativity:



Community-led and relevant



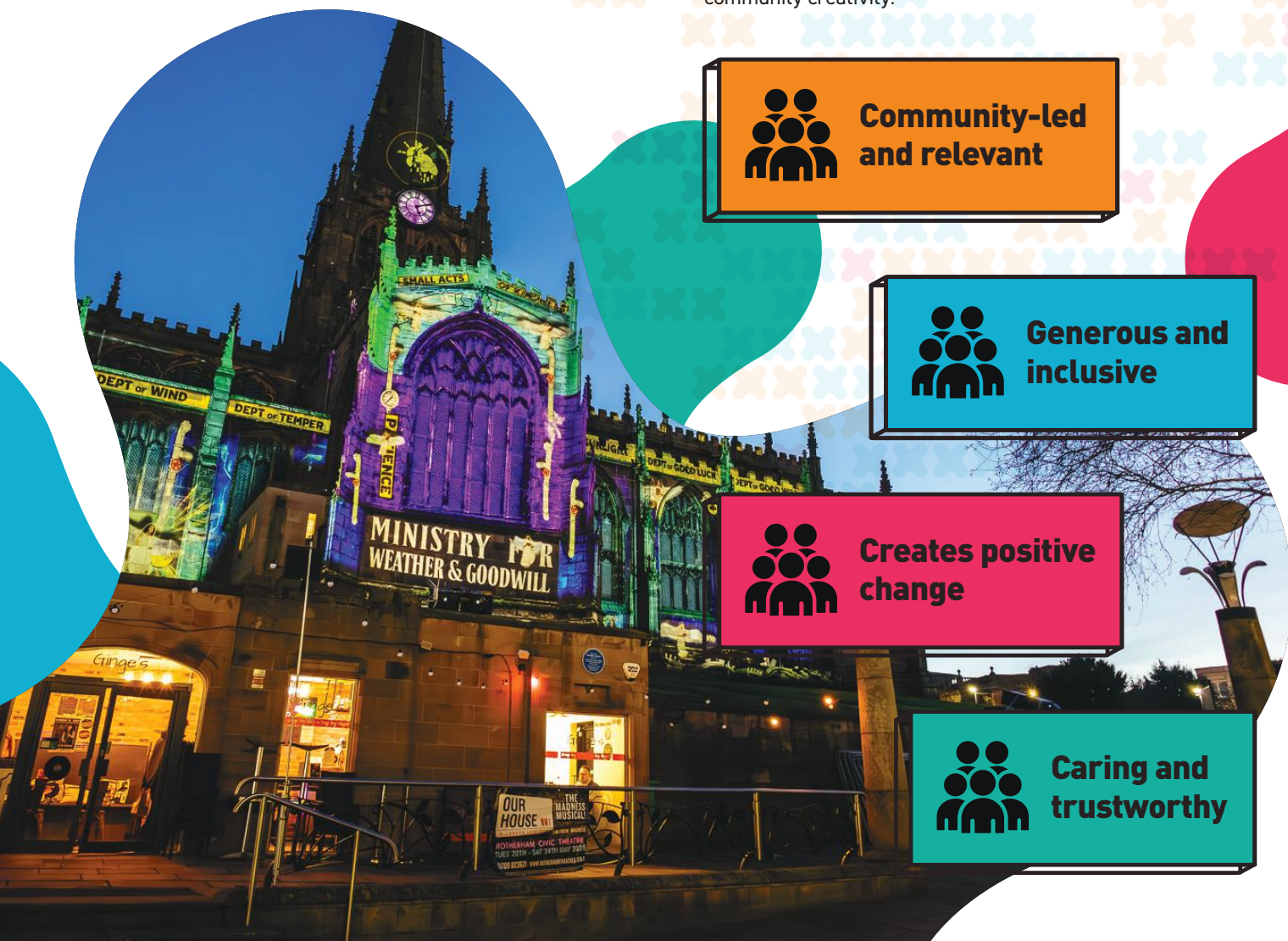
Generous and inclusive



Creates positive change



Caring and trustworthy



Track Record and Impact (PHASE 1)

FLUX's success to date is evidenced by the reach of our engagement and participation with Rotherham residents. Over 59 months in Phase 1, the programme recorded:



435,484 total engagements
including 372,944 in-person audience members and 33,908 active participants



961 activities were delivered
spanning all 25 wards of the borough



1,472.5 hours volunteered
indicating successful community buy-in



High local relevance
with 96% of attendees travelling less than 10 miles to participate

Key project highlights in phase one included the **Spread the Word** literature project, which published the "Ourselves Reflected Back" anthology in 2025; **The Sensational Alzanas**, which engaged over 20,000 people by celebrating local Maltby heritage; and the **Winter Light Festival**, which attracted over 6,000 attendees in 2026.



Methodology: The FLUX Way

Independent evaluation findings confirm that FLUX's **asset-based approach** and commitment to co-commissioning artists/producers with **authentic socially-engaged practice** has been pivotal to facilitating meaningful public engagement.

The FLUX methodology is characterised by being **"relentlessly collaborative"**. We seek to deconstruct top-down traditions to enable more communities to get a say in their arts and cultural offer. We do this by empowering **community steering groups and commissioning panels** to lead the **"choosing and deciding"** process in our programme.

Strategic pillars of the FLUX methodology include:

❑ The Action-Research Framework:

We use a continuous **"plan > do > review"** cycle, which allows for experimental "try/fail" iterations that enable projects like Spread the Word to transform (organically) over time.

❑ A Trusted Artist Model:

We develop long-term partnerships with "trusted" artists who demonstrate that they understand the borough's nuances and can "hold the space" for creativity to surface.

❑ A Collaborative Partnership Model:

FLUX bring/seek co-creation methodology in as many communities & organisations as possible to leverage collective resources, networks & skills.

❑ Consummate Production Values:

A commitment to professional-standard technical elements (lighting, sound, materials) to build trust and ensure participants feel the inherent worth of their creative contributions. We want the art to be excellent as well as the process.

❑ Investment in Practical Inclusion Measures:

e.g., for events we provide quiet space, BSL tours, easy-read versions, walk through videos, Access Statements, etc. where appropriate we engage access support specialists.



Strategic Aims and Program Strands (2026-2029)

The program for Phase 2 is refined into three core strands, interweaving action research and the active development of stakeholder partnerships.

1. Communities Create and Connect

This strand focuses on **hyper-local engagement** in six target areas identified through deprivation and engagement data: **Maltby, Swinton, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Ferham/Masbrough, and Eastwood**. The overall aim is to celebrate pride in place and enable more people who do not traditionally participate in the arts to perform and share their creativity.

2. Made in Rotherham

This strand functions as a **mosaic of Rotherham voices**, using town-wide platforms for archiving and presentation. Projects include: *Community Knowledge Store* (creatively documenting and archiving hidden or overlooked community heritage stories) and *Gallery Town* (an outdoor art gallery trail co-curated with residents to champion Rotherham's identity). The *FLUX in the Wild* project will facilitate year-round creative engagement in the borough's green spaces, such as Canklow Woods and Thrybergh Country Park.



3. Amazing Events

These large-scale productions celebrate the town centre, reimagining heritage buildings and changing perceptions of safety and accessibility. *The Winter Light Festival* will return by popular demand as a fixture of the Rotherham cultural calendar, as will *WOW (Women of the World) Rotherham 2026*. This is a celebration of women, girls, and non-binary communities in a year-long participatory festival. In addition, in 2027, *Palladiums of the North* will be a borough-wide social heritage project preserving the history of working men's clubs through immersive performance.



Flux Operations and Governance

FLUX is governed by a stable and **committed Consortium** that ensures strategic leadership and accountability. Lead Organisation, **Voluntary Action Rotherham** provides the financial framework, HR, and operational support for the FLUX programme while the other consortium partners (**ROAR, Grimm & Co, Wentworth Woodhouse, and RMBC**), alongside an independent chairperson provide governance for the programme. This entails ensuring the art happens in the places of least engagement, supporting and stretching the Director and the delivery team, scrutinising the impact of the programme (attendance, participation figures, feedback etc) and advocating for FLUX's practice.

The FLUX Team is led by a Programme Director (1 FTE) and a core team of four staff (equivalent to 2.6 FTE) who are specialists in creative engagement, events, and communications. The core team is also supported by local volunteers. In the next 3 years, FLUX aim to increase the volunteer pool to 160 active individuals, focusing on artist mentorship and themed training.

Finance and Resource Management

The budget for 2026–2029 is built on a realistic appraisal of Phase 1 experience and a robust financial framework.



Core Funding:
£1,050,000

is secured from
Arts Council England (ACE)



Match Funding:
£365,019

already secured from
consortium partners
(£149,794 cash; £215,225
in-kind)



**Fundraising
Goals:**

Plans to raise an additional
£235,000 from sources
including the Heritage Lottery
Fund and Sport England



Value for Money:

FLUX provides exceptional
value, with partners
reporting a forecast spend of
over **£800,000** per year on
complementary programs
that directly link to **FLUX's**
community work



Monitoring, Evaluation, and Communications

As an action-research program, FLUX employs rigorous evaluation to understand what facilitates better public engagement and how to achieve quality in both the creative process and the artistic output.

Independent Evaluation:

A specialist will be commissioned to analyse data using Arts Council England Systems (Illuminate and the Impact and Insight toolkit) alongside qualitative change stories and case studies.

Smart Communications:

The comms strategy focuses on "working smarter" by using AI and application technologies (e.g., NotebookLM) for managing qualitative feedback data and to prompt drafting, ensuring momentum.

Environmental Responsibility:

There will be a keener focus on eco-friendly and carbon-friendly communications, including optimised digital formats and conscious printing practices.



Three-Year Reach Targets (2026-2029)

FLUX has set ambitious targets to deepen its impact over the next three years:



By 2029, FLUX aims to have successfully transitioned co-production models from action-research practice into sustainable, borough-wide ways of working alongside people and about place. This will take FLUX, our communities and our partners nearer to the vision of a thriving cultural democracy for Rotherham by 2030.

INTRODUCTION

When I knew we were getting a CPP in Rotherham this was the kind of project that I hoped would happen.

Lisa Howarth, Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Manager

At FLUX we seldom do anything on our own. We are tirelessly & relentlessly collaborative.

We want art to be 'within the reach' of all Rotherham's communities. To make this possible, during the phase of this Business Plan (2026-2029) and beyond, we will maintain & develop a multitude of diverse, purposeful partnerships that sustain borough-wide & artform specific creative opportunities.

The FLUX team delivers an ambitious, place-based programme that uses contemporary art, stories, culture, and creativity to animate public spaces, engage communities and celebrate the rich diversity of Rotherham and its residents. As part of the UK Creative People and Places network, we are also core funded by Arts Council England to be an action-research programme. This affords FLUX the flexibility to test new approaches, take artistic risks, and actively share what we learn.

Building on the success of Phase 1, we enter the 2026-2029 programme with renewed confidence, trusted partnerships, a strong team, and valuable experience in co-production. There is demonstrable demand for our programme and strong support for it across communities.

"People were so delighted to have such quality and that it was special to them, it was made for Maltby."

Participant, Maltby Alzanas project

“I felt empowered, heard, motivated and inspired.”

Participant, Reclaim the Night

This business plan sets out the FLUX vision, mission, and delivery model for 2026–2029. It presents a strategic and sustainable approach to delivering high-quality, authentic cultural experiences that are accessible and inclusive, and deeply rooted in the lived experience of the borough.

The plan details how we will strengthen resilient partnerships, diversify income streams, support creatives, and deliver measurable social and cultural impact.



Building on our track record - the FLUX story so far

At FLUX Rotherham we create opportunities for residents, artists, and partners to collaborate in shaping meaningful cultural moments and sustained creative activity.

The programme prioritises work that is bold and experimental while remaining responsive to local context—reflecting Rotherham’s identity, strengths, and ambitions.



There were many programme highlights in Phase 1, including in the last 12 months:

Spread the Word (STW)

STW celebrates new writing. It offers opportunities to write, perform, publish and listen to new stories/poems across Rotherham. Regular engagement programmes and open mic events have been delivered through libraries and community hubs to support individuals to grow in their creative confidence. STW started in Wath and has extended across the town to include Mowbray Gardens Library, Swinton Library and the town centre. In 2025, FLUX published ‘Ourselves Reflected Back’ - a unique anthology celebrating the ‘heart, humour, and honesty’ of the project’s participants.

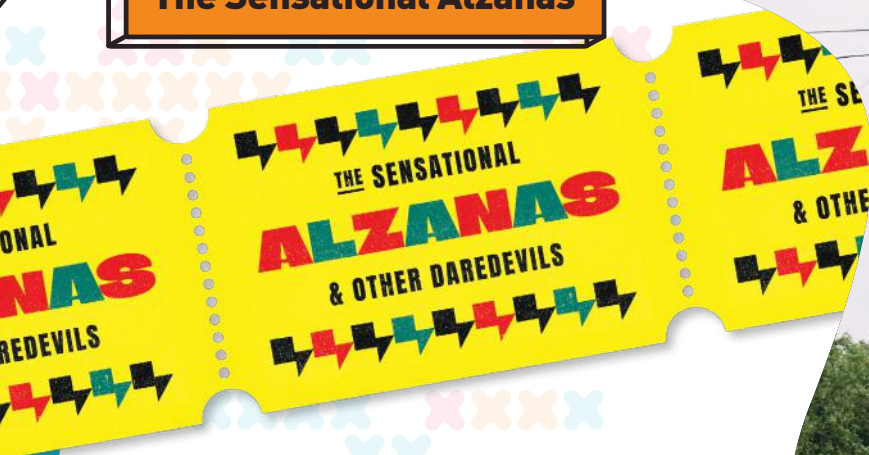


“The ‘personal is universal’ you said... it was a lightbulb moment for me. It made me believe in my words... I feel like I’ve got to conquer the world.”

STW participant (editing workshop)



The Sensational Alzanas



The fascinating story of Harold Alzana (Davis) and his family from Maltby who became world-renowned, wire walking superstars in America. This project started with a week-long immersive residency in Maltby with *Let's Circus* which developed into an exciting event for Maltby festival involving high wire artist *Chris Bullzini* and an audience of 1123 residents. The resonance of this project captured the imagination of the whole town with further Bullzini appearances at the WE WONDER festival and the Rotherham show in 2025 to cumulative audiences of around 20,000.



The 2026 Winter Light Festival, Rotherham Loves Music

Excellent attendance figures across both evenings (over 6000 people), and robust engagement in the creation and presentation of the work evidences there is a keen and growing audience for this type of cultural event in Rotherham.

The Light Festival built on last year's '*Otherham*' festival while bringing something quite different to the audience in terms of artform, co-production processes and new partnerships. Light projections were accompanied by soundtracks made with 223 local musicians, workshops happened during the event at partner venues (e.g., Grimm and Co) and a silent disco at Minster yard.

“ I was on the exit / access entrance both nights and the responses from ALL ages were so positive. On the whole, it was clear that it really exceeded people's expectations. People came out really moved and full of appreciation. It was lovely to be on the exit - so positive. ”

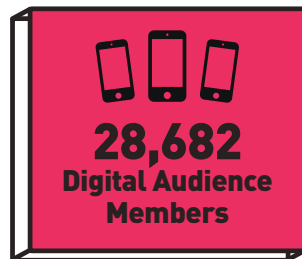
Team member, Rotherham Loves Music

All the participants in these events - and we trust many new people - will have the opportunity to take part in the development of these ideas in 2026. (For details of FLUX's future plans see Section 5. Aims. or the FLUX work plan in the Appendices)



So, Who Came in Phase 1?

In Phase 1, there were a total of **435,484 engagements** recorded across both physical and digital activity. This included **28,682 digital audience members** who engaged with digital outputs, such as viewing artworks, creating content, and accessing podcast episodes.



In-person activity reached **372,944 audience members** alongside **33,908 active participants** who took part directly in the activity, contributing through hands-on involvement, creating, making, and engaging in activities.



FLUX delivered **961 activities** achieving borough-wide reach, with residents from all 25 wards in Rotherham accessing and engaging with events and activities.

 **961 activities delivered**

A total of **1,472.5 volunteer hours** given, with an estimated value of **£17,979.23** calculated using the National Living Wage.



Attendance in phase 1 was predominantly local, with **96%** of survey respondents (2023 – 2026) reporting that they travelled less than 10 miles to attend a FLUX Rotherham event.

Travel patterns varied by programme, with participants in the Spread the Word programme more likely to travel further (87% travelling less than 10 miles), while WOW (96%) and Green and Creative (95%) reflected more localised attendance.

Hyperlocal provision enabled residents to engage with cultural experiences on their doorstep, with between **95% and 100%** of participants travelling less than 10 miles.

In total, the Phase 1 Business Plan spanned 59 months. The next phase is 3 years and our highly ambitious forecast is to reach **451,300 audience members** and engage **45,400 active participants** in that period.



Our Impact - What difference did we make?

On the basis of the information/data collected by an independent evaluator, the evaluation report concludes that:

The most successful approaches developed by FLUX are an asset-based approach to cultural development; working with core values of care and respect; working with optimism, positivity and hope; working with the 'right' artists and supporting them well; programming relevant and purposeful activity; working with local heritage; a collaborative approach and positive leadership style. All of these are key to FLUX's success in facilitating better public engagement.

Sue Cook



Going Forward - Recommendations

- ❑ Continue to be ambitious and, building on lessons learnt from Phase 1, work at a pace that can be accommodated within capacity to deliver high quality end results.
- ❑ Use what it has learnt about successful approaches in designing projects.
- ❑ Maintain the balance: between delivering projects and working strategically; investing in partnerships and leading; and between leading projects and co-creation.
- ❑ Adopt evaluation tools consistently across projects and embed reflective practice, making more time for reflection within projects and throughout the year.
- ❑ Look forward - consider new policy work on Cultural Vitality led by the Centre for Cultural Value, including Cultural Indicator Suite, a practical framework designed to measure and communicate the holistic everyday cultural vitality of place; better understand how cultural vitality contributes to thriving, resilient and inclusive communities.

Specifically, FLUX would benefit from taking time to consider:

- ❑ Who the programme is not yet reaching and why.
- ❑ Ways to collect data at un-ticketed public realm events.
- ❑ Opportunities to co-produce some creative evaluation methods with participants to measure individual change over time.
- ❑ Whether its aspiration to 'go deeper' with the people already engaged has been achieved.
- ❑ Ways to identify and capture that tipping point where behavioural change around culture doesn't fall back but becomes permanent.

Looking Forward - The FLUX Phase 2 Programme

As an action research programme, it is important to have a responsive and non-prescriptive programme. For 2026-2029, FLUX has a simple framework for delivery refined to 3 specific programme strands (and 2 strands working across the programme).

This is a glimpse of what each strand will look like (*for further details see Section 5. Aims or the FLUX work plan in the Appendices*).

1. Communities Create and Connect

In this strand we'll work in 6 hyper-local communities (areas selected by panels and chosen using Audience Agency and IOD data).

Activities in these communities will involve the co-creation or co-curation of accessible artworks of different scales, with different levels of engagement and participation in choosing, making and presenting.

This means more people who (traditionally) do not participate in the arts have many opportunities to get involved as FLUX take to their neighbourhoods.

This strand will include ongoing work in **Maltby**, new projects in **Swinton** and **Rawmarsh**, a new cultural research project in **Greasborough** and town centre projects in **Ferham/Masbrough** and **Eastwood**.

2. Made in Rotherham

Activities in this strand will co-create a **Community Knowledge Store** (CKS) and explore different artistic platforms for archiving and presentation across the Town.

Through the leverage of new analogue and digital platforms to expand reach and accessibility, FLUX will provide new spaces for residents to tell their stories and present their artworks, nurturing a greater sense of pride and belonging in Rotherham.

This strand will include the continuation of **Spread the Word**, the **WOW festival year-round programme** and the development of **FLUX in the Wild** where activities will focus on working creatively outside with a diverse range of local groups, families, and individuals to discover and enjoy local greenspaces.

Additionally, **Gallery Town** will bring national and internationally-exhibiting artists together with residents to co-create new murals, sculptures, and other playful artworks, which will be proudly displayed in the town centre and at other sites across Rotherham.



3. Amazing Events

Activities in this strand will not only be awe-inspiring and exciting but they will celebrate and populate the town centre: reimagining important heritage buildings, changing perceptions about accessibility and safety, and giving people positive things to say about their hometown which is a key component of positive place-making.

In this strand, by popular demand from the Town Centre Community Steering Panel, the **Winter Light Festival** will return as it is fast becoming a fixture of the Rotherham cultural calendar. **WOW Rotherham** will continue to facilitate safe spaces for women, girls & non-binary communities from across the borough. They will join together to co-create a bold participatory arts festival and a year-round engagement programme. As part of **WOW**, **Reclaim the Night** will take back the streets in defiance against gender-based violence, and will showcase the strength and solidarity of women walking together in the town centre after dark.

Key to the success of the next 3 years will be the ongoing strength of FLUX's leadership. FLUX's 2026 Evaluation report attests to the generous, ambitious and collaborative leadership style of Director, Helen Jones. This is her perspective on phase 1 of the FLUX programme and how it has provided a robust foundation for the continuation of the programme:

"The partnership across Rotherham's cultural sector is something genuinely remarkable. When I joined as Director at the end of 2021, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was inspired by the ambition of the Town becoming the world's first Children's Capital of Culture, but I couldn't have anticipated what the following four years would bring. What stands out is the shared positivity and commitment in communities, alongside a strong culture of mutual support among partners. This is reflected in ambitious festivals, the sharing of food, bold transformations of spaces, joint exhibitions, shared funding applications, curious audiences, deeply rooted community programmes, and a wide range of opportunities for local young people and creatives.

In the next 3 years FLUX will create meaningful, authentic, and distinctive cultural opportunities with people across Rotherham. The programme is a celebration of who and what Rotherham is –individually, culturally and collectively. We want more people to join us in shaping this next phase. We are seeking residents to be part of community steering panels and volunteer with us, artists to collaborate on bold new work, and partners to continue to embrace the co-creation methodology, leveraging collective resources, networks, and skills to ensure that high-quality, and experimental art is within the reach of everyone in Rotherham.

We'll keep on creating positive change, surprising and inspiring people and raising aspirations whether it's bringing visiting poets, changing the way people experience the town centre, giving people a chance to write, perform, be published."



"The power of the arts to bring people together and appreciating what everyone had done was amazing. The whole community working together to create something so powerful was just more than I could have expected."

Revd Sue Armstrong, Rotherham Minster



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

“Great for our town & the amazing opportunities given to young people. It was wonderful to see the town buzzing.”

Audience Member, WOW Festival 2025

The Flux Vision



The long-term goal of the FLUX programme and the vision we are working towards (by 2030):

Rotherham is established as a new cultural democracy, ensuring that everyone has regular and frequent opportunities to experience high quality culture and to explore and express their own creative ambitions, heritage and identity.

Setting a ten-year vision for cultural democracy means there is time to build the frameworks and nurture the strategic partnerships that will make this a reality. Working towards a long-term cultural democracy becomes meaningful when partnerships are grounded in shared practice as well as strategic planning. It is active collaboration (i.e., learning by doing) on collective work that is enabling Rotherham's cultural sector to build this democracy together.

Following the success of 2025's Children's Capital of Culture, Rotherham's network of cultural partners continues to work much like a relay team. We are sharing creativity, trusted relationships, and 'handing on' local knowledge to keep creative momentum moving across the borough. It is this exceptional level of collaboration — rather than any single effort — that continues to drive optimism and progress in our partnership-working, and a shared responsibility for culture in Rotherham.



This generosity of will and intelligence means FLUX's partners are helping each other to prosper 'in the pursuit of the incredible', with a shared ambition for the whole sector to have creative and societal impact. For example, Rotherham Museum has committed to a full exhibition in its main gallery spaces in 2028 for FLUX's Palladiums of the North project. This demonstrates authentic partnership working, specialist resource sharing and a joint commitment to honouring community stories. Alongside the Museum, FLUX will ensure high-quality representation across varied artforms, and respect the distinct roles each partner leads on, shaped by the intersection of our skills, knowledge, and relationships.

In addition, the legacy imperative from 2025 Children's Capital of Culture means FLUX will continue working with sector partners developing Gallery Town and the Winter Light Festival with a focus on the imaginations and creativity of young people in Rotherham. FLUX intends to explore opportunities for traineeship funding/young artists in residency to support skills and capacity building. We will also invite members of the current Youth Programming Panel to become members of FLUX's Community Panel.

All of this contributes to the next generation of Rotherham culture makers where the 'frequent' and 'regular' engagement of FLUX's vision means creativity is a norm.

“Thanks to Children's Capital of Culture and partner organisations like Grimm and Co and FLUX, Rotherham seems warmer, with lots more opportunities, and an even greater sense of community than ever before.”

Harry Wright, 17 years old, Heritage Producer, Children's Capital of Culture

Along with the FLUX mission, to attend to progression against our vision, we will use it to drive reflective sessions with stakeholders and (broadly) shape processes as part of governance and evaluation measures.

The Flux Mission



Through the power of the arts, we are the co-creators of a cultural movement that celebrates diversity, nurtures personal growth, & creates lasting connections between people. Together, we are crafting a legacy where art is within the reach of everyone & deeply-rooted in Rotherham's community spirit.

This is a refreshed mission for the 2026-2029 business plan. As a programme with almost a 5-year track record, our purpose is to make a positive and direct difference to community life in Rotherham.

Our mission is a movement. It is organised to bring people together, make art accessible and, through co-production, give people feelings of strength, inspiration, joy and pride from 'being Rotherham'.

WOW always provides and that this year was no exception. There was a real genuine feeling of community and a real diverse audience. The singing and dancing in the square as part of a massive crowd felt really special and I'm so happy I got to enjoy it.

Audience member, WOW Festival 2025

The Flux Values



Since the start of its CPP programme, FLUX has been developing methodology to engage more people in arts and culture. As an action-research project we have learnt and honed skills that enable us to start projects in places that have very little arts and cultural infrastructure.

For a people-centred approach to be successful we need to be authentically led by our values and attract artists, partners and employees to the programme that align with those values. Together we will be:

 **Community-led and relevant**

 **Generous and inclusive**

 **Creates positive change**

 **Caring and trustworthy**

Trust is a new value in this Business Plan. In Phase 1 of the programme FLUX focused on establishing trust with our stakeholders. Trust has taken time because it is built through consistent, observable actions, not just messaging words. It has required a history of behaviour from FLUX to prove to stakeholders that we are reliable, authentic and have Rotherham's best interests at heart. In Phase 2, we want to build on what this value brings and put it front and centre.

For FLUX, trust underpins the ethical side of our socially engaged work, helping relationships stay reciprocal rather than extractive. Trust enables us to share both power and risk in ways that stretch what is artistically possible while supporting the creative process. Ethical, consistent practice also makes partners more willing to invest their time and support. In phase 2 FLUX will continue to nurture the loyalty that is forming around our practice and nurture the loyalty from our brand that is showing up in our relationships with artists, partners and funders.

FLUX has been true to its name. It has forged an essential role as broker and coordinator and enabler. Helping partners stitch together and leading positive change to transform the creativity of people, this place and communities.

Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism Rotherham Council

FLUX values equally apply to our consortium practices and our marketing and communication practices. They are also in alignment with Arts Council England's four core Investment Principles:

-  **Ambition & Quality:** Commits to supporting the highest quality work, believing excellence can be found anywhere, from village halls to major venues, and in both the process and the final product.
-  **Inclusivity & Relevance:** Ensures that the creative and cultural sector reflects the diversity of England, making work that is relevant to and valued by local communities.
-  **Dynamism:** Encourages cultural organisations to be resilient, responsive to change, and capable of using innovation to thrive in the coming decade.
-  **Environmental Responsibility:** Pushes cultural organisations to lead in addressing the climate emergency.

Beyond compliance; FLUX use the Investment Principles as drivers within our strategic framework. They help us design a programme that is resilient, relevant and high-quality.

FLUX METHODOLOGY

How we will deliver our
programme - Methodology and
Collaborators

“ A sophisticated understanding of the complex local community allowed for sensitive and inclusive multicultural programming. ”

Partner, Roma Young People project

Working with Communities

Central to the FLUX methodology is the deconstruction of traditional power structures that often decide who culture is for. This is achieved by establishing Community Steering Groups and panels who are supported and empowered to lead the “choosing and deciding” process.

We have learnt that different voices need different support. Whilst we create environments where people are empowered to express themselves, some participants may be new to being listened to or asked their opinion. We don't always view silence or hesitation as a reluctance to participate, often we just need to show people what might be possible.

By introducing our residents to “Go Sees” of national and international art, we inspire these panels to set high precedents for commissioning, moving them from participants to active commissioners and designers of their own cultural provision.



Working with Artists and Producers

Central to FLUX's values, we don't hire artists and producers to simply deliver a service. We see them as co-creators who, along with participants, view everybody's expertise as “welcome and equal”.

The professional creatives bring their creative skill, while the community brings lived experience and local knowledge and we ask of artists that the final artistic outcome is a development of everyone's expression, not just their own. FLUX wish to assure participants that the idea of ‘culture’ is diverse enough to embrace the everyday (gardening, walking, sewing etc) so everyone feels they can play their part in producing meaningful work.

As our funders value excellence in our process, FLUX evaluates an artist's excellence not just by their portfolio, but by their ability to ‘hold a space’ where ‘scared’ or ‘reluctant’ creativity can gently surface. Artists are not asked to dumb down their ambitions but it is important that they are open and keen to demystify the creative process, to build consensus between people about what will make the work great & achieve the best outcomes.

Towards the end of phase 1, FLUX has shifted away from purely open-call commissions for every project, recognising the value of “trusted artists” who understand the borough's nuances and gather intelligence by being regularly on the ground. This creates a different type of reciprocity and trust and helps facilitate the action learning process.

“ As the project has organically evolved, the space for my relationship with FLUX has evolved as well and we feed back and forth to one another, which has just been such a gift. ”

Vic Leeson, artist facilitator

Working with Partners

FLUX's methodology extends co-creation beyond residents to include a network of over 200 partners ranging from NPO friends, council partners & peers in the third sector to faith leaders, shopkeepers and park rangers. In addition, we have maintained a stable & committed consortium for over 4 years.

Across the town, all FLUX partners are tasked with understanding complex social problems and delivering contextually relevant responses, so it makes best sense that partners collaborate (with equal say) on how we 'bring about better' for Rotherham. Sustainability lies in embedding co-creation methodology in as many communities & organisations as possible to leverage collective resources, networks & skills.

Key to this model is the ability to "pass the creative baton". FLUX often conducts initial development work to uncover a community asset or story and then transitions the project to a partner organisation better equipped for its long-term development.

For example, whilst the Alzana project originated from Rotherham Museums, it was developed in other neighbourhoods—such as Maltby—by FLUX. The Maltby strand of the project then returned to the Museum and became an intergenerational commission with Spilt Milk.

Cultural partners in Rotherham are working together using socially-engaged practice as a common methodology:

FLUX have paved the way for community confidence in the cultural sector, brokering authentic collaboration and supporting the building of trust in communities. FLUX have built a precedent for high-quality artistic work, which Rotherham's cultural partners look to as an example of best practice.

Victoria Ryves, Head of Culture and Engagement,
Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust



Working with an Action-Research Framework

FLUX adopt an action-research approach, which is characterised by a continuous "plan > do > review" cycle. This 'permits' the team to engage in a series of "try/fail experiments" alongside artists and participants enabling projects to transform organically over time. For example, in Phase 1, Spread the Word evolved from a small story-sharing space into a thriving creative network through the consistent exchange of participant ideas and the testing of various events, workshops and project ideas. This iterative process is designed to build collective confidence in project design and delivery and it encourages creative freedom.



There's safety in the way that FLUX holds the project. I can go to FLUX and say, I don't think this is working or, I've had this idea. Should we take the sessions on tour? No-one's going to be like, what are you talking about? It's really open. Yeah, we can do that, let's think about this.

Vic Leeson, artist facilitator

Working with Quality

A distinctive element of the FLUX methodology is the emphasis on consummate production values. We maintain that every community experience must be delivered through high-quality arts programming, ensuring that all the elements—from lighting and sound to materials and the physical welcome—is "thoroughly thought through". This intentionality is designed to build trust, allowing participants to relax and engage in a (potentially) transformative experience because they sense the inherent worth and care put into the production of it.

Working with Accessibility and Inclusion

Our methodology for ensuring community voice is to constantly evolve our practice to be as inclusive as possible. We carefully consider points of entry to a project - where people find out about & sign up for activities. And we avoid jargon.

“We loved it and also loved the accessibility.”



We're mindful of where our events take place too, considering what those spaces mean to people, as well as how accessible they are. At a local level, we choose representative spaces where different voices/perspectives are valued and we establish different ways to keep in touch with participants to accommodate people's visible and hidden needs.

FLUX invests in practical inclusion measures like quiet space, BSL tours, walk through videos, engaging access support specialists. It invests also in safety and security, briefing and supporting volunteers extremely well and adapting its security approach for different community settings.

“We could really see the effort made into making things accessible for families and those with additional needs.”



“My son with severe learning difficulties was very happy to see the lights and experience a community event, it wouldn't have been possible to experience it without the FLUX staff team who helped us access this event and recognised autism meltdown.”

Audience feedback, Rotherham Loves Music



“(We are) really grateful that BSL has been considered.”

THE CONTEXT OF ROTHERHAM

I think one of things that's nice about FLUX is there's just a lot of enthusiasm. There's a lot of enthusiasm for Rotherham and for the work and for the communities and people we're working with. It's investing in them and it's investing a lot of resources in them.

Geotone, Artist in Residence

FLUX Rotherham takes a thoughtful and strategic approach to deciding where to focus our work in the Town, combining our understanding of local communities from all our stakeholders with hard data. This approach helps ensure our efforts are both well-targeted and genuinely inclusive. It supports our longer-term vision of building a "cultural democracy" by 2030—where everyone has regular opportunities to engage with high-quality cultural experiences. In alignment with that vision, FLUX also contributes to the engagement, delivery and/or legacy of partnership projects.

Specifically, we draw on feedback from grassroots partners, panels, and steering groups, alongside the identified data sets detailed below. Together, these sources help FLUX build a clear, evidence-based case to our funders about where—and with whom—we work.

- ❑ **Audience Profiling:** Using **Audience Spectrum** geo-demographic information, FLUX specifically targets communities that are statistically "least engaged" in arts and culture.
- ❑ **Target Profiles:** Our work is directed toward specific mosaic profiles, such as "**Frontline Families**," "**Supported Communities**," and "**Up Our Street**".
- ❑ **Indices of Multiple deprivation.**
- ❑ **Public Health and Deprivation Data:** We work with the **Rotherham Data Hub** and the **Public Health team** (via the Creative Health Board) to drill into data sets that include indicators of **social deprivation** alongside social barriers.

FLUX has a strong track record of using data to evidence impact. In 2023/24, 78% of participants had not taken part in any other creative event or workshop in the previous 12 months, demonstrating our success in reaching new audiences.

This figure reduced to 54% in both 2024/25 and 2025/26, suggesting increasing levels of repeat engagement over time.

At the same time, FLUX continues to attract new participants. In 2024/25, 43% of survey respondents were attending a FLUX event for the first time, with a similar figure of 42% in 2025/26, indicating sustained growth in new audiences alongside returning participants.



FLUX Target Areas 2026-2029

Rotherham East is the most deprived ward in the borough, ranking 1st out of 25 wards on the indices of social deprivation.

It is also the second most ethnically diverse ward in Rotherham, with over 35% of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds. This includes more than 18% of Asian heritage, while non-British White residents make up 7.5% of the population.

Diversity is even more pronounced among younger residents: over half of school-age pupils come from ethnic minority communities, including 23% of Asian heritage. At over 15%, the proportion of non-British White pupils is the highest of any ward in Rotherham. The area has a large Roma Slovak population and over 35 languages are spoken locally.



The ward has a notably younger age profile than the borough average. The proportion of children aged 0–15 is significantly higher than average, while the proportion of residents aged 65 and over is considerably lower.

Rotherham East is home to several key community organisations, including Clifton Learning Partnership (CLP), Rotherham Ethnic Minorities Alliance (REMA), and the Global Women's Voices Network, with whom FLUX have strong partnerships.

Community life is vibrant and culturally rich. Eastwood Funfest, led by CLP, takes place each June and showcases the area's passion for performance, with music and dance often spilling out from the terraced streets.

"Spread the Word" sessions are also held at Mowbray Gardens Library in East Dene, providing ongoing opportunities for regular community engagement.



Rotherham West ward has a social deprivation rank of 6 out of 25 wards in Rotherham. FLUX's work in Rotherham West ward is concentrated in the neighbourhoods of Ferham, Masbrough, and Meadowbank which are within the most deprived 10% of England.

Rotherham West is the third most ethnically diverse ward in Rotherham with almost 27% from ethnic minority backgrounds, including over 13% Asian heritage.

Non-British white make up 6.5%. The school age population is more diverse, with 45% from ethnic minority communities. This includes nearly 23% of Asian heritage.

The age structure of the population is younger than the Rotherham average, with the percentage of residents aged 65+ being well below average.

The area is home to many faith led groups and small grass root community groups.

There is a high level of participation amongst young audiences eager to engage in activity, with a particularly strong desire to perform and create new music and dance.

“It's my first time DJing... I'm proud.”

Participant, Roma Young People project for Ferham Festival

Maltby has a social deprivation rank of 3 out of 25 wards in Rotherham.

The age structure of the population is younger than the Rotherham average with the percentage of children aged 0-15 being above average.

Maltby East is among the 80% of wards in Rotherham where the white British population exceeds 90%, and the 60% of wards where the 2020 School and Pupil Census shows the white British school age population exceeding 90%.

Due to the success of previous projects, FLUX has built strong relationships across the ward. We have identified and continue to work with a wide range of community groups and assets, including the library, leisure centre, the Wesley and Edward Dunn Centres, and The Queens Hotel (Wetherspoons), all of which support FLUX activity through free venue use and, for some events, the provision of food.

Maltby's parks and green spaces are also key to FLUX's work, providing important settings for Maltby Summer, the Maltby Show, and larger community events such as Yorkshire Day and the Maltby Community Festival.

The Maltby Neighbourhood Coordinator plays a central role in planning and delivering FLUX programming and engagement. This is further supported by active and engaged local councillors in both wards, as well as parish councillors across Maltby, who help promote our activities and events.

Due to the success of previous projects, FLUX has built strong relationships across the ward



Swinton Central and the Fitzwilliam Estate

Swinton South neighbourhood where our work is concentrated is within the most deprived 10% in England.

Kilnhurst and Swinton East is among the 80% of wards in Rotherham where the white British population exceeds 90%.

Community assets include Swinton library and their well-connected, friendly team, Swinton Community Focus Group, St John's Church and all their volunteers, the Honey Pot Café, Civic Centre, Waterloo Kiln and the Fitzwilliam estate Tara group. The SCFG alongside the neighbourhood co-ordinator arrange and celebrate events including St Georges Day, Yorkshire Day and Remembrance Day.

Regular Spread the Word sessions happen at the library as well as one off community arts events at St John's, the Fitzwilliam Estate and The Civic Centre.



Greasbrough ward has a social deprivation rank of 4 out of 25 wards in Rotherham and is in Decile 2.

Deprivation in Greasbrough ward is above the borough average and in most of the ward is also above the national average. The three neighbourhoods of Masbrough, Wingfield and Rockingham West are within the most deprived 10% in England.

The age structure of the population is older than the Rotherham average, with the percentage aged 45+ being 52.6% compared to the Rotherham average of 46.4%. Greasbrough ward is among the 80% of wards in Rotherham where the white British population exceeds 90%. However, the 2020 School and Pupil Census shows ethnic minority pupils accounting for over 10% of the school age population.

Regular sessions take place as part of Greasbrough Creates at St Margaret's Church, alongside one-off sessions held at other local assets, including Greasbrough Park, Greasbrough Library, The Plough Pub, Greasbrough WMC, local supported living communities, and nearby green spaces.

Activity in the area is well supported by local councillors, neighbourhood coordinators, the Friends of Greasbrough Park, and the newly formed Greasbrough Creates Community Group.



Rawmarsh East ward has a social deprivation rank of 5 out of 25 wards in Rotherham and is in Decile 2.

Rawmarsh East is among the 80% of wards in Rotherham where the white British population exceeds 90%. However, the 2020 School and Pupil Census shows ethnic minority pupils accounting for over 10% of the school age population.

FLUX is relatively new to working in Rawmarsh but has already established strong relationships with the library and its team, the High Street Centre, the neighbourhood coordinator, local councillors, and the local childminders network.

Boston Castle is one of three wards with non-British white population exceeding 6% and Black/Black British exceeding 2%. The school age population is more diverse, being one of two wards where White British accounts for less than 50%.

Deprivation in Boston Castle ward is well above the borough average and in most of the ward is also above the national average.

There are 2 neighbourhoods which are within the most 10% deprived in England (Canklow North and the Town Centre). These 2 neighbourhoods are where our work is concentrated.

In Canklow North, there is a limited presence of community groups, and relationships are primarily centred around the local primary school, which is a key community partner. Friends of Boston Castle are also an active FLUX partner, focussing on the heritage site located at the top of Canklow Woods.

FLUX's town centre partnership is rooted in relationships with local independent businesses, the team at Rotherham Minster, including the social supermarket, and partners such as the Rotherham Advertiser and the town centre team.



FLUX's town centre partnership is rooted in relationships with local independent businesses, the team at Rotherham Minster, including the social supermarket, and partners such as the Rotherham Advertiser and the town centre team.

Overall, Rotherham's communities experience inequality, above the national average rates across a number of indicators including:

- ❑ Child poverty (percentage of children aged 0-15 in low-income families) is much higher in South Yorkshire (35%) than the national average (30%).
- ❑ The rate of young people living in workless households across South Yorkshire City Region stands at 5.7% above the national average and is increasing due to the impact of the pandemic.
- ❑ Participation in cultural and physical activities in Rotherham is currently 10% below the national average with 51.3% leading active lifestyles, compared to the national average of 61.8%.



FLUX and its partners

External narratives have shaped perceptions of Rotherham for over a decade. FLUX recognises the vital role that participation in culture, arts and heritage can play in supporting health and wellbeing, driving economic growth, and strengthening inclusion. Building on the legacy of Children's Capital of Culture, we want to reshape Rotherham's story on its own terms.



Realising this vision requires collective commitment. FLUX and our stakeholders across Rotherham will need to come together with a shared willingness to contribute assets and expertise.

The world's first Children's Capital of Culture 2025, attests that we have a borough that is both ambitious and forward-looking. In its legacy year, partners are delivering major initiatives, including:

- The new library and market complex opening in early 2027, with opportunities for community events, exhibitions and takeovers. Forge Island and the new independent Arc Cinema are thriving and host community films and celebrations. Riverside Gardens will be completed and be part of the permanent home for Gallery Town artworks. FLUX have received £45,000 external funding to procure permanent outdoor exhibition infrastructure which will offer FLUX, cultural partners and creatives the opportunity to share artworks in one of the highest footfall areas in Rotherham.

- The ongoing restoration of Wentworth Woodhouse, Rotherham's grade 1 listed stately home continues, including the March 2024 opening of the Grade II* listed Camellia House as a daytime cafe and events venue, a 5.1 million pound restoration of the derelict Georgian stables which will become the main arrival point for Wentworth Woodhouse visitors housing a production kitchen, café and events space.
- Grimm and Co have recently opened the incredible Emporium of Stories at the heart of Rotherham's ceremonial central square.
- Rotherham Civic Theatre has completed a £350,000 refurbishment, including a new coffee shop, a new relocated box office, refurbished reception area, new bar and additional smaller performance spaces for alternative shows. They are about to develop The Annexe into a 100 seat development space.
- Funding for a feasibility study has been secured for the development of a new performance venue in the heart of Rotherham.
- Along with the cinema at Forge Island, there is a new hotel, food and drink outlets and parking. The new leisure facilities are set within an attractive public square with a new pedestrian bridge connecting the scheme to the wider town centre, creating an exciting mixed-use destination.
- Future High Streets Funding will secure a new library and children's gallery space for the town centre, planned for opening in 2027.
- Clifton Park Museum is part of the Arts Council National Portfolio.

In addition, Rotherham is one of Arts Council's Priority Places. One of 54 places identified by Arts Council to effectively increase investment and engagement to create positive cultural change as identified by partners and communities.

To complement this the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority have identified Creative and Cultural Industries as one of their priority areas of focus and are keen supporters of the South Yorkshire Creative and Cultural Industries Network.

FLUX recognises the vital role that participation in culture, arts and heritage can play in supporting health and wellbeing.

FLUX and the Cultural Strategy for Rotherham

Rotherham's current Cultural Strategy runs to 2026. FLUX is playing a key role in the writing and delivery of the next strategy which is being co-designed using a collaborative partnership approach.

FLUX Director Helen Jones serves as Vice Chair of the Cultural Partnership Board, where FLUX is one of six cultural organisations represented alongside Yorkshire Sport, Places Leisure, Public Health, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, local creatives, and Rotherham Council's Culture, Sport and Tourism leads. FLUX is also part of the working group developing the new cultural strategy. The current draft strategic pillars are:

Creative Health - Wellbeing & Prevention:

Aligns with public health, adult social care, loneliness prevention

Creative Places - Place-based Identity:

Supports regeneration, heritage, placemaking, town centre renewal

Creative Futures - Children & Young People First:

Matches the Children's Capital of Culture legacy

Creative Skills - Economy & Skills:

Aligns with economic growth, inward investment, employment and skills pipelines

Underpinned by:

Equity & inclusion:

Embedded in every programme, not siloed

Partnership ecosystem:

Works across all systems, not a standalone programme

Sustainability & environment:

Applies to events, buildings, programming and supply chains

Insight-led delivery:

Belongs in measurement, learning and adaptive strategy

The new strategy will be ready in early autumn to go to Cabinet in November.



FLUX and Arts Council England (ACE)

FLUX is funded by ACE to be one of the UK's 45 Creative People and Places Programmes. The award to FLUX (2026-2029) is £1,050,000.

ACE's Vision up to 2030 is a "country where creativity is valued and accessible to all". To meet the requisites of its grant funding, FLUX's programme must be guided by the following **Investment Principles**: Ambition & Quality, Inclusivity & Relevance, Dynamism, and Environmental Responsibility.

FLUX's aims must also align with ACE's aims (see Section 5. Aims, Objectives and Outcomes).

1. Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?
2. What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?
3. What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?



ACE also expect FLUX to be working in close partnership with cultural sector and non-cultural organisations and they wish to see models of community leadership demonstrating how Rotherham residents are shaping, choosing and deciding the content of the FLUX programme.

The next three years are incredibly exciting with the ongoing funding from Arts Council England and the FLUX team/consortium are in a strong and confident position to build upon Rotherham's collective strengths to capitalise upon these opportunities.



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**CREATIVE
AND PEOPLE
PLACES**



AIMS (our goals), OBJECTIVES (our programme strands) & OUTCOMES (the difference we will make)

The FLUX vision is that by 2030 Rotherham is established as a new cultural democracy, ensuring that everyone has regular and frequent opportunities to experience high quality culture and to explore and express their own creative ambitions, heritage and identity.

To realise the FLUX vision, and to meet its ambition, our **business plan aims** (2026-2029) are:

1. More Communities Creating Together

2. Telling Our Stories

3. Raising Aspirations

4. Taking an action research approach

5. Embedding the practice in stakeholder partnerships (sector/non-sector)

(To understand how we will achieve these aims, objectives and outcomes, see summary table on page 35). To service our aims, FLUX has a programme framework with **three specific strands of work**, which will use methodology that leans fully into socially engaged practice and uses action learning to develop our learning and share our findings.

This is our strand overview and how the strands map to ACE/CPP aims:

1. Communities Create and Connect

This FLUX aim of More Communities Creating Together is in alignment with Arts Council's first aim for the national CPP Programme:

Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?



The FLUX programme will continue to successfully co-create cultural activities that have multiple points of access for residents who do not usually engage.

This access will be in terms of geographic spread (responding to specific demographics in the Rotherham area) as well as being co-designed to be as inclusive of the whole place as possible.

Sometimes, this may include working with specific communities of interest who may not share geographic or demographic characteristics e.g., the LGBTQI+ community.

The FLUX delivery model of employing 3 Creative Engagement Activators means that most of FLUX's capacity is on the ground, to meet people 'where they are at' (embedded outreach) and create trusted and safe spaces for creative collaboration in their neighbourhoods. On longer term programmes, such as Spread the Word and Palladiums of the North, our lead artist model will be implemented where the artist explores the full geography of a place and pulls together multiple partners and artforms. This is very similar to an artist in residence model but with additional project management responsibilities.

In Phase 2, the programme focus will narrow and our work (in 6 target communities) inclusive of Rotherham East, Rotherham West, Maltby, Swinton Central and the Fitzwilliam Estate, Greasborough and Rawmarsh East. We will go even deeper as part of our **Communities Create and Connect** strand. This hyper local work will celebrate pride in place and the unity between residents, representative of the diversity of the borough & enable more local people to perform and share their creativity.



Examples of future projects: (See FLUX Activity Plan for detail).

Swinton Creates - FLUX will use the rising demand for pottery projects and the links to Waterloo Kiln (which is 200 years old in 2026) as a starting point for a Family Festival of Making and Play at Yorkshire Day in 2027. Working alongside community members, the local library and Clifton Museum, we are developing a partnership approach to creatively celebrate local heritage and culture.

Maltby Creates - Building on outcomes from The Sensational Alzanas, FLUX will continue a 'local heroes' inspired programme celebrating Maltby's heritage and delivering high quality creative activity across a range of local events and groups. Linked to the desire for opportunities to dance and socialise together, we will run 3 Silver Dollar events per year at The Wesley Centre.

FLUX will not replicate the programme in each neighbourhood; we will use the intelligence of community panels, partners and our own Creative Engagement Activators to inspire a bespoke programme in each place.

(See Section 4. The Context of Rotherham to explain how these 6 areas have been selected for this targeted work).

2. Made in Rotherham

This FLUX aim of Telling Our Stories is in alignment with Arts Council's second aim for the national CPP Programme:

What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?

Our new strand of work in Phase 2, Made in Rotherham, will be a mosaic of Rotherham voices, with different art forms and perspectives coming together in the Community Knowledge Store and Gallery Town.

Examples of future projects:

Community Knowledge Store (CKS) will capture the hidden wisdom & assets that have been uncovered by FLUX when advising on complementary ACE projects like Communities Create and Connect in Wath. CKS will exemplify how FLUX can use its expertise to (sensitively) empower these projects to reach another level of visibility and connect with a wider audience. We know local people have amazing tales to tell, tales which are often hidden or overlooked and many of them are at risk of being lost. CKS will creatively document and archive those community heritage stories and, as before, take them to audiences beyond the neighbourhood of origin.

Gallery Town (GT) will be a town-wide art platform that is co-curated with a community panel who commission/programme a series of bespoke exhibitions made with/by/for people in Rotherham. GT will transform Rotherham into a reimagined outdoor art gallery that celebrates local creative talent and community storytelling. Led by FLUX Rotherham, the consortium brings together businesses, property owners, developers, children and young people, and residents to make and co-curate a public art trail that champions Rotherham's identity.

In preparation for the expansion of GT, FLUX has worked with 20 artists and 16 community groups to make new artworks. In Summer 2026, we are partnering with regeneration teams to install 10 gallery benches in Minster Gardens, creating a permanent town centre exhibition space. This focal point provides a platform for Rotherham artists and community programmes to be shared, celebrated, and continually reimaged.

Gallery Town will transform Rotherham into a reimagined outdoor art gallery that celebrates local creative talent and community storytelling.

Build and Play is an inclusive, intergenerational activity combining imagination with recycled and repurposed materials to create ever-evolving play spaces. Adaptable to any scale—from small green areas on housing estates to large parks or woodlands—each session is unique, shaped by participants' creativity and generates diverse opportunities for play and physical activity. It's ideal for temporary or "meanwhile" use of spaces, activating hyperlocal sites and underused areas; however, if delivered by the FLUX team with a number of artists and volunteers, Build and Play could also scale up for larger settings and events, such as the Rotherham Show. We see it as a highly-flexible, adaptable model suitable for anyone who simply likes to be outdoors.

FLUX in the Wild focuses on creative engagement in outdoor settings too, inviting residents and visitors to discover and enjoy Rotherham's established green spaces. At Canklow Woods, a unique ancient woodland, and Thrybergh Country Park, a popular green and blue leisure site (in the 2nd most deprived ward in Rotherham), we will develop a year-round creative programme. We intend to collaborate with environmental artists to explore both sites, responding to the changing seasons.

Finally, in this strand, FLUX will continue to develop community leadership and facilitation on projects like **Greasbrough Creates** and **The Craft Collective** where participants are moving into creative support roles, developing skills and taking charge of their activities.

3. Amazing Events

This FLUX aim of Raising Aspirations is in alignment with Arts Council's **first and second aims** for the national CPP Programme (as listed above).

In Phase 1, the catalyst for large-scale event commissioning had two sources of origin. One was very clearly rooted in the decisions of the Town Centre Community Steering Panel (TCCSP) e.g., Rotherham Loves Music, whilst the other emerged out of neighbourhood projects moving from a local origin story i.e., the Maltby Alzanas to something of wider, place-based heritage and cultural interest.

Examples of future projects:

In Phase 2, the Amazing Events strand of the FLUX programme will remain responsive to these possibilities. For example, the TCCSP has identified the Boston Castle ward as a target area for an event project 2026-2029.

This town centre ward is the most ethnically diverse in Rotherham with almost half of the population being from global majority backgrounds, primarily those with Pakistani or Kashmiri heritage and with a higher than UK average Romanian population. (See Section 6. The Context of Rotherham).

In addition, from 2026-2028 as part of the Community Knowledge Store **Palladiums of the North** (PON) will tell its locally-grounded story in Greasbrough before moving into the wider public realm, demonstrating how neighbourhood voices can shape the whole town's cultural identity.

For project participants, that shift in scale can turn a local creative process into a Rotherham-level moment of recognition and belonging. FLUX has a proven track record of scaling up local project outputs without erasing the source of the work and maintaining the integrity of its inception.

For project participants, that shift in scale can turn a local creative process into a Rotherham-level moment of recognition and belonging.



Palladiums of the North will bring working men's clubs, arts centres and Northern Soul dancefloors roaring back to life in an immersive performance celebrating the places—and people—that hold communities together.

PON will become a borough-wide, sustainable model for identifying, recording, interpreting and preserving social and community heritage, in collaboration with local people and Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage.

The project builds on FLUX's learning from The Sensational Alzanas and Other Daredevils, a NLHF-funded project delivered in 2025, which demonstrated that creative participation is an effective method for recovering underrepresented social heritage and generating high-quality archival material alongside large-scale public participation and engagement.

Through Palladiums of the North, we will move beyond one-off heritage projects and embed long-term, community-led collecting practices within museum systems, enabling communities to shape how their histories are recorded, preserved and shared as part of Rotherham's public historical record.

PON will become a borough-wide, sustainable model for identifying, recording, interpreting and preserving social and community heritage, in collaboration with local people and Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage.

Partnering with The WOW Foundation, FLUX will host talks, live performances, youth commissions, installations, workshops and ticketed evening events for **WOW 2026: Daredevil Women**. As an inclusive celebration of women, girls & non-binary people, this fearless project will deliver a vibrant, established town centre event, featuring inspirational touring work combined with locally co-produced content. WOW will also launch a reimagined year-round programme featuring comedy led by Rotherham Theatres and spoken word as part of Spread the Word.

Across all 3 programme strands, FLUX will have two interweaving strands that focus on our action research approach and the embedding of socially-engaged practice in stakeholder partnerships. Both are in alignment with Arts Council's third aim for the national CPP Programme:

What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?



4. Taking an action research approach

“Everyone was so positive, no-one ever said no to the ambition of the project. We’ve never worked with a team so positive or willing to make things happen. Doors opened, people said yes.”

Artist, Imitating the Dog

FLUX Rotherham’s action research approach means we are using our programme as a live, iterative way of learning about how communities in Rotherham want to engage with arts and culture. Alongside the creation of artworks, we treat activities, events, and projects as opportunities to gather insight about what enables participation, confidence, belonging, and cultural democracy in different neighbourhoods.

FLUX take a ‘positive error’ approach, we stretch everyone’s ambitions while removing performative pressure from our projects. We co-create activity with communities, test approaches in real settings, and feed learning back into future programming so that our artistic practice remains responsive, place-based, and community-led.

FLUX take a ‘positive error’ approach, we stretch everyone’s ambitions while removing performative pressure from our projects.



5. Embedding the practice in stakeholder partnerships (grass roots community / sector / non-sector stakeholders)

Sharing FLUX’s practice with stakeholders matters because it takes our learning beyond the realm of internal reflection and into shared ownership. It also feels important for us to make the value of socially-engaged work visible in ways that communities, partners and funders can recognise.

For example, we build trust and strengthen our community relationships by showing all stakeholders that communities are not only arts participants but contributors to societal knowledge and change.

Across the FLUX programme, we make the case for what happened, how and why it makes a difference and not just how many people came.

By sharing evidence that is grounded in Rotherham’s neighbourhood areas, we are able to influence partners/funders when they are shaping their resourcing, partnerships, evaluation and strategy too. In 2025/6, the Children’s Capital of Culture successfully brought partners together to transform Rotherham into a more vibrant, child-friendly Borough. With 70% of the activities expected to continue, the mechanisms and conditions exist to share learning and advocate for best practice in a meaningful way.

In 2025/6, the Children’s Capital of Culture successfully brought partners together to transform Rotherham into a more vibrant, child-friendly Borough.



Summary Table: FLUX Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

AIM 1: More Communities Creating Together	AIM 2: Telling Our Stories	AIM 3: Raising Aspirations
How does FLUX achieve more communities creating together? Objective: Activities in communities that involve the co-creation or co-curation of accessible artworks of different scales, with different levels of engagement and participation in choosing, making and presenting.	How does FLUX help the Town tell its stories? Objective: Activities that co-create a community knowledge store and explore different artistic platforms for archiving and presentation.	How does FLUX raise aspirations? Objective: Activities that elevate creative experiences and expectations at scale.
Why will this work make a difference? What are the outcomes: 1 More people engaging, participating & deciding 2 Greater Pride and Belonging 3 Excellence in art and practice 4 More learning and sharing 5 Greater Sector/non sector influence		
What are the 3 strands of work (and example projects) to deliver these outcomes:		
Communities Create and Connect	Made in Rotherham	Amazing Events
Targeting local areas of low engagement: • Rotherham East • Rotherham West • Maltby • Swinton Central and the Fitzwilliam Estate • Greasborough • Rawmarsh East	Co-curation and commissioning across the Town: • Spread the Word • Green and Creative - FLUX in the Wild • Build and Play • Gallery Town • WOW year round • Community Knowledge Store	FLUX-led events: • WOW Festival • Ferham Festival • Winter Light Festival Partner events: • Uplift Festival • Rotherham Show • Signals • Roots Carnival Parade • WE Wonder
What are the outputs/success indicators:		
• More people (who do not traditionally engage) are experiencing and participating in the arts • More people (who do not traditionally engage) informing decisions about FLUX's programme inclusive of choosing artists and projects • More community cohesion through new friendship groups, shared creative experiences and positive pride in place	• More Co-curating platforms for showcasing stories and artworks from Rotherham • Closer consolidation of existing partnerships in the context of shared place-making strategies • Greater advocacy for the arts and more volunteering • Joint fundraising at local and borough-wide level	• Artworks as evidence of stretch and creative ambition in community-led programming • Outputs/artworks of the creative programme attached to major events/festivals in the town for greater reach than the FLUX programme • FLUX participants are co-collaborators rather than spectators in civic and significant town events • More high-quality art made in/with Rotherham
Targets:		
Based on FLUX activity to date we will achieve the following targets in our phase 2 extension period: • Engagement will be maintained and deepened with 33,908 to 45,400 individuals • Audience numbers will increase by 4% from 435,484 to 451,300 • Volunteer number will increase by 5% to 160 active volunteers • We will deepen and continue to develop practice with the 257 artists we have worked with to date		

NB Phase 1 was April 2019-March 2025 (59 months/almost 5 years) Phase 2 is 36 months/3 years.

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

The governance and management arrangements for FLUX are designed to ensure clear strategic leadership, robust accountability, and empowered local decision-making that reflects the programme's commitment to cultural democracy, co-production and artistic excellence.

These arrangements balance the oversight from the Consortium and Lead Organisation with a meaningful community voice in shaping, commissioning and reviewing the programme, in line with ACE/CPP principles and the wider ambitions for Arts, Culture and Heritage in Rotherham.

(For details about the governance of FLUX's financial operations and fundraising expectations please see section 7. Finance).

Delivery capacity and management structure

On the ground, the skill and capacity to deliver the programme comes from the community steering group and community panels, the FLUX team, our partners, and socially-engaged artists across a wide range of artforms whose expertise includes reaching and working with new participants. All of these stakeholders have experience of living and/or working in Rotherham on our hyper local projects, ensuring that decision-making and delivery are rooted in local knowledge and relationships.

Alongside Go Sees, the Steering Group and community panels are able to ask for training and development to give them increased knowledge and confidence to make decisions. In parallel, local artists have been networked together by FLUX and their sector partners to share practice, contacts and other resources to develop the Town's cultural infrastructure and support the CPP programme.

On a day-to-day basis, the FLUX programme is delivered under the leadership of the Programme Director, Helen Jones (1 FTE). She has had a 25+ year career in the arts as an artist, curator and senior leader in participatory arts organisations. The Programme Director line-manages the core team and reports directly to the Chief Executive at VAR; Helen is accountable for the delivery of FLUX's programme, both creatively and operationally.

In Phase 2, FLUX will have a core team of four staff (FT x equivalent).

From 2026–2029 these will be:

- ❑ Creative Engagement Officer (0.4 FTE). Katie Matthews is an independent drama practitioner with over 20 years' experience in delivery and management of community arts programmes.
- ❑ Creative Engagement Officer (0.6 FTE). Alison Somerset-Ward has a Degree in Landscape Architecture and Town Planning with over 15 years in community engagement through creative and outdoor practice, and ten years' association with the Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield as a researcher and studio tutor, with a special interest in the social aspects of design in terms of health and wellbeing.
- ❑ Events Officer and Communications Lead (0.6 FTE). Aga Samecka has a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication, an MA in Events Management and ten years' experience in events and marketing working for cultural and heritage projects.
- ❑ Marketing & Communications Officer (1 FTE). Eleanor Beever is a musician/cellist and has previously worked for Children's Capital of Culture and Wakefield Live as a creative producer.



FLUX will continue to apply for funding for trainee and alumni posts using the well-developed model through Children's Capital of Culture.

VAR will continue to be the employer for the CPP delivery team to ensure that all posts receive continued terms and conditions of employment during Phase 2.

As an action-research programme, the team will reflect not just on the success of our projects in achieving outcomes, but also on the level of artistic excellence and depth of socially-engaged practice in our delivery. To support this, in Phase 2 we will introduce new, bi-annual development sessions for group reflection, group challenge and group inspiration. If necessary, these facilitated discussions will enable the team and consortium to recalibrate their roles, realign with the FLUX mission/vision and better advocate for the programme.

In addition to the team skill and capacity above, FLUX will commission an independent evaluator to analyse data, monitoring and feedback, and to facilitate focus groups, interviews and observations (with participants and other stakeholders) for reporting and reflection. This role will specifically evaluate the Arts Council England aims for its CPP programmes.

Creative Producers and consultants will be contracted on a freelance basis to provide specialised facilitation, advice and support.

Across all FLUX strands in Phase 2, we will create opportunities for volunteering & skills development & seek new partners to add value and sustain the existing offer. Volunteers support FLUX in a myriad of ways, from participants who become co-deliverers to session and event warm welcomers, brew makers, strategic decision makers and community activators. In Phase 1, FLUX engaged 334 active volunteers. In the next phase, we aim to develop a more targeted volunteering model, recruiting project-specific volunteers who can benefit from themed training and artist mentorship.

We will undertake a review in Spring 2026 to reconnect with all previous volunteers, discuss their level of interest, and, if appropriate, align them with opportunities in the 2026–29 programme. We will also continue to work with the 16–25 year old cohort who volunteered through Children's Capital of Culture, ensuring they have ongoing opportunities and tailored support.

Across all FLUX strands in Phase 2, we will create opportunities for volunteering & skills development & seek new partners to add value and sustain the existing offer.

Consortium governance and strategic oversight

FLUX have extensive skills, experience and capacity within our consortium, who agree the strategic direction of the programme and provide both stretch and stewardship for the team. They also take accountability for programme performance and compliance with the conditions of the grant from ACE or any other funder.

In Phase 2 the FLUX consortium will comprise of:

- ❑ **Auriel Majumdar** – Independent Chair
- ❑ **Shafiq Hussain** – Chief Executive, VAR (Voluntary Action Rotherham) – Lead Organisation
- ❑ **Matt Butt** – Chief Executive, ROAR (Rotherham Open Arts Renaissance) – NPO
- ❑ **Deborah Bullivant** – Chief Executive, Grimm & Co – NPO
- ❑ **Victoria Ryves** – Head of Culture, WWPT (Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust)
- ❑ **Leanne Buchan** – Head of Creative Programming & Engagement, RMBC (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council)
- ❑ **Arts Council England** – RM Allegra Nespoli (Observer)

Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) bring 25 years of third sector experience to their role as Lead Organisation and FLUX operates from the Spectrum, the VAR workspace on Coke Hill.

In Phase 2, VAR will continue to provide FLUX with support for HR and finance responsibilities. This includes banking functions, cash flow support, invoicing systems, budgeting and forecasting, payroll, pension advice and processing staff expenses.

The remaining four cultural organisations on the consortium are those which are the main providers of arts, heritage and cultural destinations and activities in Rotherham. These organisations are therefore instrumental in the FLUX mission to embed cultural democracy as a mainstream practice and maximise the impact of Priority Place focus, as well as sustain this beyond the lifetime of the CPP funding.

- ❑ ROAR provides: arts sector specialism; knowledge of independent artists locally, nationally and internationally; expertise as a grassroots organisation working with diverse communities in Rotherham; expertise in progressing artists towards Trusted Status, production facilities, support, mentoring; and other routes to professional development.
- ❑ Grimm & Co provides: evidence-based understanding of quality assurance, understanding of the education sector; knowledge and skills in championing literacy and vulnerable groups and families; and a unique creative venue for events.
- ❑ Wentworth Woodhouse provides: a world-class venue, inside and outside – commercial expertise; and strong finance, project management and fundraising skills.
- ❑ RMBC provides: access to Rotherham's publicly owned cultural assets for use in the delivery strands – Rotherham Civic Theatre; 12 urban parks and 3 country parks; 15 libraries; Museums, Archives and Heritage Service, including Clifton Park Museum, Boston Castle, five heritage sites, archives and local studies and the Rotherham Collection; the ACE funded Music Hub; the Events Team and the events programme;

FLUX have extensive skills, experience and capacity within our consortium,

The consortium meets quarterly. The specific consortium processes that empower the delivery team include the scrutiny of papers (provided by the Director ahead of meetings), with ongoing items on finance, operations, ACE reporting, and performance against targets, outputs and/or outcomes. There are 121 meetings between the Chair and the Director to discuss and monitor any specific team challenges. The provision of PESTLE context in Rotherham gives broader context to FLUX operations.

The consortium also attends 1 Away Day per year to give members additional time and space for deeper discussion, (self-) assessment and, if requested, additional training. This enables all members to clarify expectations of their role, including monitoring conflict of interest and advocacy of the FLUX programme.

Transparency and conflicts of interest

FLUX adopts a transparent approach to managing any potential or perceived conflicts of interest, to maintain integrity in all governance and decision-making processes. Consortium partners declare interests to ensure transparency and maintain their integrity in role. Annually they declare in written format professional affiliations, personal connections, and financial interests that may intersect with the CPP activities. They also declare relevant business interests, sponsorships or patronages that could potentially influence decision-making processes on the consortium.

The FLUX team declare any conflicts of interest through VAR's annual update. Community Steering Panel members declare any conflicts of interest and sit out of decision-making in which they could have a vested interest.

FLUX adopts a transparent approach to managing any potential or perceived conflicts of interest, to maintain integrity in all governance and decision-making processes.



Alignment of governance with programme principles and community voice

Aside from our creative practice, perhaps another distinction that sets FLUX apart from other sector alliances is the excellent collaboration that is modelled by our consortium.

This committed group of high-functioning, senior leaders in Rotherham's arts and cultural sector genuinely aims to deliver the best programme for FLUX's target communities and the rest of the borough.

There is a collective will – represented in the aligned vision and missions of these separate organisations – to make Rotherham a cultural democracy, positioning communities as the driving force in the cultural strategy.

In 2025, the world's first Children's Capital of Culture (CCoC) in Rotherham provided a rare but timely opportunity for cultural stakeholders to coalesce around the idea that co-production with residents can be embedded in all CCoC activities – co-production being a central tenet of CPP.

An example of governance alignment with the principles of community voice was the Otherham Winter Festival (Jan 2025).

The town centre was transformed into an "otherworldly" space with light projections on Rotherham Minster., digital art and trails. The projections, by Imitating the Dog, were commissioned by the FLUX Community Steering Panel and the Youth Programming Panel but the project was delivered in partnership with Grimm & Co and the CCOC creative learning team.

Reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement

As an action-research programme, reflection and learning are embedded in our governance and management arrangements. As before, FLUX will introduce bi-annual development sessions that bring together consortium members, staff, artists and community representatives for group reflection, challenge and inspiration.

The independent evaluator will be commissioned across the next Phase of the FLUX programme. Aside from their evaluation tasks, they will feed evaluation findings into governance discussions, providing an independent perspective on both outcomes and the quality of artistic and socially engaged practice. This continuous learning loop will help ensure that the governance and management of FLUX remains responsive, accountable and aligned with the programme's ambition for community voice and empowerment. *(For more details see Section 8. Monitoring and Evaluation).*



Credentials and Control

Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) hosts the FLUX programme and provides a secure and well-governed financial framework for its delivery. VAR is a financially robust organisation, with annual turnover of around £3 million and a dedicated, experienced finance team. It has a strong track record of managing significant grant programmes and distributing funds effectively to the voluntary and community sector. VAR also provides FLUX with Public Liability insurance to the value of £10 million.

The organisation is externally audited on an annual basis and VAR holds a number of quality awards including NAVCA (VCS Infrastructure Services) Quality Mark and ISO 9001 accredited organisation status; which includes assessment of financial procedures and processes from a 'quality' perspective.



VAR operates clear financial controls and governance systems to ensure all funding is managed responsibly, transparently, and in line with funder requirements. All funds are appropriately ringfenced and accounted for, enabling accurate tracking and reporting.

A scheme of delegation operates where items of expenditure in excess of £20,000 are referred to the VAR Board for approval. The scheme of delegation follows the framework of VAR and complies with European procurement requirements.

Budgets and quarterly financial performance information are submitted to the consortium. Invoices and financial transactions are managed by VAR's finance team.



Identifying, Mitigating and Managing Risk

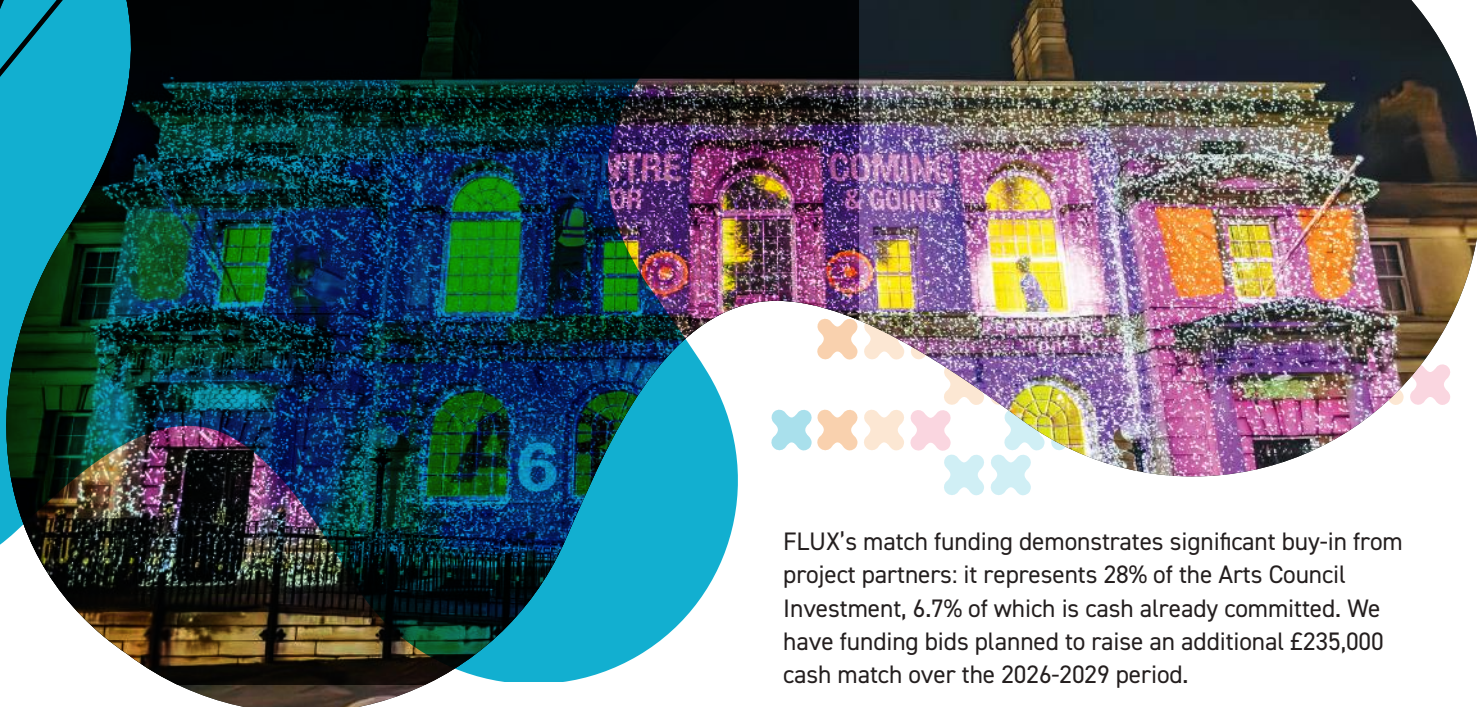
The Consortium has undertaken an assessment of the 'Key Risks' associated with managing the finances of the FLUX programme (2020-2029) as per the FLUX Risk Register. (See *Appendices*).

The financial plan for the project has been assessed both by VAR and the wider consortium. As part of the project activities, VAR and the consortium partners will revisit the financial plan on a quarterly basis, and undertake a risk assessment, developing mitigation options for any income line which may not achieve its forecasted potential.

The match funding for Arts Council England's core funding comes from a diverse range of sources. Targets are informed by the FLUX Director's strong track record of partnership applications with consortium partners in Phase 1, alongside ongoing conversations with businesses and local funders who have historically supported the programme's activity.

Earned income targets related to ticket sales are modest, based on our experience of building up an audience over the course of the programme so far. In addition, the FLUX programme is designed to serve target audiences such as 'Frontline Families'. The Audience Agency suggests that art programmes "remove barriers" (such as cost) for these families and focus predominantly on community engagement rather than costly ticket prices.





Resourcing the Activity 2026-2029

The FLUX programme budget has been built up through a realistic appraisal of the programme activities and the expenditure required to deliver them, along with a prudent assessment of the match funding available to support the delivery. The budget has been verified by the wider delivery partnership, checked with the consortium partners, and it is based on our experience of delivering the programme in Phase 1.

FLUX has been successful in securing **£1,050,000** from Arts Council England. Across the three-year Business Plan, the match contribution secured from **consortium partners is £365,019** of which **£215,225 is in-kind and £149,794 is cash**.

VAR are contributing an in-kind amount of £32,295 which is the equivalent premises cost, and VAR have reduced the lead organisation costs from 10% to 8% which includes insurance, management of all finance transactions, HR, auditing of accounts and line management for the Director.

FLUX have calculated an in-kind match of £21,576 volunteer time based on real living wage calculations. This is an increase of 20% on phase 1.



FLUX's match funding demonstrates significant buy-in from project partners: it represents 28% of the Arts Council Investment, 6.7% of which is cash already committed. We have funding bids planned to raise an additional £235,000 cash match over the 2026-2029 period.

These are all funding applications which are in progress and/or at pilot stage with a range of funders and sponsors including Sport England and Heritage Lottery Fund, plus local businesses including Nicholas Associates Group for Gallery Town and a partnership bid with Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust.

Part of our fundraising plan will be to apply to HLF for a 3 year Community Knowledge Store Project, 26-29 built upon a pilot project delivered with HLF in 2025, where people come together to discover and celebrate hidden or overlooked stories, working with creatives to tell these stories in a series of place specific celebrations.

As before, our ticketing income targets are conservative, as we do not wish to exclude residents because of ticket prices. Our target is £6000 and is based on previous years.

In kind funding includes:

- ❑ **Consortium time and expertise**
- ❑ **Free use of venues and meeting rooms,**
- ❑ **Free use of partner's equipment and resources (such as gazebos, signage, tables and barriers)**
- ❑ **Staff time at FLUX led events**
- ❑ **Shared communication capacity and systems**

Both Rotherham Town Centre and Maltby East will receive £20 million over 10 years as part of the Pride in Place funding which are both areas where FLUX has a strong track record of supporting the community to realise ambitious creative projects and events.

Value for Money

(Relative to Population and Reach Targets)

At £1,050,000, recognising the limits of current and historic levels of Arts Council England investment in Rotherham, FLUX offers exceptionally good value for money. In 2024/25, (The last complete year of data) ACE investment in Rotherham was £10.43 per head of population, which shows the massive impact of Priority Place weighting from a previous £2.14 per head of population in 2020/21. Compare this to our closest neighbours for 2024/5 with a per head investment: Doncaster - £4.31; Barnsley - £11.50; Sheffield - £18.72.

We expect that audiences in certain programmes such as Gallery Town will in reality have higher audiences than forecast (Forecast of **97k** per year audience) As this strand of work is in the early stages, we can expect this annual figure to be much higher based on Town Centre footfall figures.



Given Rotherham's level of need (see section 2 CONTEXT), alongside the strength and ambition of the FLUX programme, this level of investment from additional sources over a three-year period is both realistic and achievable. It will extend the impact of Arts Council England funding beyond its initial reach, enabling other funders to join ACE and local partners in increasing engagement and participation in Rotherham. This joining up of financial and non-financial resources also generates shared cultural practices. Partners report a forecast spend of over £800,000 per year on programmes and events which directly link to FLUX's Community based work in the period 2026-2029.

In phase 1, FLUX successfully supported a significant number of artists and grass roots organisations to apply for project funding including from Arts Council England, the Shared Prosperity Fund and Youth Music. Given the reduction of FLUX's grant from 2,333,000 in Phase 1 (including extension year) to 1,050,000 in Phase 2, within the CPP work plan, there will be no direct provision of training/skills development for artists. However, Place funding can invest in several capacity-building strategies to contribute to a robust cultural infrastructure for Rotherham which, in turn, will create leverage to attract other funding for community groups and artist collectives.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We recognise that it is imperative for FLUX as an action research programme to monitor and evaluate the programme robustly, beyond the enthusiastic testimonials of participants and the self-reflection of the quarterly and annual reports.

As a consequence, during Phase 2, we will continue to commission an independent specialist to deliver our evaluation and make objective recommendations for the growth of our practice and how we are 'measuring up' against the aims in our Business Plan.

FLUX will continue to monitor and evaluate its programme using the requisite ACE systems i.e., Illuminate and the Impact and Insight toolkit. Aside from helping us to evidence the impact of our programme on the people who experience it, these systems enable us to work with consistent metrics to collect data and -alongside our CPP peers - make the case for the quality and the value of the national programme.



Monitoring

To monitor the programme with rigour, FLUX has established various systems that ensure we generate relevant data to understand how projects are performing on the ground, and assuring our partners, funders and consortium that the work is reaching those least likely to engage in arts and culture.

There is substantial quantitative data to be recorded e.g., numbers of people attending workshops, the number of sessions delivered, volunteer numbers/hours, project activity, event attendance etc. Additionally, signposting to other services, project partners engaged and the number of artists FLUX commissions can all create data to demonstrate active programme delivery.

Invitations to participate are monitored using registration platforms (e.g., Eventbrite and Ticketsource), whilst attendance is captured using individual registration sheets. Demographics and feedback can also be monitored through surveys for mid-large scale community events, festivals and gatherings. The collation of this monitoring data enables FLUX to develop SMART objectives in relation to engagement and participation targets. The information can also help inform the targeting of our marketing and communications.

Evaluation

Whilst the FLUX consortium is interested in evaluating the performance of the programme overall (its change story) and its broader impact on Rotherham's culture, the focus of the independent evaluator will continue to be on the three lines of enquiry at the core of all the Creative People and Places programmes:

- 1** *Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?*
- 2** *What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?*
- 3** *What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?*

Sitting alongside the monitoring data captured for Illuminate (evidencing more people from places of least engagement) and the quality metrics of the Impact and Insight toolkit, the evaluator will seek other success indicators to demonstrate excellence of art/culture and the FLUX process.

Community observation and consultation provides rich, qualitative information in the shape of participants' views, ideas, feedback and change stories. The evaluator plays the role of participant or non-participant observer on FLUX projects and gathers qualitative information in 1:1 discussions, focus groups/group discussions with residents and existing/newly forming interest groups.

By 2029, the FLUX programme will have generated 4 meaningful and celebratory case studies and longer-term bespoke evaluations on durational projects such as Spread the Word.



Partners' views solicited by the evaluator and other stakeholders will also help FLUX improve its programme. Self-evaluation with the FLUX team can be facilitated by the evaluator and/or external consultants/critical friends.

Evaluation is a key part of FLUX's approach to developing meaningful and relevant projects. Monitoring and Evaluation reporting is an agenda item at every consortium meeting and FLUX continually reflects on the success of its programme in a plan > do > review cycle common to action-learning.

Delivering the CPP programme itself provides an ongoing feedback loop with all stakeholders. Through active listening and discussion with participants, close associates, artistic collaborators; specialist advisors on issues such as diversity, inclusion and access; critical friends; investors; staff and audiences, FLUX seeks out and welcomes critical debate.



These significant efforts to gather what is and isn't working - the trialling and the testing and the building - shape the present and future FLUX programme. In 2026-2029 this may mean doing fewer projects but delivering them better and ensuring greater impact. In a responsive and relevant programme, it is almost impossible to replicate projects and the invisible elements that make socially-engaged practice successful - such as care and trust - are values that people create together, they are not transferable skills.

As a consequence, it is important that we continually reframe targets and expectations for the wellbeing of everyone concerned. We need to reflect on the pace of projects and the capacity of the staff team to deliver high quality programme outcomes.

Other strategies for assuring good practice in evaluation include:

- **A Consortium Champion** - Victoria Ryves, Head of Culture and Engagement at Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, will act as the consortium champion for evaluation, utilising her extensive experience in this area to ensure that the programme is being scrupulously evaluated and that best practice is adhered to. Along with the Programme Director and Independent Chair, she will provide support to other partners as required.
- **Critical Friends and Peer support** - In addition to collecting required data to contribute to the national learning from the CPP programme regarding models and methods of quality engagement, feeding into the National Peer Learning group and presenting at relevant CPP UK events, we will develop a new system of peer-to-peer review and scrutiny.

We will bring people from multiple sectors, including arts and culture, community development, commissioning, health and local authority together to experience and feedback on our progress, while providing a valuable opportunity to advocate for the advances and uniqueness of Rotherham's achievements through this activity.

FLUX welcome the opportunity in September 2026 to host the national gathering of the Creative People and Places network.

These significant efforts to gather what is and isn't working - the trialling and the testing and the building - shape the present and future FLUX programme.



Disseminating our Learning

In alignment with the CPP research question 'What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture? outside of the FLUX consortium and ACE, FLUX will share learning with;

- ❑ **Participants and community stakeholders**
- ❑ **Up to 45 CPP projects UK-wide at national gatherings and annual conferences**
- ❑ **Local creative/artist networks**
- ❑ **Cultural Strategy partners and other place-based investors**
- ❑ **South Yorkshire Creative and Cultural Industries Network**
- ❑ **South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority**
- ❑ **CHWA (Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance)/ Creative Health Network**
- ❑ **Culture Hive (ACE portal)**
- ❑ **Relevant Journals**
- ❑ **Light Up the North network**



COMMUNICATIONS

The Communication function within the FLUX programme underpins the aims and outcomes of the Business Plan, inclusive of making improvements to existing communication strategies (to retain our current stakeholders) and implementing new ones (to grow FLUX's networks).

This broad plan also takes into consideration how to continue to develop the FLUX brand as we raise our profile locally and regionally.



For 2026-2029, our key Communications priorities are:

1. Strategic Growth: but doing "more" of what?

i) Platform Specific Growth:

- ❑ **LinkedIn (peer to peer comms):** FLUX will raise our LinkedIn profile through the Director's account and the FLUX page to enliven stakeholder communication. This platform will share our strategic learning, experienced and/or curated by the Director. FLUX will capitalise on hosting the CPP National Gathering in September as the catalyst for this strategy. Focus is: outcomes (the 'so what')
- ❑ **Instagram (participant and artist comms):** FLUX aims to increase followers by 120 annually (approx. 10 per month). We aim to reach 2000 followers by the end of our Winter Festival in February 2028. This channel will focus on 'de-mystifying' our socially-engaged creative processes. This means artist takeovers, behind the scenes sharing and more 'platforming' for the artworks that our communities create with artists. This demonstrates how brand alignment works with our co-creation values. Focus is: the process (the how)
- ❑ **Facebook (predominantly participants):** FLUX aims to increase followers by 400 annually (approx. 35 per month) through organic hyper-local engagement. Content will engage new audiences, recruit to activities, showcase activities, retain participant interest, reflect 'what happened' and tease the 'coming soon' etc. Focus is: programme delivery (the what)
- ❑ **Mailchimp (predominantly participants):** FLUX aims to increase newsletter subscribers by 120 annually (approx. 10 per month) through regular comms posts, opt-in opportunities during customer journeys and through subscribing Call to Actions in hyper-local activity flyering.

Additional guidelines for content can be seen in the Working Smarter section below.

ii) Network and Neighbourhood Seeding for growth: This involves "seeding" content into established communities of interest rather than solely targeting individuals. It may also mean providing content for partner communications. For example, FLUX will further explore our relationships with neighbourhood officers to embed FLUX copy into more ward newsletters.

iii) Monthly Newsletter: FLUX will maintain its monthly newsletter, focusing on the high-value "Opportunities Section" to remain a regional hub for artists and emerging practitioners.

iiii) Flux will showcase work/ achievements and engage with partners through a number of forums, including the Rotherham Together Partnership



2. Working Smarter: Incorporating AI and other technologies

To manage communications with limited capacity, FLUX will adopt new "smart working" behaviours to streamline content creation and data management.

- ❑ **Consolidating new data:** FLUX will experiment with NotebookLM (or similar AI workspaces) to manage comms data, inclusive of stakeholder testimonials from evaluation and Mosaic profiling outcomes etc... By feeding the "massive store of brilliant quotes" from participants into a live workspace, the team can (efficiently) search for community voice to bring authenticity and relevance to FLUX communications.
- ❑ **AI-Assisted Drafting:** FLUX will feed its activity plans into AI tools to generate a series of draft posts. This isn't delegating authorship to AI; this enables our team to be prompted for content rather than starting from a blank page. It is using automation to maintain the momentum in comms scheduling/delivery.
- ❑ **Content Pillars:** FLUX will use specific content pillars e.g., job opportunities, learning, community feedback, event recruiting, event reporting etc. to bring a more coherent feel to what is being communicated on what platform and how often (comms frequency). This isn't to make comms feel formulaic but it is to bring some coherence and content guidelines to our communications.

3. Eco-friendly Comms practice

FLUX will implement a new intention around **eco-friendly and carbon-friendly communications**, considering the environmental impact of our digital footprint.

- ❑ **Digital Sustainability:** FLUX will optimise the website to improve its carbon rating. We will do this by using compressed media and streamlining the design. Where suitable, we will create and distribute content in optimised formats (web/social-first).
- ❑ **Format Management:** FLUX will work with professional photographers and filmmakers to ethically manage digital storage and formats. High-resolution files will be requested only when necessary (e.g., on new projects like Gallery Town).
- ❑ **Conscious Printing:** FLUX will reduce physical waste by carefully planning printing runs to avoid excessive production, working with local suppliers to reduce travel and where suitable, we will distribute content digitally.

4. Experiment with specific test projects to achieve aims 1-3 above (learn by communicating). Inclusive of:

- ❑ **Instagram Takeovers (Trusted Artists):** FLUX will test the "takeover" model with trusted artists to show the collaborative process of FLUX projects. This could be over a week or once a week over a series of months - it can include past work of the artist too for context etc.
- ❑ **The Winter Festival (February):** This project will serve as the baseline test for the seeding strategy i.e., reaching new audiences through stakeholder networks (ward newsletters/partners) rather than just direct boosting of posts on existing FLUX channels.
- ❑ **The Greasbrough Project:** If successful, this project will be a test for heritage and regional media engagement. FLUX will lean into the nostalgic stories, offering regional media e.g., Yorkshire Post or BBC Radio Sheffield exclusive looks at the archive and exhibition to build longer-term relationships. This social history project also opens up the possibility for academic writing.
- ❑ **Sharing the Evaluation data:** the team will be tasked to turn evaluation data into story rich socials (e.g., animate the case studies).



Co-created arts with the communities of Rotherham

Flux Rotherham creates art projects and events with communities. From festivals filled with music, dance and outdoor arts experiences to exhibitions, creative workshops and conversations. Join us to explore and express your creative ambitions, heritage and identity.

Visit: fluxrotherham.org.uk

Facebook: [rotherham.flux](https://www.facebook.com/rotherham.flux)

Instagram: [flux_rotherham](https://www.instagram.com/flux_rotherham)

LinkedIn: [FLUX Rotherham](https://www.linkedin.com/company/FLUX-Rotherham)



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