



## **Art Galleries Committee**

Date: Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Antechamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

### **Access to the Council Antechamber**

Public access to the Council Antechamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. That lobby can also be reached from the St. Peter's Square entrance and from Library Walk. **There is no public access from the Lloyd Street entrances of the Extension.**

## **Membership of the Art Galleries Committee**

**Councillors** - Rahman (Chairman), Akbar, Bridges, Craig, Hacking, Igbon, Johnson, Midgley, Rawlins, T Robinson and White

## Agenda

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- 1. Urgent Business**  
To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.
- 2. Appeals**  
To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.
- 3. Interests**  
To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.
- 4. Minutes** 5 - 6  
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023.
- 5. Manchester City Galleries report and revenue budget 2024/25** 7 - 46  
The report of the Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture and City Treasurer is attached.

## Information about the Committee

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The Art Galleries Committee sets the budget for the Art Galleries and is involved in major decisions about the city's galleries.

Copies of the agenda are available beforehand from the reception area at the main entrance of the Town Hall in Albert Square. Some additional copies are available at the meeting from the Committee's support officer.

The Council is concerned to ensure that its meetings are as open as possible and confidential business is kept to the strict minimum. When confidential items are involved these are considered at the end of the meeting at which point members of the public are asked to leave.

Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk).

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

Joanne Roney OBE  
Chief Executive  
Level 3, Town Hall Extension,  
Albert Square,  
Manchester, M60 2LA

## Further Information

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For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

Donna Barnes  
Tel: 0161 234 3037  
Email: [donna.barnes@manchester.ov.uk](mailto:donna.barnes@manchester.ov.uk)

This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 6 February 2024** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

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## Art Galleries Committee

### Minutes of a meeting held on 15 February 2023

#### Present:

Councillor Rahman – In the Chair

Councillors Akbar, Bridges, Hacking, Johnson, Igbon, Midgley, Rawlins, T Robinson and White

#### Apologies:

Councillor Craig

#### AG/23/01 Minutes

#### Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022.

#### AG/23/02 Manchester City Galleries' report and Revenue Budget 2023/24

The Committee considered a joint report of the Head of Libraries and the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that Manchester City Galleries' providing an overview of the performance during 2022. The report also provided an outline of the plan to deliver the vision for the service in 2023/24, within the context of the strategic plan, and presented a draft revenue budget for 2023/24 for the approval of the Art Galleries Committee.

The report set out a proposed budget for 2023/24, which the Committee was recommended to endorse.

Expenditure	Proposed revenue budget 2023/24 £000's
Staffing	2,986
Premises	98
Transport	60
Supplies and Services	780
Internal charges	23
<b>Total Gross Budget</b>	<b>3,947</b>
<b>Income</b>	
MCC cash limit	2,430
ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)	520
Art Galleries Trust (fundraising)	362
Earned income	530
Internal recharge (OTH Project)	105
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>3,947</b>

The Committee viewed a short presentation video on the Lion's Den (Clare Art Studio) scheme held within Manchester Art Gallery that provides services to families

through a mixture of events and activities through art and culture sessions involving the Council and other service partners.

### **Decisions**

1. To note the report and endorse the draft gross budget for 2023/24 of £3.947m, with cash limit budget contribution from Manchester City Council of £2.43m.
2. To recommend the budget to Executive for approval as part of the Council's 2023/24 budget setting process.

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Art Galleries Committee – 14 February 2024

**Subject:** Manchester City Galleries’ report and revenue budget 2024/25

**Report of:** Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture and City Treasurer

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### Summary

This report details Manchester City Galleries’ performance during 2023, outlines how we plan to deliver our vision in 2024/5 within the context of our strategic plan, and presents a draft revenue budget for 2024/5 for the approval of the Art Galleries Committee.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the contents of the report and approve the draft gross budget for 2024/5 of £4.101m, with cash limit budget contribution from Manchester City Council of £2,574m. - See para 8.2 for details
  2. Recommend the budget to Executive for approval as part of the Council’s 2024/5 budget setting process.
  3. Authorise the Chair of Art Galleries Committee to approve potential rehoming or repurposing (known within the museum sector as ‘disposals’) of accredited collections items as part of a collections review, as outlined in section 10.2.1 of the report.
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### Wards Affected: All

<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>The capital programme and Taking Stock collections-based work outlined in this report aims to reduce energy use (transport, utilities, M&amp;E infrastructure) and, through the development of a public programme based around the City’s collection, we will reduce the carbon impact associated with traditional exhibitions (loan transport, tighter environmental requirements, build and materials). Our commercial activity (business events, retail and café) has begun to look in more detail at carbon reduction measures. An action plan has been drawn up to reduce energy and food waste, reduce food miles and promote local produce and better respond to customer feedback relating to social and ethical business practices. This will be incorporated into an</p>
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	<p>Environmental Action Plan for the gallery which is being developed in tandem with our NPO partners.</p> <p>The Gallery will continue to encourage social responsibility through community and stakeholder involvement, supporting community climate champions, and providing public platform for climate activism as a respected and trusted educational organisation, promoting public dialogue and raising awareness. We're an active member of the city-wide MAST group that brings together cultural organisations to improve sustainability across the sector.</p>
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>The service is committed to equality of access and celebrating and promoting diversity. Our vision for 2024/5, based on our successes of previous years, is for the benefit of the widest possible audience, especially those least likely to engage with culture. There remains a strong emphasis on widening participation and our anti-racism work, focused on equality, diversity and inclusion; working with children, young people and older adults with a focus on residents of priority Manchester wards where engagement is currently lowest and where the potential of art and creativity to change lives could have the biggest impact.</p> <p>Overall, the focus of our public programme, collection review and capital programme is to unlock the rich potential of the collection to foster belonging, togetherness and understanding. To unite cultures and communities through shared experience, common purpose, and mutual recognition. To create the conditions for new understandings, ideas and knowledge that will make a tangible difference to people's lives.</p>



<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	We provide support for the creative economy through our public programme, training and development opportunities for young people, and contribute to economic growth and prosperity of Manchester by championing creativity, supporting creative industries, and through cultural tourism.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	We develop and nurture skills within our workforce and support the development of skills and creativity of Manchester residents through our programme of events, workshops, activities and exhibitions. With a large staff of skilled professionals, we work across the sector in mentoring, training and development programmes to strengthen the sector for the future.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The gallery aims to support individuals, families and communities achieve best outcomes through a programme that brings people together, encourages creative decision-making, and delivers public projects that generate social capital.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Manchester Art Gallery has signed up with Culture Declares to declare a Climate Emergency and commit to radical action in relation to its own carbon footprint, including making the physical gallery green (and developing our Jarman Garden) and working towards being carbon neutral. We are an active partner in the MAST initiative which promotes sustainable business practices across the local cultural sector.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	We deliver world-class exhibitions, education, arts and health, and community development through national and international partnerships.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue and capital**

The proposals set out in this report form part of the draft budget submitted to the Executive and Council.

### **Contact Officers:**

Name: Neil MacInnes  
Position: Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth  
Telephone: 0161 234 1392  
E-mail: [neil.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:neil.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk)

Name: Amanda Wallace  
Position: Senior Operational Lead  
Telephone: 07470 423677  
E-mail: amanda.wallace@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Inbal Livne  
Position: Senior Creative Lead  
E-mail: inbal.livne@manchester.gov.uk

Name: John Rooney  
Position: Director of Neighbourhood Delivery  
E-mail: john.rooney@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Neil Fairlamb  
Position: Strategic Director: Neighbourhoods  
E-mail: neil.fairlamb@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Paul Hindle  
Position: Head of Finance, Corporate Services and Neighbourhoods  
E-mail: paul.hindle@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

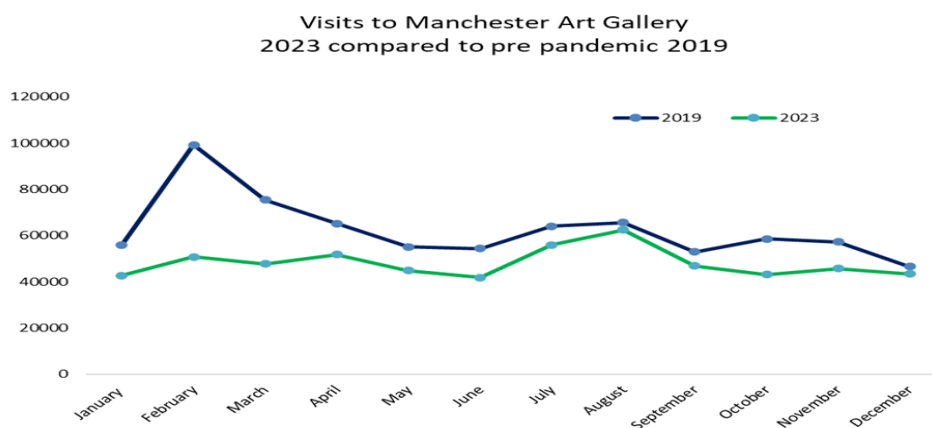
None

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester City Galleries are proudly part of Manchester City Council and belong to the people of Manchester. We believe that creativity can be a powerful force in making a healthy society and achieving positive social change, and that art can expand our knowledge of the world and our sense of place within it.
- 1.2 At our three sites – Manchester Art Gallery, Platt Hall, and our Queens Park Conservation and Research Centre (QP) - we care for a collection of over 50,000 objects including art, craft and design, and clothing. In our 200<sup>th</sup> year, we are taking stock of our collection, working with and for the people of Manchester to shape our future. Across our sites we meet the needs of Manchester's varied communities through exhibitions, engagement and education, that connects art and people.
- 1.3 We are committed to working in partnership, offering free social spaces, and building collaborations with communities, agencies, charities, and other council services. We place people at the centre of all that we do, using our resources to make the city a fairer place.
- 1.4 This report outlines our achievements over the last 12 months, our budget outcomes, and outlines our budget plan and priorities for next financial year.

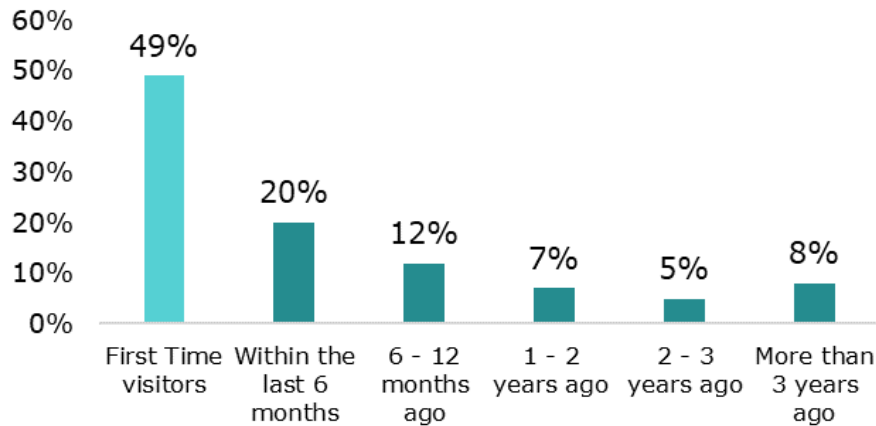
## 2 Reach and Impact

- 2.1 There are a number of data streams that the gallery collects to analyse impact and performance. Data for number of visits to the gallery is collected via an automated visitor counter. Detailed visitor data (demographics and visitor experience) is collected via surveys undertaken by the gallery's Visitor Team and analysed by the Manchester Museum Partnership Data Manager. Additional data is collected by the learning team in relation to school visits, participants and volunteers.
- 2.2 Manchester Art Gallery received over 575,000 visits in 2023 (576,920). This represents a 17% increase on 2022 visitation levels.
- 2.3 The graph below compares monthly footfall data in 2023 with prior to the pandemic in 2019.



- 2.4 While visitor numbers at the gallery remain below 2019, the graph clearly demonstrates how close visiting levels are now to pre-pandemic, particularly over the crucial summer period. This is a real achievement given the gallery is now open on a six day week (compared to seven days in 2019).
- 2.5 During 2023, MAG continued to reach new audiences: almost half (49%) of visitors in 2023 had never been to MAG before.

### When did you last visit Manchester Art Gallery?

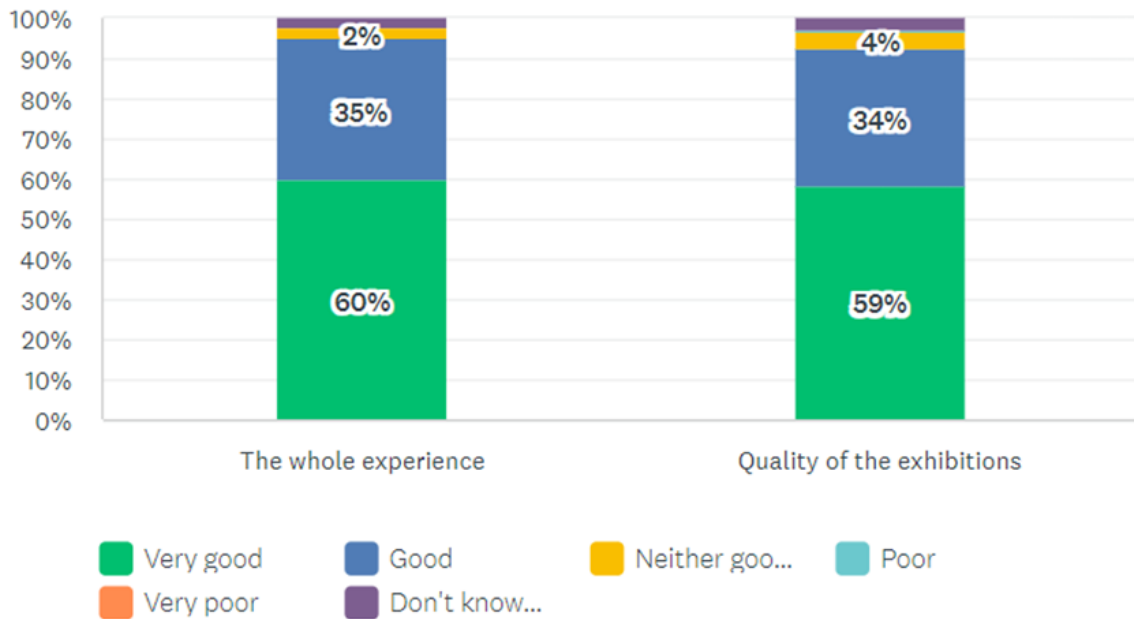


- 2.6 New visitors in 2023 are more likely to have engaged with the Lion's Den (29% of new audiences versus 17% of repeat visitors) suggesting that the gallery has been particularly successful at reaching new families. New audiences are also less likely to be of a White British ethnicity (41% of new audiences versus 59% of repeat visitors), evidencing progress in equality, diversity and inclusion work, explored further in section 2.5 and throughout this report.
- 2.7 The remaining 51% of visitors are repeat visitors, the majority of whom last visited relatively recently (within the last 12 months). This suggests the gallery is creating a positive balance between work to engage new audiences and maintaining active relationships with existing audiences.

### Quality of Experience

- 2.8 Audience research demonstrates that the gallery continued to deliver an excellent visitor experience in 2023. The graph below shows that:
- 95% of visitors rated their whole experience at Manchester Art Gallery as either excellent or good (up from 94% last year).
  - 93% of visitors rated the quality of the exhibitions as excellent or good, matching last year's results.

Visitor Ratings of Quality of Experience at  
Manchester Art Gallery, 2023



- 2.9 Qualitative feedback from visitors also indicates that a high level of excellence was achieved this year across all aspects of the business from exhibition making, to the welcome, to the food in the café.

*“Vital. Essential. Engaging. Startling. Diverse. One of the most “alive” museums I have ever enjoyed. Bravo.”* (MAG visitor comment, June 2023)

*“A brilliantly organised gallery. I loved it. The best I’ve been to.”* (MAG visitor comment, June 2023)

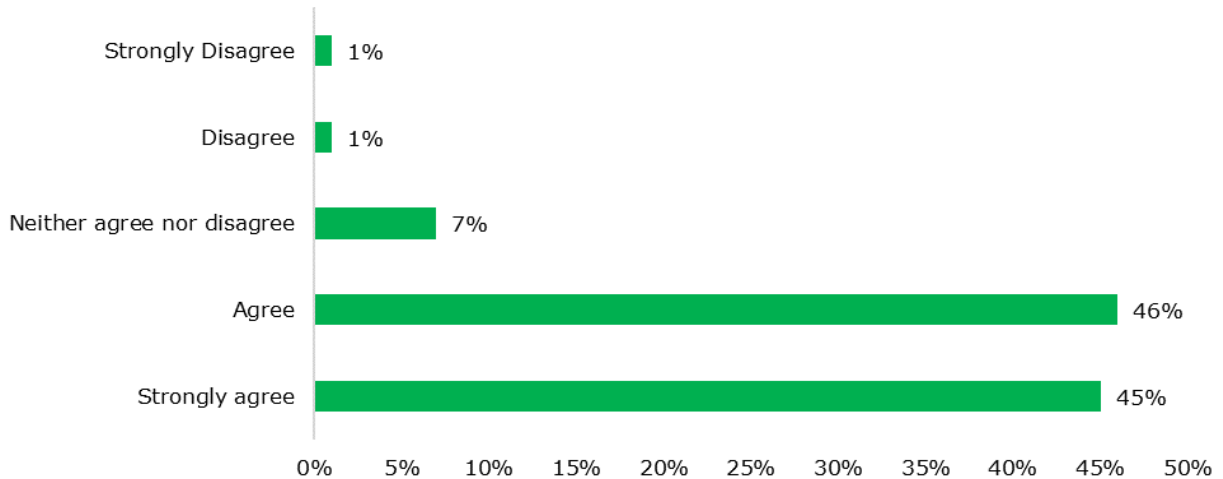
*“Many thanks to the Café staff. Food delicious, excellent service, very friendly staff. And accepting cash. See you again!”* (MAG visitor comment)

*“This visit has been a revelation. It is accessible, refreshing, thought-provoking, not fixed in time but seeking to, and achieving in, making connections with our lives today. The presentation, juxtaposition, of artworks is a great surprise.”* (MAG visitor comment, August 2023)

### Social Impact

- 2.10 Audience research conducted in 2023 demonstrates that MAG continues to act as a valuable civic resource for community wellbeing.
- 2.11 The graph below shows the percentage of visitors who agree with the statement ‘My visit had a positive impact on my wellbeing’.

My visit had a positive impact on my happiness and wellbeing



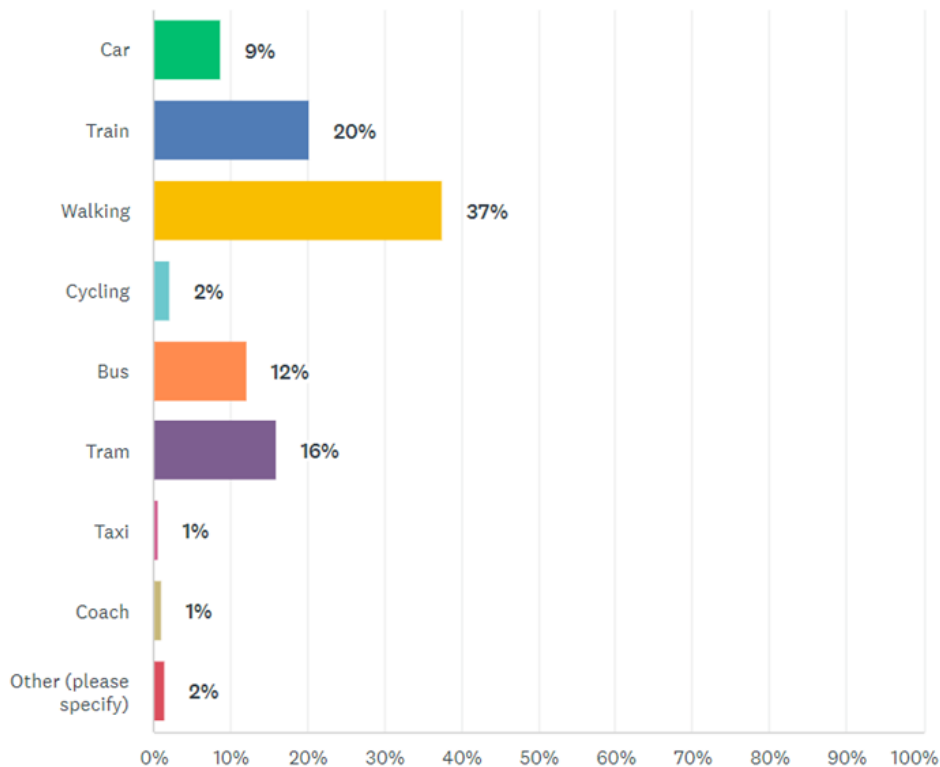
2.12 91% of visitors agree that their visit to Manchester Art Gallery had a positive impact on their happiness and wellbeing, with 45% strongly agreeing with this statement.

2.13 Significantly, first time visitors were more likely to strongly agree with the statement indicating that MAG’s reputation and work in relation to well-being might be a particular draw for new audiences.

**Environmental Impact of our visitors**

2.14 Data on the mode of transport used by visitors to reach the gallery enables us to monitor the environmental impact of emissions generated by visitor travel.

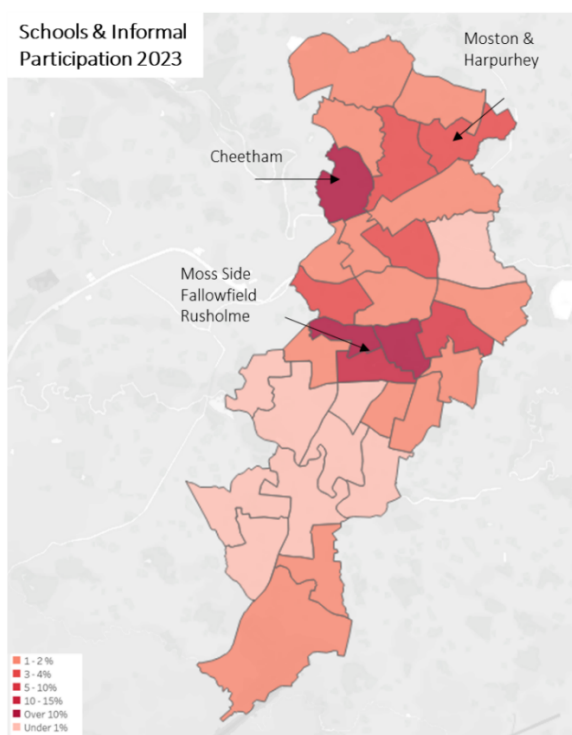
2.15 The graph below shows the main of transport used by visitors to travel to MAG:



- 2.16 Reflecting high levels of engagement with city centre residents, the largest category of mode of transport is walking (37%). Adding in cycling, we can see that almost 2 in 5 visitors use active travel to reach the gallery.
- 2.17 Almost 50% of visitors reach the gallery via public transport (48%), with the most popular option being the train.
- 2.18 Just 9% of visitors drive into the city centre to visit the gallery, down from 12% last year. However the 51,923 journeys this equates to, generated an estimated 104 tonnes of Co2 emissions.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.19 In 2023 we were part of *Act Green 2023*, a national survey which looked at the environmental impact of the cultural sector and what expectations visitors/customers have of cultural organisations, both to work sustainably (internally) and promote carbon reduction (externally).<sup>2</sup>

### Engagement in Manchester Wards

- 2.20 The map below shows the distribution of data on participation at MAG. This map draws on data of schools engagements and participation in our informal programmes during 2023. Data is shown at ward level with darker shades showing wards with higher levels of engagement and lighter shades indicating wards with lower relative levels of engagement.<sup>3</sup>



- 2.21 The map shows hot spots in engagement in three wards of **Fallowfield**, **Moss Side** and **Rusholme** which collectively account for over a third (36%) of participant engagements in the city in 2023. This represents an increase of 6%

<sup>1</sup> Calculation based on duration of average UK car journey of 14 km and Co2 conversion make using EcoTree Carbon Calculator

<sup>2</sup> Act Green 2023 [accessed via <https://www.indigo-ltd.com/blog/act-green-2023-report-released>]

<sup>3</sup> An interactive map is available online: [https://bit.ly/MAG\\_Engagement\\_Map\\_AGC\\_2024](https://bit.ly/MAG_Engagement_Map_AGC_2024)

on 2022. The map makes visible the growing engagement activities taking place at Platt Hall which serve communities in these three wards through a diverse programme including social prescribing delivered in partnership with Robert Darbishire GP practice. This data also reflects engagements with schools in these communities including Webster Primary, Wilbraham Primary and Heald Place Primary.

- 2.22 We would like to note that at present, data collected from activities at Platt Hall tends to over emphasise participation from Moss Side residents, as engagement figures at Platt (unlike MAG) are collected as one total and then split equally across these wards. In 2023 we began to extend our work to residents in Longsight, which will also lower the figures across individual wards. However, it remains that participation across all four wards has increased, due to the hyper-local focus of Platt Hall's activities. We are working on developing data collection methodologies for Platt Hall that more accurately capture ward specific data.
- 2.23 Significantly, and another first, Cheetham is the top ward in terms of schools and informal participation in 2023. Cheetham accounts for 24% of participation, up from 2% in 2022. This is substantially influenced by summer outreach programmes in the ward with the Manchester College which alone accounts for 1000 Key Stage 5 engagements. We would also like to highlight growing engagement in historically under-represented wards of Harpurhey (Saviour Primary School) and Moston (Moston Fields Primary).
- 2.24 Relative cold spots in terms of participation in 2023 continue to reflect those wards identified as less engaged with funded culture by Manchester's Cultural Impact Survey. Specifically:
- Higher Blackley, 2% of engagements, up from 1% in 2022
  - Northenden, 0% of engagements, down from 0.3% of engagements in 2022
  - Baguley, 0.4% of engagements, up from 0.3% of engagements in 2022

### Equality and Diversity

<b><u>Equality and Diversity KPIs</u></b>	<b><u>2017/18</u></b>	<b><u>2018/19</u></b>	<b><u>2019/20</u></b>	<b><u>2020/21</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>2023/24</u></b>	<i>Census 2021 (GM pop.)</i>
<b>Adult visitors aged 50+</b>	33%	39%	32%	32%	32%	31%	26%	35%
<b>Adult visitors from ethnic minority backgrounds</b>	20%	19%	25%	10%	19%	20%	27%	24%
<b>Disabled adult visitors and those with a long-term health condition</b>	11%	11%	11%	10%	13%	10%	9%	27%
<b>Adults who identify as neuro-divergent</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	16%	15%



(new measure  
for 2023)

- 2.25 The 27% rise in adult visitors from ethnic minority backgrounds (+7% on 2023) marks the highest percentage that the gallery has achieved, particularly as this fell to 10% immediately post pandemic. This success is not mirrored by an increase in disabled adult audiences, where visitor numbers for 2023 show a decrease of 1% on a figure that was already low compared to city census data. This negative trend indicates that there is work to do regarding access and understanding barriers that disabled visitors face in accessing the gallery and the city centre. However, access by neurodiverse visitors at 16% exceeds the city census data (+1%) and links to staff training and engagement programmes such as Open Doors.

### 3 Public Programming

- 3.1 The gallery's Senior Creative Lead Inbal Livne took up the role in June 2023, to co-lead the gallery alongside Senior Operational Lead Amanda Wallace. The focus in this first period of working to a new leadership model has been on understanding USPs within the gallery's programme and collections and how we align these to council priorities and services, strengthening links with organisations across Manchester, and working closely with the Directors of our NPO partners at the Whitworth (Sook-Kyung Lee) and Manchester Museum (Esme Ward). Developing who we are as an organisation, our vision and values, has been a priority, to help guide the programming team in setting their priorities and aspirations for the next 3-5 years.

#### Early Years and Families

- 3.2 The gallery's family and early years (EY) programme continues to grow, achieving a strong profile with links to infant and family health and wellbeing, and specialist provision for newly arrived migrant families. Although the Families programme's focus is on need and delivering social impact, this year saw the rebooting of drop-in activities and holiday sessions that are free for all residents. As a result of this combined offer (targeted and universal) the gallery was again asked to host the launch of MCC's Start Well week that involved inviting every child born in the preceding twelve months to the gallery to sample what the city provides for its youngest residents. This built on the success of the previous year's launch, which was a finalist in Manchester's Cultural Awards for best event. In addition, MAG in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, Sheffield Hallam University and Martenscroft Sure Start was awarded Arts & Humanities Research Council funding of £250K (£154K allocated to MAG) over three years to research under 3-year olds' experience of exhibitions and displays. This work started in January 2024 and will focus on collections at Platt Hall and connecting with families in that locality.
- 3.3 Highlights from Families and Early Years include:
- Our Families of the World project, supported by the Ogelsby Trust, ran for its second year. Activities included a food offer being developed by the mothers attending the project, working in partnership with the gallery's chefs and with the culinary social enterprise, Heart and Parcel.

During Refugee Week, MAG extended this strand by linking with other cultural venues in Manchester, including Manchester Museum, the Whitworth, the Jewish Museum and the National Football Museum to strengthen the offer for refugee and asylum seeker families across the city.

- The gallery delivered creative artist-led, drop-in sessions for families in The Lion's Den. These activities focused on weekends and holidays.
- Bi-monthly Stay and Play and health visitor led clinics extended our health care programme for the city's youngest residents and their parents, culminating in July's Baby Week celebration event. This year sessions were added to focus on weaning and healthy diets.
- MAG has remained committed to working with autistic children and their families in the monthly Open Doors sessions.

3.4 Some words from families from our regular evaluation sessions:

*"I am so happy to come here, I feel relaxed here and staff are so friendly and it feels like family."*

*"I love this group and it is the best way to get out of the house and meet new people and communicate with the different cultures and backgrounds ... My son is very happy and enjoys a lot when I'm attending this group every time, since he started coming to this group, he has got more confident and he plays more with kids."*

### **Schools, Colleges and Young People**

3.5 In 2023 we invested resources into developing paid opportunities within the schools and colleges programme for early career global majority artists. We recruited two early career drama practitioners for our popular Ancient Greeks workshops and provided training to help them discover and develop their delivery styles. Both have now lead workshops for classes of KS2 Manchester pupils. We have also created assistants' roles within our Art of Resilience programme, with young artists supporting some of Manchester's most vulnerable children while learning from established artists and developing their confidence and skills.

3.6 Art of Resilience is one of the gallery's targeted programmes; focusing on school children who endure adverse childhood experiences, in partnership with the Council's Population Health Unit and supported by Greater Manchester Police's Violence Reduction Unit. We work in partnership with thirteen schools to meet the needs of these children and support them in developing good mental health and better life chances.

*"One child is a selective mute and the girls who work with her (at the gallery) don't know that because she speaks when she comes here and that is enabling her then when we go back to school. We were a little bit anxious watching what she would do because we were really challenging her, but in a funny way we can't shut her up now so how wonderful is that?"*

Gaynor Williams at Rushbrook Primary Academy, Gorton.

- 3.7 In 2023/24, MAG reviewed its programme for young people with a series of *Listening Sessions*, consulting directly with young people, their organisations and youth workers. We've built new partnerships with a focus on future careers, resilience and health and wellbeing.
- 3.8 We have worked with MCC's Work and Skills Team, to pilot Enhancing the Chances. In this initiative, we worked with two groups of year 10 pupils, from Abraham Moss High School (Crumpsall) and St Paul's High School (Wythenshawe). These pupils had been identified using Manchester City Council 'Risk of NEET indicators' as high risk of disengagement with Employment, Education and Training. Over a four-week period, the sessions achieved a distinct shift in the behaviour and engagement of the young people who developed their creative and communication skills.

*'I have seen another side to these young people, I've not seen them together as a group this settled'*. Abraham Moss teacher.

- 3.9 Other highlights include:

- running a series of focused *Listening Sessions* with youth organisations including supplementary schools through *Young Manchester*, *Wai Yin* (which supports Chinese and other global majority individuals and families) and *Henshaws* (which supports blind and visually impaired people and people with other disabilities).
- working with mental health charity for young people 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to programme a series of four workshops delivered by fashion and sustainability organisation *Stitched Up*, who feature in our *Unpicking Couture* exhibition.
- profiling the voices of young people in our *Unpicking Couture* exhibition through our partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University's National Saturday Club where creative writing by young people opens up new perspectives on 'Couture Attributes' in the exhibition.
- Collaborative working between Manchester School of Art students and gallery staff to deliver a collections review project on furniture at MAG. The project was one of several designed to give student artists and designers professional skills and real-life experiences within the city they have made their creative home. The furniture review work forms part of our NHLF funded *Taking Stock* project, helping us reflect on our own practices and collections to build a future gallery hand in hand with those people who will be the next generation of creatives living and working in our city.

### **Health and Well-Being**

- 3.10 Manchester Art Gallery's approach to health and wellbeing increasingly underpins our wider engagement programme. A significant step up this year is MAG's commitment to becoming a trauma informed space, a gallery where people come to improve their mental health and can be assured that they are safe, confident, and can be part of the gallery if they choose to. Recognising this, the Barings Foundation has contributed £27k over two years to pilot and disseminate what a trauma-informed gallery looks like and how it functions. This strand creates an ongoing relationship with MCC's Population Health Unit.

### 3.11 Highlights in 2023 include:

- Building from last year's Mums Matter, MAG developed Incredible Years - an eight-week perinatal wellbeing course delivered in partnership with Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Parent and Child Service for new parents who are struggling with their mental health. We run Mindful Mums and Dads, a monthly peer-to-peer drop-in session for the parents after they complete the course so they can continue to support each other.

*"Manchester Art Gallery is such a great space for families, not just the convenience of the locality but it is a space where they feel welcomed and relaxed. As always it has been wonderful."* Joanne Harkins, Parent Infant Mental Health Specialist Health Visitor

- We continued the Silver Linings project which is an ongoing partnership with Recovery Pathways GMMH NHS supporting adults with lived experience of mental health difficulties with their recovery. The artworks created in these sessions will also inform the design and art on the wards in the new mental health hospital in North Manchester, (opening in 2025)

*"The gallery has and continues to be an amazing environment to support our work. Room to Breathe has been an eye opener in supporting awareness around impacts of artworks and their interpretations. This project has brought so much joy and confidence for everyone involved. The whole process and support from the Gallery has been amazing, it would have been a very different outcome if we had not been able to absorb the art gallery environment."* - Stella Corral, Creative Director, Lucienta Design, GMMH NHS

## **Adult learning, Communities and Volunteering**

### **Adult Learning**

- 3.12 To complement our community targeted work, the gallery continues to run a programme of volunteer guide-led tours (weekly) and a range of monthly discourse-based initiatives including Philosophy Cafe, Art Bites and Stories We Share. These increasingly popular sessions focus on encouraging people to connect with the collection, the buildings and other people. Facilitators use these resources to explore the varied and complex issues in contemporary life, whilst also creating an environment for learning from and connecting with others. Many of the participants are regulars and feedback that their frequent attendance supports their individual wellbeing. The gallery also runs dedicated sessions that increase opportunities for access. These include British Sign Language tours for those with hearing impairments, Audio Described tours for people with visual impairments, and monthly Making Conversations sessions that include audio description and multisensory approaches.

- 3.13 Texts sent by Making Conversations participants:

*"I felt so Fantastic !!! yesterday at your Gallery Space. So thanx 2 you and all your colleagues, participants"*

*“I have been thro such an awful Lot of S\*\*\*, I feel my time 4 celebration is at last near my Grasp.”*

### **Communities**

- 3.14 Throughout the year, we have delivered a series of events with artists with experience of displacement using the Rethinking the Grand Tour exhibition as a stimulus for discussion, creative workshops and performances. The artists also co-delivered internal staff learning sessions and presented at the Displacement Aesthetics conference in October. We have also delivered a series of events in our Trading Station teahouse with ESOL groups and an eight-week creative making public programme with recently arrived Hong Kong artists and communities.

### **Volunteering**

- 3.15 This year 99 volunteers gave 4,517 hours of their time to Manchester Art Gallery. This equates to approximately an additional 2.5FTE paid employees over the year – a huge cost and resource benefit to the organisation. We have developed the depth and breadth of our volunteering team in a number of ways. We extended volunteer opportunities available, introducing some new roles including Families of the World support volunteers, and gallery archivists. In addition, we opened up current roles to new people, recruiting 20 new volunteers for a variety of existing roles including the Manchester Together Archive, Summer Family volunteers, Furniture Collection Research volunteers, new tour guides and conversation facilitators. Roles continue to attract huge interest and over 30 people applied to be a tour guide in the last recruitment. We have used the new recruitment to focus on shifting the demographics of the volunteer teams to ensure a greater degree of diversity in age, race and more representation from Manchester residents.
- 3.16 The use of the MCRVIP system has ensured that we are able to reach out in a more effective way and to collate and analyse the data that it gives us. After a second year of using the system, useful data is beginning to emerge. The full demographics will be analysed at the end of the financial year, but we already have had a percentage increase in people volunteering from global majority backgrounds.
- 3.17 Throughout the year volunteers have been able to access training sessions including the Let's Talk about Race training, curators talks and learning sessions to increase and broaden their skills and confidence. Volunteer managers have continued to work closely with volunteers who experience very poor mental health and challenging life circumstances - signposting to other agencies where needed.

### **Uncertain Futures**

- 3.18 Initiated in 2019, the project has explored intersectional issues on paid and unpaid work through the lens of women over 50, focusing on gender, age, race, disability, and class. It has been developed with academics from the University of Manchester: School of Social Sciences, and Manchester Metropolitan University: Faculty of Health and Education. 2023 saw a significant increase in local, national and international interest in the project for

both its artistic output and research agenda and advocacy. The second display output of the project ran through 2023, and the project team released their research findings.<sup>4</sup> In November, Uncertain Futures was selected as a case study in the UN's Decade of Healthy Ageing Progress Report 2021-2023 for its important contribution to national progress on healthy ageing.<sup>5</sup> We celebrated this success, and continued drive to use art for social change, with the launching of the report at MAG in November which included an audience of the women involved in the project, policy makers and academics from across the city and beyond.

### Unpicking Couture

- 3.19 Following Dandy Style, the second Fashion Gallery exhibition Unpicking Couture launched on 21 July 2023. It premieres spectacular high-end fashion which has recently entered the gallery's collection acquired through a National Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures grant from 2015-20. Created by influential designers and fashion houses, each outfit represents a groundbreaking moment in fashion and includes works by Christian Dior, Elsa Schiaparelli, Azzedine Alaïa, Cristobal Balenciaga, Pierre Cardin, Vivienne Westwood, Yohji Yamamoto, Bruce Oldfield and Alexander McQueen. This exhibition celebrates pioneering creativity and design, linking fashion and emotions in the form of dopamine dressing which encourages dressing for joy. There is also a focus on repair and restoration, inviting us to consider the lifecycle of a garment and the way it is valued and cared for.
- 3.20 We have worked closely with the Centre for Fashion Curation, London College of Fashion, Manchester Fashion Institute and National Saturday Clubs to create an exhibition which considers value and care of collections, sustainability, expression of self, making and creativity.

### Room to Breathe

- 3.21 Room To Breathe is a well-being space dedicated to mindfulness and art, created in response to mental health decline post-Covid. It showcases just two artworks to encourage people to slow down and look mindfully. It is also an active research space - working with psychologists from Goldsmiths University of London and residents of Manchester we delivered mindfulness sessions in the space to capture scientific evidence of the ways art and culture improve health and wellbeing.

*"First of all can I massively congratulate you on Room to Breathe. It is a fantastic initiative. I am not in Manchester that often but visited the installation yesterday and enjoyed it so much I came back today and between the two visits spent quite a bit of time there. It is a pleasure to experience your installation and thank you for your contributions to wellbeing. Sofa and armchairs are an inspirational idea."* Justice Richard Humphreys, judge of the High Court, Ireland

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<sup>4</sup> Research findings available online:

[https://pure.manchester.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/281224925/Uncertain\\_Futures\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://pure.manchester.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/281224925/Uncertain_Futures_Report_2023.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See page 15: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/374192/9789240079694-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

*“This space has calmed me and made me forget about any stress I had. The tranquillity of it all! Brilliant.”* Anonymous feedback. member of the public.

### **Derek Jarman Pocket Park**

- 3.22 This green space for the city created by Pride in Ageing volunteers from LGBT Foundation continues to flourish. The project delivers health and well-being benefits for the group and addresses the gallery's Climate Justice agenda through sustainability, including water saving elements and planting to encourage biodiversity. The success of the group's activities was evidenced by a nomination at the 2023 Spirit of Manchester Awards in the Tackling Inequalities category.

### **Manchester Literature Festival**

- 3.23 We collaborated with Manchester Literature Festival to commission award-winning poet Jason Allen-Paisant (recently winning the TS Eliot prize) to respond to paintings and garments in the collection. He created a trio of exquisite, sensual and playful poems which he performed at the gallery in October 2023, discussing fashion, identity and the presence of the Black male body with writer and poet Malika Booker.

## **4 Web and digital**

- 4.1 The gallery's digital progress focused on enhancing accessibility and sustainability through technological tools. The implementation of digital touchscreen way-finding systems aimed to reduce reliance on printed materials, relying on scalable adaptability and improved accessibility. Additionally, the integration of targeted content on the digital offer into the Bloomberg Connects App, which supplies multilingual access and personalisation, has expanded our outreach to a broader demographic ensuring a better inclusive offer. The collaborative effort with NPO partners — Manchester Art Gallery, The Whitworth, and Manchester Museum — has made considerable progress and will culminate with the launch of a new collection search in the first quarter of 2024.

## **5 Platt Hall**

### **Overview**

- 5.1 The project Platt Hall Inbetween continues to progress the community-led development of Platt Hall through key partnership programmes across Rusholme, Moss Side, Fallowfield and Longsight. In July 2023, we secured a major grant of £400,000 over four years from the Paul Hamlyn Arts Access and Participation Fund to build on this work, providing funding for three new posts: Platt Hall Lead, a Health and Wellbeing Coach, and Young People's Engagement Co-ordinator. The Platt Hall lead is already in post, driving the strategic and logistical vision of the work, with the other two posts now going through the recruitment process.
- 5.2 Programming at Platt this year continued to meet the core aims of understanding and addressing identified local need, strengthening local investment in the Hall, and furthering our understanding of how the site and

collections can best be developed for the future. Three strands of programming delivered 2083 physical engagements and 1610 volunteer hours over the year, in a building that is not currently open to the general visitor. This represents a small increase on last year's engagements, but a doubling of volunteer activity as we expand volunteering opportunities from the garden project into supporting the public programme and collections and building care.

### **Inhabiting the Hall**

- 5.3 Promoting a sense of belonging within the Hall and exploring collaborative approaches to developing the site have been key drivers for our programme. The Garden Project runs from March to October each year with the support of the Friends of Platt Fields and MCC Parks team. This year volunteers have focused on the front of the Hall with new planters, beds, and the transformation of the former rose garden into a wildflower meadow. Open Days in April, September and November included tree and bulb planting across the park, while inside the building a focus on everyday creativity, care and repair saw embroidery and upcycling workshops led by local groups Women's Voices and Stitched Up. The monthly Makespace programme has provided a regular space for calm, creative practice, skill sharing and conversation, interspersed with monthly and Open Day tours of the building. We have been exploring the role of food and drink in bringing people together, with volunteer and Open Day lunches, and a ceramic workshop and conversation event in partnership with Moss Side Boilerhouse and potter Meg Beamish that provided the Hall with a new collection of community-made tea and coffee mugs. Family Stay and Play, our weekly Surestart partnership creative play session for under-5s and their carers, goes from strength to strength, and is particularly successful at bringing new families into the building.

*"I feel more settled in Manchester through this volunteering in the Garden",*  
Garden Volunteer recently migrated to the UK

### **Presence in the Neighbourhood**

- 5.4 We continue to embed Platt Hall in the wider neighbourhood and contribute to local events and initiatives. We've supported and partnered with several organisations this year, including providing summer holiday activities under the Holiday Activity Fund programme with Trinity House Community Centre and hosting a poetry and textiles workshop by Women's Voices to celebrate South Asian Heritage Month. Our November Open Day supported Creative Rusholme's 470 Trees greening programme and was attended by local community supporters, MMU student volunteers and MP Afzal Khan, who offered support for the work and planted the first tree. Exhibitions in the windows of the Hall have included the Women's Voices project Embroidery is a Universal Language drawing on the Platt Hall textile collection, Feel the Rhythm Pocket Park, celebrating a Moss Side volunteer-run green space, and SEEN in the Windows, a photographic exhibition by SEEN global majority music collective, showcasing the work of Moss Side resident musicians HMD and DJ Paulette and spoken word artist Isiah Hull.



- 5.5 Our health and wellbeing programme this year worked with Sajida Ismael of Grass Routes and the physiotherapy team from Robert Darbshire GP Practice to develop a programme of regular walk-and-talk events using the collections, building and wider park. Our growing partnership with Heald Place Primary School has developed into an annual Year 4 'history detective' programme investigating history and heritage on your doorstep, alongside other bespoke projects which this year included an animation project and school choir performance.

*"When I first came to the Hall I felt a bit scared, but now I have been a few times and sung with my school choir here, I feel alive!",* Year 4 pupil, Heald Place Primary School

### **Activating Collections**

- 5.6 This year has seen a number of artist and community-led projects and programmes exploring the value and significance of the collections at Platt Hall. Our monthly Collection Chat programme continues to use the collections to foster togetherness and relationship-building through sharing stories and life experiences, all captured in a growing body of artworks by artist Laurie Pink. Earlier in the year, Heald Place Primary School brought together toys and dolls from the Mary Greg Collection with their own playthings, contributing to an animated film made by University of Manchester researcher Sophie Everest. Manchester School of Art researcher Sara Davies has been exploring stories of migration and transnational identity through the Hall's photography collection, developing new knowledge around this collection and creating a new body of work in response. And a major new AHRC-funded project – Things of the Least: Lively Exhibition Making through the Material Encounters of Under-3s – in partnership with MMU and Surestart focuses on the embodied knowledges of early years children through exploration of the Mary Greg Collection of domestic and childhood objects. Six artists are working with the collection, the site and families with very young children to develop new interactive environments and materials for under-3s. Finally, the significance and value of the little-known flat textile collection at Platt is becoming increasingly clear. In addition to Women's Voices selecting South Asian textiles for exhibition, the MAG-based project Re-Thinking the Grand Tour saw four artists with experience of displacement using the textile collection to question colonial collecting legacies, and artist Holly Graham, commissioned through the UAL Decolonising Institute 20/20 programme, select textile pattern books and domestic patchwork as source material for a new body of work. Textiles are also one of four areas of the collection undergoing review and development through the NHLF-funded project Taking Stock, with a new role of volunteer co-ordinator working with curatorial and conservation staff and volunteers to carry out research and collections care of this material.

*"I have been isolated – as a long-distance lorry driver – socially anxious and this was scary, but Platt Hall has been really helpful, being with people, looking at artefacts",* Collections Chat participant

## 6 Developing our Assets

### Collections Development

- 6.1 Our collections development work continues to focus on the review of our existing collections to improve our understanding of them and explore how they can best be used with and for the benefit of Manchester residents and communities. We are currently in the first year of *Taking Stock*, an ambitious 2-year collection review programme funded by the NLHF's Dynamic Collections funding stream. As well as building on the review of the furniture collection, *Taking Stock* focuses on three additional collection areas: the Rutherston Loan Scheme, the Old Manchester local history collection, and global flat textiles. Working with Manchester residents, we are seeking to understand why this material was acquired, how it has been used in the past and whether or not it continues to be relevant today.
- 6.2 We have begun our collections reviews alongside the capital project funded programme of building improvement works. Over the last year we have moved collections from our sculpture store to allow work to take place to rectify damp problems in this area. In the process we have been able to re-organise the store to make best use of this space. Currently, we are in the process of moving a wide range of material, including the Rutherston and Old Manchester collections, into a temporary storage area on the second floor of Manchester Art Gallery to facilitate building works in other storage areas. The temporary 'open store' will be publicly accessible and provide a window into the *Taking Stock* project, and a space for volunteers and other partners to access and work with the collections. The process of moving the collections has provided a valuable opportunity to carry out large scale audits and condition assessments, as a result we have been able to improve the accuracy of our locations data and better understand ongoing collection care requirements.
- 6.3 In line with our collecting priorities outlined in our Collection Development Policy, a key focus of our collecting activity continues to be works by artists under-represented in the collection; namely global majority, women, LGBTQ+ and disabled artists. We have acquired a painting by Somaya Critchlow, offered as a gift. We have also accepted a small sculpture by Jac Leirner as a gift from The Contemporary Art Society. The Manchester Contemporary Art Fund patrons continued to offer their generous support for acquisitions and at this year's art fair we selected six works for the collection by a broad range of artists: Jen Orpin, Ruth Murray, Faisal Hussein, Lesley Hilling, Ben Goring and Stacey Foster.
- 6.4 There are no disposals to report for this period as our collection review projects are still in their research phase [please see section 10.2.1 for further information].
- 6.5 Although we currently have a loans moratorium in place to enable staff to focus on delivering the capital programme, we are continuing to honour loans agreed before the moratorium was implemented. Over the course of 2023/24 we have lent works to The Ashmolean Museum's Colour Revolution exhibition and National Museums Scotland's Little Black Dress exhibition as well as

supporting local museums and galleries with loans to exhibitions and displays at The Whitworth, Manchester Museum and Central Library.

### **Collection Care**

- 6.6 Our Conservation and Technical teams have continued to consolidate and improve storage areas ahead of the Capital Development collections moves. This has included a full review of all paintings in Artstore 1 at MAG, reviewing fittings, checking measurements, and relocating works to maximise space. The shoe collection (over 200 pairs) at Platt Hall has also had improved housing so that they are stable for transport.
- 6.7 Some areas of collection have already been moved. The ceramics and glass collections have been moved up from Artstore 2 (Lower ground floor Athenaeum) to Gallery 17, and the full decant of the top floor of Queens Park Conservation and Research Centre (QP) will be successfully completed by early March 2024. We have worked closely with MAG and QP contractors to move collections safely and to meet building schedules. As well as our inhouse team of technicians, we have commissioned external specialist art movers to assist with larger moves throughout 2024/25.
- 6.8 The studios and stores are managed by a primary contractor at QP, and we have been working to clear specialist studio equipment and facilitate building works with them. We have been advising on future building need/ security and use. The temporary store at Lowry Mill has had ongoing roof leaks and we have had to carefully move collections away from gullies. Our furniture conservator continues to condition check the collection and assess for future use. We continue to monitor for moth and pests at all sites and have progressed our hazard management – working on asbestos and radiation in collections.
- 6.9 The gallery's costume mounting technician has mounted the dress for *Unpicking Couture* and worked with the curatorial and digital comms teams to create a film for the exhibition detailing the 'back of house' work of mounting dress, which has been an extremely popular edition to the show.

### **Capital Development**

- 6.10 The programme of building works at QP are largely on track. The sculpture store has been completed in the basement, and work is underway to create a new staff/public study area, as well as a new workshop and quarantine room (the latter, to house a walk-in freezer to treat and prevent insect/moth infestations – essential once the dress collection is rehoused on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in 2025). At ground floor level, work is underway to create a new furniture store (to rehome key collection items that are currently stored at Lowry Mill) and to relocate the paintings conservation studio. Work at first floor level is due to start at the end of March, once all collections have been relocated to G17 in MAG (see above).
- 6.11 The programme of works at MAG have been slow to start, largely due to delays with planning consents. Scaffolding was installed at the front of the gallery to facilitate access for surveys to the lantern light and high-level windows above the entrance hall. This is now complete, and a design scheme

has been submitted. Investigations to the Athenaeum basement office (Art Store 2) have uncovered significant problems with damp and water ingress, the condition of the windows, and identified improvements needed to heating and security. Design schemes for the revolving door/basement staff room, all public WCs, treatment of damp to the basement of the old City Art Gallery have been signed off, with work starting in the next two months. This will see an additional building compound being created along Princess St, taking the Princess St doors out of use and leaving Mosley St as the sole public entrance.

- 6.12 At Platt Hall, a Conservation Management plan has been commissioned from Atkins Realis to inform future development and capital need. This focusses on options for increased public access (including the viability of a lift), provision of food and drink on site, improved public facilities, and the need to address the condition and appearance of the building fabric and the impact this has on the heritage significance and use of the hall.

### **Manchester Together Archive**

- 6.13 Significant progress has been made this year with cataloguing the MTA material. Unfortunately, the part-time archivist (funded by the National Archives) left her post 12 months into an 18-month contract, so recruitment is underway to enable us to complete the project.
- 6.14 Dr Kostas Arvanitis, Senior Lecturer in Museology, University of Manchester was seconded to the gallery from October 2022 to June 2023 (funded by the Advanced Humanities Research Council, Medical Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and the Manchester Art Gallery Trust) to co-develop sustainable, and empathetic cultural policy and practice related to the MTA. His achievements this year include:
- Creation of a Manchester Together Archive Collection Development Policy and Plan. This sets out our statement of intent regarding the purpose, use, development and public access of the Manchester Together Archive (MTA). It outlines the history of the MTA's formation and outlines plans for its use, future collecting, disposal and public access aligned to Manchester Art Gallery's mission and vision and the objectives and priorities of MAG's stakeholders and constituents.
  - A 3D/VR Prototype Tour of the Manchester Together Archive that can be used in future digital platform, or with families and other stakeholders.
  - A Toolkit that provides guidance on understanding the aims, benefits and challenges of forming personal, family, and community archives around traumatic events. The toolkit also offers guidance for managing archives, helping individuals and communities to plan for such work, and identifies the scope of cultural professional and psychological support that this work might require.
- 6.15 Dr. Arvanitis has also published a number of academic and professional articles this year based on his work with the MTA, including:
- Arvanitis, K. and Simpson, R. 2024. "Making, Sharing and Extending Presence of Spontaneous Memorials in the Aftermath of the Manchester Arena bombing" in Karcher, K., Dimcheva, Y. and Medina, M. (eds).

*Remembering, Forgetting and Anticipating Urban Terrorism in Europe since 2004*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

- Arvanitis, K. 2024. "Ethics of Care in Collecting Spontaneous Memorials" in Bounia, A. and Witcomb, A. (Eds) *The Ethics of Collecting Trauma: The role of museums in collecting and displaying contemporary crises*. London: Routledge,
- Arvanitis, K., Bolton, L. Marsden, J. McKenzie, E. and Wallace, A. 2024. "The Ethics of Response-ability in Collecting Spontaneous Memorials" in Cordner, S., Kavanagh, J., Miles, E. and West, R.L. (eds). *Ethics of Contemporary Collecting*. London: Routledge

- 6.16 As the basement room housing the MTA is now undergoing major capital refurbishment to create Art Store 2 (for decorative arts, and works on paper collections), the archive has been relocated to a private, dedicated space on the second floor of MAG, in Gallery 18. The layout, whilst smaller, replicates the look and feel of the previous archive space and will enable cataloguing work to continue, as well as the review of material (as part of our Taking Stock work).

## **Our Town Hall**

### **Visitor Experience**

- 6.17 Exhibition designers, Mather & Co, completed the Stage 4 design of the 'Manchester Town Hall Story' in early 2023. This was released to the OTH Management Contractor, Lend Lease, in May 2023 for their pre-tender review. Lend Lease went out to tender for the Fit-Out contractors in November 2023 and tender submissions are due back in February 2024. When the Fit-Out contractor is onboard, the exhibition development and fit-out programme will be reviewed, and key milestones will be fixed.
- 6.18 In parallel with the ongoing procurement exercise, the OTH team continues to research and develop content for the exhibition. Historic content will be sourced not only from the Town Hall collection, but also from MAG and Archives+. In addition, new community content is being generated from a programme of Engagement events.

### **Engagement Work**

- 6.19 The OTH heritage team has developed two streams of engagement activity to support the development of the Manchester Town Hall Story exhibition. Firstly, a series of drop-in engagement events have been held across the city at venues including Gorton Hub, Wythenshawe Forum, Heaton Park, The Avenue Blackley and Central Library. In addition to in-person engagement, an online questionnaire has also been widely circulated. This has resulted in 513 responses to the request for community contributions to the exhibition content.
- 6.20 Debbie Walker has been contracted as a specialist engagement practitioner for the OTH project, to undertake focus groups ensuring that target audiences are included in the engagement activity. The target groups have included geographical communities, as well as communities of interest. Debbie has worked with City of Sanctuary, 42nd Street, Manchester Deaf Centre, Media Crew in Wythenshawe, Manchester Settlement in Openshaw and the

Chatterbox Centre in Charlestown. Further sessions are planned with the Italian Association, the Jewish Museum, the Irish Centre and the Caribbean community in Moss Side. To date, this has resulted in focussed engagement with 108 participants, with 77 saying they would like further involvement in the process.

- 6.21 The OTH team is in ongoing discussions with Tony Walsh regarding the creation of a poem for the Manchester Town Hall Story. A brief has been issued for the potential commission, including learning and engagement activities to support the creative process. We expect a response in Spring 2024.

### **Audience Development Plan and Lottery Application**

- 6.22 The OTH appointed expert consultants Janice Tullock and Jane Davies to develop an Audience Development Plan for the Town Hall Visitor Experience. This was used as the basis for making an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project to develop and engage new audience with the Town Hall.
- 6.23 The consultants undertook extensive consultation with both internal and community stakeholders, including skills and employment organisations, refugee and asylum seekers, schools and young people and disabled people. The consultation identified key barriers and drivers to visiting the Town Hall. As a result of the consultation, an Audience Development Plan was created, including the vision and mission of the future Visitor Experience: “Manchester City Council will provide a vibrant and accessible cultural offer to celebrate the heritage of Manchester and the Town Hall, to build pride, inspire people, develop understanding and create belonging”.
- 6.24 An application to the NLHF was developed based on the findings of the consultation, using the framework of the Audience Development Plan. This was submitted in September 2023. The project aimed to develop a programme of engagement activities to attract new and underserved audiences to the Town Hall, as well as enhancing the cultural offer for all Manchester communities. Despite being very well received by the NLHF panel, the funding round was heavily oversubscribed and there was insufficient funding to award a grant to the OTH project. Following this outcome, the OTH Strategic Board decided not to make any further applications to the NLHF as resources now need to be focused on the OTH project delivery.

### **Conservation and Collections**

- 6.25 Over the last 12 months, the OTH heritage team has continued to make progress with the conservation of the furniture and paintings collections, ready for their reuse and redisplay in the Town Hall.
- 6.26 Having developed a furniture Restoration framework in 2022, work on 15 batches of furniture has been contracted to seven different furniture conservators. Two of these batches are complete, with the rest well underway. A specialist furniture consultant has been contracted to provide Quality

Assurance checks on the completed conservation to ensure a high standard of work across the board.

- 6.27 Much of the work on the Town Hall paintings collections is now complete. In 2023/24, contracts for the conservation of five batches of paintings were finalised. Three of these batches will be complete in the financial year 2023/24, with the other two being complete in 2024/2025.
- 6.28 As building work on the Town Hall progresses, the discovery of items of architectural or social history significance continues. These are assessed and samples are being added to the Town Hall's Building Record Collection. In future this collection will provide evidence of the adaptations and use of the building over the years and could be made available for research. Decisions about the retention of items for the BRC are being made in collaboration with the architect and the Local Planning Authority.

## **7 Earned and raised Income**

- 7.1 Cultural fundraising and commercial income in the cultural sector continue to be challenging. However, aligning gallery projects with council priorities – in particular, children and young people and community cohesion - and promoting the gallery as a key civic asset, has once again offered new opportunities to secure charitable grants and individual giving to support our work. This civic and charitable message extends to our promotion of the gallery as an event venue for corporate hire, weddings etc. and to customers in our shop and café.

### **Fundraising**

- 7.2 Given the capacity within the small Development Team, we take a strategic approach to how we raise external funds, focusing on grant applications to public bodies and trusts and foundations; the area of fundraising that ensures the best return on investment. This has resulted in some success in securing capital and revenue grants from a number of sources including £673,826 from Arts Council England (MEND) for capital works being undertaken at Queen's Park; £400,000 from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for community programming at Platt Hall; a further year's grant funding (£60,000) from the Oglesby Charitable Trust for Families of the World; £50,000 from The Freelands Foundation to support and empower teachers' creativity; and £27,000 from the Baring Foundation to support the Gallery to become a trauma informed public organisation.
- 7.3 Ongoing reporting and monitoring of a number of large grants secured in 2022/23 and 2023/24 has taken up a significant amount of the Development Team's time but has ensured positive and sustainable relationships with funders.
- 7.4 Manchester Museums Partnership is now in its second year of the 2023-26 Arts Council England National Portfolio funding round. Manchester Art Gallery, as the lead partner, has responsibility for the management and draw down of this grant which is partially distributed to partners Manchester Museum and the Whitworth. This grant contributes £1.620k annually, of which £520k is

allocated to Manchester Art Gallery. ACE have recently announced that there will be an extension year to this grant (2026/27) which will be standstill.

- 7.5 In addition to grant funding, the Gallery seeks donations from individuals and companies through onsite and online donation, legacies and membership schemes. This unrestricted funding has remained consistent and messaging about supporting civic and charitable activity continues to develop alongside our programming and respond to social and political change. We continue to increase the visibility of a charitable message and the opportunities to give – in the building and online.
- 7.6 While we are keen to build relationships with businesses in the city, corporate membership and sponsorship are both difficult to secure in the current financial climate and high maintenance to service and maintain. The Business Partners scheme has retained all existing members but seeking new members has not been a priority, given the current financial climate and limited staff capacity to relationship manage. However, we continue to partner with Manchester Contemporary who set up the Manchester Contemporary Art Fund, bringing together local businesspeople to help the Gallery acquire new works for the collection through donations. This year the fund achieved a significant increase in membership and contributions totalled £20,000.

### **Retail**

- 7.7 Retail sales in 2022-23 were on target, with total net sales of £384,216. This was significantly lower than the previous year, which had been skewed by the huge increase in sales that Grayson's Art Club generated but was in line with projections.
- 7.8 Online sales reduced as a percentage of overall turnover to just under 5%, down from 25% in the same period last year. Again, this can be attributed to Grayson's Art Club and the fact that many of last year's sales were from non-visitors.
- 7.9 After being used as a retail space since 2021, Gallery 2 was reinstated to a gallery space, housing works displaced by the capital programme. The relatively low income this space generated has not been impacted since the retail activity was confined to the main shop area only.
- 7.10 Partnerships with the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair (GNCCF) and Manchester Jewellers Network continued this year. From October 2023 to January 2024 work from a handpicked selection of exhibitors at GNCCF was sold through the gallery shop. Manchester Jewellers Network continues to produce two exclusive ranges per year for sale through the gallery shop. This year we have also worked with Benchmark, part of Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. Benchmark manufacture bespoke furniture and homeware for a variety of environments as well as providing training and work-related opportunities to people experiencing complex and enduring mental health issues.
- 7.11 Retail sales year to date are 10% ahead of target, with net sales in the period April to December 2023 at £338,267. Much work has been done to improve the presence of branded/bespoke product, with a strong range being



developed for the Unpicking Couture exhibition, and a new Manchester Art Gallery range, developed with local artist Dave Gee.

### Venue hire

- 7.12 2022/23 was the most successful year for Venue Hire since the Trading Company was established, with hire fees of £297k and associated spend on Food & Beverage at £328k. The events team delivered 196 daytime events, 55 evening events and 21 weddings.
- 7.13 In the current financial year, we are projecting sales in excess of 2022-2023, despite the challenges of the ongoing capital programme.
- 7.14 At the end of January 2024, sales are at £300k for venue hire and £322k for Food & Beverage, with 195 daytime events, 48 evening events and 25 weddings.

### Cafe and catering

- 7.15 Cafe sales have been strong in the current financial year (£336k YTD) with a price review taking place in September 2023, and another planned for April 2024.
- 7.16 Work has taken place to identify all costings in relation to the current menu, with increases in raw ingredients being reflected in the increased menu price.
- 7.17 Staff recruitment and retention remains challenging and is in line with trends seen in the wider hospitality sector.

## 8 Budget overview

### 2023/24

- 8.1 The service is projecting a balanced outturn.

### 2024/25

- 8.2 We ask that committee approve a provisional cash limit budget of £2,573,543 for 2024/25 subject to approval by Executive in February 2024.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Proposed revenue budget 2024/25 £000's</b>
Staffing	3,301
Premises	80
Transport	65
Supplies and Services	630
Internal charges	25
<b>Total Gross Budget</b>	<b>4,101</b>
<b>Income</b>	
MCC cash limit	2,574
ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)	520
Art Galleries Trust (fundraising)	450
Earned income	450

Internal recharge (OTH Project)	108
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>4,101</b>

- 8.3 Expenditure is based on notional estimates and the distribution between staffing and revenue will be confirmed once next year's business plan is finalised at the end of March 2024.

## 9. Our priorities for 2024/25

- 9.1 The successes of 2023/2024 have shown the strength that comes from our position within MCC and our ability to support and align with council priorities through the lens of art and creativity. The coming year will see the further development and embedding of this way of working not just through our learning programmes, but through processes and practices traditionally viewed as 'back of house' and outside the public purview. As a collection belonging to the people of Manchester, we are committed to increasing public awareness of *how* we work and expanding and improving the opportunities for collaborative practice and decision making with stakeholders across the city. Our NHLF funded 'Taking Stock' programme will be pivotal in supporting this development.
- 9.2 We look forward to working more closely with other cultural and educational organisations across the city, knowing the strength that comes from being part of such a vibrant cultural ecology. As well as continuing to develop the Manchester Museums Partnership and our place in MADE, we look forward to supporting MCC's new Cultural Strategy and the work of the incoming Director of Culture, with whom we are already in conversation about future activities.

### Programming

- 9.3 To mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gallery, we have launched a lively programme of events which explores this milestone in our history. Throughout 2024 there will be monthly events exploring the origins of the institution, the collections, and the gallery's place in the cultural life of the city. In addition, a series of engaging short films will highlight key pieces from the collection.
- 9.4 This year will also see the launch of the public programme elements of Taking Stock, running alongside the collections reviews and capital development work QP and MAG. Whilst QP is upgraded, Galleries 17 and 18 at MAG have been transformed into a temporary 'open store' which visitors can see into, giving audiences a snapshot of behind the scenes work as it happens. From April a viewing area will be available to watch staff and volunteers work on the collection, as well as a programme of monthly 'behind the scenes' tours and other events.
- 9.5 2024 will see the expansion of our gallery tour programme and other 'light touch' engagement across the gallery. The newly restructured Visitor Team will be researching, developing and trialling tours and trails for general visitors. Utilising our Visitor Team in this way provides a broader offer for our visitors walking in off the street, who make up the majority of our audience, but who are perhaps less well served by our in-depth and smaller scale learning programmes which have rightly focused on audiences with the greatest need.

## Exhibitions and Displays

- 9.6 On International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March) we will launch the final iteration of Suzanne Lacy's 'Uncertain Futures' at MAG. The exhibition will include a new three channel film highlights the multiple inequalities around work, faced by women later in life, through excerpts from 100 interviews undertaken in 2021. The film will be shown alongside the project manifesto and a documentary outlining the research findings.
- 9.7 Room to Breathe remains popular with visitors and will continue this year with artworks continuing to change every six months. The research element of this project – a collaboration with Goldsmiths London – should also yield some interesting learning opportunities to better understand the relationship between wellbeing and art.
- 9.8 To support the capital programme and the collection reviews that run alongside it, we will continue to limit our exhibitions and displays in 2024/2025. The run of Unpicking Couture has been extended to summer 2025, but we will make changes to the exhibition in June 2024, to both preserve some of the more delicate items which can only be on display for a limited time and provide new interest and expand public access to the collection. This will be a test of a new model of exhibition making we hope to pursue, where exhibitions run for longer, but with significant changes in the middle of the run, to entice visitors back, or to make changes based on visitor feedback that improve our offer. This is also a move towards a more sustainable method of exhibition making both in terms of materials and staff resourcing.
- 9.9 However, the very process of Taking Stock will itself be on display later in the year. Following on from Uncertain Futures, Gallery 8 will be a space to begin exploring the hidden stories, artworks and activities that will be uncovered in Galleries 17 and 18 as part of the collection reviews. This space will change regularly to reflect new finds and will draw on the experiences of everyone involved in the project – staff, volunteers, students and community partners.
- 9.10 Slowing down our temporary exhibitions has provided space to rethink our permanent galleries. Successful changes in some of our galleries from linear western art history to thematic interpretations focusing on key ideas important to Manchester residents (such as migration and climate justice), has proven popular with new and returning visitors. However, we acknowledge that there is some disconnect between these newly interpreted spaces and those that have stayed the same for many years, the latter having quite stilted and sometimes inaccessible written interpretation. Therefore, in 2024 we will be installing new interpretation panels across all the permanent galleries in the historic building to make sure that how we talk about our collection is more inclusive of the varied interests of our audiences and is written in more engaging language. This is in advance of a more significant redevelopment of the interpretation across this suite of galleries, the first step of which will be the creation of a five-year interpretation plan for the permanent galleries, which we will begin consulting on at the end of the year.
- 9.11 We are continuing to develop different approaches to decolonising our collection. This includes working with diverse groups and communities to select works from the collection for display and research; decentering

whiteness and Western perspectives in our interpretation so the displays are more representative of the people of Manchester; and reviewing our historic cataloguing systems to address problematic terminology and include different voices and perspectives. The two projects with the Decolonising Arts Institute at University of the Arts, London are entering their final phases: Transforming Collections: Reimagining Art, Nation, and Heritage will dissolve barriers between collections by addressing digital search and research capability i.e. decolonising algorithms. The aim is for audiences to be able to explore collections holistically, using machine learning and citizen-led archiving.

- 9.12 As one of the 20 galleries nationwide collaborating on the 20/20 programme (a commissioning to collect project working specifically with ethnically diverse artists), MAG is working with artist Holly Graham who is creating a work to enter our collection. Holly's work so far has included researching pattern books, patchwork and garments in the dress collection. She is interested in the legacies of expansionism, colonialism and exploitative labour inherent to the material history of cotton. Also inspired by the African American Abolitionist Sarah Parker Remond who spoke in the Athenaeum (now part of the gallery) in 1859, Graham's research will lead to the creation of a new printed or woven fabric and use it to create a mid-19th century dress in the style of that worn by Remond. There will also be a sound work created like a museum audio-guide and responding to the history of the gallery. All the elements will be completed by November 2024.

## **Learning and Engagement**

### **a) Early Years and Families**

- 9.13 Alongside the gallery's standard family and early years offer of baby and parent sessions and holiday / weekend drop-in creative activities, MAG will focus on developing the newly funded AHRC project Things of the Least in partnership with Sure Start, Manchester Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam Universities This project works with 0-3 year olds, parents and a team of artists and researchers to develop new exhibitions for early years children. Groups we will work with to develop this project include newly arrived families accommodated in a Home Office hotel who connect with Sure Start. Most of this work will be centered at Platt Hall. At MAG, we are moving into year 3 of the Families of the World initiative, where this year's focus is on sharing good practice and work closely with other cultural venues.

### **b) Schools and Colleges**

- 9.14 MAG will extend the Future Creatives programme – now in its eight year - through our Taking Stock funding to include previous students of the programme now working as emerging artists in the city. They will be supported through the development of a network that helps build skills, knowledge and understanding with professionals working in Manchester's creative industries. These artists will be working with the students and connecting to the gallery's Rutherford Loans Scheme to increase the future use of this neglected part of our collection.
- 9.15 Using the expertise developed through Art of Resilience, the gallery is now supporting schools and cultural organisations across Manchester. As co-chair

of MADE's Health and Wellbeing group, we have recently secured funding to create four pilot programmes between secondary schools and arts providers in the city and will now lead the group in developing new models of practice. We are also developing our programme to include working in schools, delivering teacher professional development and including parents in our programmes - all with the intention of helping Manchester be a Trauma Informed city.

- 9.16 MAG has secured generous funding from Freelands Foundation to support the Manchester Artist Teachers Collective. This includes Secondary schools, Colleges and other galleries in the city. We are working in depth with Manchester's arts ecology to reconnect art teachers with their own arts practice and to identify a relatable and relevant curriculum for the young people of our city. We will be developing case studies and data to demonstrate the vital role Art and Design plays in the curriculum and use this to advocate for this increasingly sidelined subject.

### **c) Young People**

- 9.17 In 2023/24, we reviewed our programme for young people through a series of Listening Sessions, consulting directly with young people, their organisations and youth workers. We've built new partnerships with a focus on future careers, resilience and health and wellbeing. Our programme for young people will be funded by a grant from Zochonis, who continue to support the gallery's engagement work. Highlights include:

- Enhancing the Chances - Following last year's project, we have been invited by the Work and Skills Team to expand our deliver of Enhancing the Chances sessions for pupils who had been identified using Manchester City Council 'Risk of NEET indicators' as high risk of disengagement with Employment, Education and Training.
- Manchester School of Art and Manchester Fashion Institute - We will deliver a project to professionally upskill Manchester's students for the future, meeting their needs and practically enhancing their studies at university.

- 9.18 We'll be exploring the feasibility of developing a partnership to support Supplementary Schools. This piece of work is in an early phase where we know there is a need but we have yet to build up the resources necessary for a programme.

### **d) Adult Learning, Communities and Volunteering**

- 9.19 This year's adult events programme will continue to develop the skills of our creative practitioners and volunteers who lead public sessions. Discussions on topical issues can sometimes be challenging and our team's ability to manage interactions is vital in helping us build connection and understanding between the diverse people who attend. Our programme – volunteer-led tours, Art Bites, Philosophy Cafe, Stories We Share - will be heavily shaped around Taking Stock and our 200-year anniversary which looks at how our historic collections can help us meet the social challenges of our time, remaining useful and significant for the future.

- 9.20 Over the next year, we will continue to support communities across the city to feel a sense of belonging in the gallery by enabling them to engage with the collections, displays and building. In particular, we will support them to have a sense of connection with the Taking Stock 'open store' displays in Gallery 17, associated programme and 200-year celebrations. Examples of groups visiting are Know Africa based in Wythenshawe, Burnage Buddies and Women's Voices as well regular ESOL groups.
- 9.21 As part of Uncertain Futures, we will hold five community events to show the Research Findings Documentary and hold bespoke workshops, supporting the needs of women over 50 ranging from mental health support in the workplace to pension advice. These will be strategically located across the city and delivered in partnership with the Uncertain Futures Advisory Group. We are also work closely with MCC Work and Skills, academics from MMU and UoM and the Advisory Group to embed the recommendations into the new MCC Our Manchester Strategy. We recently received MMU/ UoM Impact Acceleration Funding to co-create a manifesto, contribution map and toolkit to disseminate learning and impact locally, nationally and internationally.
- 9.22 During 2024 we will be developing more volunteer roles as part of the Taking Stock programme of work with the review of collection areas. The recruitment of a part-time volunteer coordinator using funds from Heritage Fund will enable us to build capacity in the volunteer team. There will be a focus on health and wellbeing and connecting people with new skills and building confidence and self-esteem within a small team of volunteers involved in behind-the-scenes tasks.
- 9.23 Current volunteers will continue to be supported through training, including continued Anti Racism training, socials, and group sessions to ensure that they are getting the most out of their role and feel supported to deliver the public programme of adult learning and behind the scenes support.

#### **e) Health and Well Being**

- 9.24 In the coming year, MAG will take the next steps in our ambition of developing trauma informed practice as we trial how we will become a trauma informed gallery. Using funding from the Baring Foundation, this work will extend the relationship with MCC's Population Health Team and our active partnership with Thrive Manchester, who are experts in addressing child / parent / family trauma. This will involve piloting initiatives, research and dissemination. The latter will include sharing best practices and building up a network of trauma-informed cultural organisations in the city and across Greater Manchester. Connecting with this strand, we will be continuing our Incredible Years programme. We will complete our final research programme with Goldsmiths University of London exploring how art and culture can support people's mental health and wellbeing, which utilises our 'Room to Breathe' exhibition space. Results of this will be disseminated with cultural organisations in the city as well as across the cultural sector, cementing the gallery's record of being involved in and contributing to the health of the city.

## **Web and digital**

- 9.25 2024 digital plans include a 3D mapping resource for Gallery 17, offering digital access to Taking Stock for visitors either physically in the gallery through a standing touch screen, or virtually on our website and app.
- 9.26 The Platt Hall website is slated for an upgrade to meet evolving communication needs and with an addition of a new presence on the Bloomberg Connects App both will be ready to reflect and foster Platt's cultural participation and social inclusion in the digital realm. The app will be designed to promote community-driven content and becoming a dynamic and relevant space for amplifying multiple perspectives and increase access to the collection. This new digital strategy aims to virtually open the building and connect Platt Hall to a global audience.
- 9.27 The design of the new Trauma Informed Gallery website will serve as a comprehensive platform for case studies and a valuable collaborative resource to researchers, practitioners, and the wider community interested in trauma-informed approaches within the art and cultural sector.

## **Platt Hall**

- 9.28 The next twelve months are shaped by externally funded programmes that support the development of Platt Hall – Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Arts Access and Participation funding, the AHRC Things of the Least grant, working with the Mary Greg Collection and families with very young children, and the NHLF Taking Stock grant for community-engaged collections review that includes the textile collection. We will also be addressing building management to support expanded engagement programmes and the development of a longer-term capital development plan for Platt Hall.

### **a) Community development (delivering the Paul Hamlyn Activity Plan)**

- 9.29 We will continue to develop programmes that engage the diverse demographic of the neighbourhood, building on existing projects and expanding into new areas. Families and schools remain central, through Surestart Family Play and Stay and our partnership with Heald Place Primary School. This will be complemented by the creation of a new post of Young People's Engagement Co-ordinator, working with local youth services to develop better understanding of this significant but under-represented demographic in the wards local to the Hall. Our social prescribing programme, now well established in partnership with Better Health Manchester (BHM), will be strengthened and further developed through the appointment of an innovative new post of Health & Wellbeing Coach, jointly managed and funded with BHM, and leading on the development of an expanded health programme using the Hall and its collections.
- 9.30 Our programmes also help us better understand the potential of the site and its many uses. For example, the volunteer-led development of the garden and surrounding landscape, our Makespace programme of skillshare creative workshops and building tours, regular Open Days and In the Windows exhibitions. In addition, we will also host the first of two artistic residencies, exploring the role of food and drink to community belonging within the diverse

neighbourhood of the Hall. This programme will produce a body of work and evidence that will help shape the future plan for food and drink provision in the Hall in the longer term.

### **b) Collections use and development**

- 9.31 This year will see significant development towards the relocation of a substantial part of the dress collection from Platt Hall to Queens Park Conservation Studios. Alongside this, the Taking Stock project will support volunteer development at Platt Hall for the review of related textile collections, providing opportunities for local community involvement in collections care and contribution to decision-making about the future of collections at the Hall. We will initiate phase one of a pilot research project, *776 Pieces of Cloth*, addressing the legacies of colonial collecting histories through collaborative investigation of an archive of textiles made and sold across Lancashire and West Africa during the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This phase of work will see the creation of a study group comprising cultural, community, academic, professional and creative expertise, setting research questions and methodology that will support further phases of redocumentation and rehousing of the material. Things of the Least will progress initial artistic investigations of the Mary Greg Collection at Platt Hall with exploratory workshops and pilot projects carried out with family groups at the Hall and across the city. And we will continue to explore ways of using the collections as inspiration and provocation to discussion, understanding and action as an integral part of our wider engagement programmes.

### **c) Building management and planning**

- 9.32 Improvements will be made to building management and development that reflect the complex and changing status of Platt Hall as a heritage site, collections store and increasingly active community resource. The combined findings of a fire audit, security review, and building conservation assessment have provided a series of recommendations that will be pursued this year as the starting point for more in-depth feasibility studies, informing longer term capital development plans. The newly appointed Platt Hall Lead will develop this work, providing strategic oversight of the needs of the Hall and building a strong relationship between MAG's leadership team and wider MCC teams.

## **10. Developing Our Assets**

### **Collection Development**

- 10.1 As part of the Taking Stock project, we are developing a framework for collection review and disposals, using new guidelines from the Museum Association and working with Museum Consultant Dr. Jenny Durant. The aim of the framework is to create a clear and transparent method of review – including decision making about what we retain and what we might transfer to other galleries and museums – that can be shared with stakeholders, and broader audiences via our website. These decision-making processes have historically been hidden from public view. As a collection belonging to the people of Manchester, MAG staff take great pride in the responsibility bestowed on us to look after the collection and are trialling new ways of sharing those processes. The framework is being developed around those



collections which form part of Taking Stock (Old Manchester, Furniture, Rutherford Loan Scheme, global textiles), each of which will be supported by different external specialists, volunteers or young people throughout the review process. The framework developed and tested through Taking Stock, will then be rolled out across other collections areas, such as arms and armour and costume, ensuring long-term sustainability of the collection and more transparent and collaborative decision making to ensure relevance and engagement.

- 10.2 The review will lead to a limited number of collection items being rehomed or repurposed (largely to other arts organisations), which the gallery aims to bring to the chair of the Art Galleries Committee for designated approval throughout the year. Rehoming or repurposing of items that have been thoroughly assessed as either not meeting the needs of MAG and its audiences or being better placed for use and care in a different organisation, is a key part of good collections management and supports the recommendations of the Museums Association's guidance 'Off the Shelf: a toolkit for ethical transfer, reuse and disposal'.
- 10.3 In January 2024 we began the complex process of moving collections out of Queens Park Conservation Studios, so that building repairs can take place. This programme of collection moves will continue throughout 2024 and beyond. Collections will be audited as part of the moves and there will be an ongoing collections care programme before items are returned to QP or other storage areas within MAG.
- 10.4 The loans moratorium remains in place until the end of 2024, but we expect to be able to resume lending in 2025. We continue to honour loans agreed prior to the introduction of the moratorium and are also working with the Our Town Hall Project on potential loans to the new visitor centre.
- 10.5 We are about to launch a new collections search on our website which will offer much improved digital access to our collection including an improved user interface, better search functionality, a high-resolution image feature, and a wider range of voices within our collection interpretation.

### **Team Development**

- 10.6 To support our work, 2024 will see the implementation of Phase 3 of our service redesign, which will focus on programming (curatorial, learning, Platt Hall and digital communications). The redesign is not being undertaken as a cost-cutting measure, but as a means of increasing the impact and scope of our public-focussed work. These changes will drive a renewed focus on our engagement USPs (Early Years, Schools and Colleges, Communities and Health and Well-being) and will support the collections reviews and their possible outcomes through the Taking Stock project.
- 10.7 The ambitious programme of work at Platt Hall requires a more structured team based at the site who have a deep understanding of the nuances of both residents/programme participants and the building itself. Platt Hall also requires more focused communication provision, to support the team in sharing their work and reaching wider audiences.

- 10.8 The above will be supported by more effective administrative support for both the programming team in general and our work as part of the Manchester Museum Partnership.

### **Capital Development**

- 10.9 There will be an intensive programme of building works at both MAG and QP this year, which will place additional pressures on staff, and require careful management to ameliorate the impact on the public, our programme, and our ability to raise income through commercial activities at MAG.
- 10.10 At QP, works to the roof and first floor galleries (lead paint removal, redecoration, and new heating) will create three new storage spaces for the City's dress and fine art collection. The basement area of the building (the only area that can be made fully accessible to all users) will be complete, enabling our collections-based work to be extended from MAG to QP. Once the first floor refurbishment is complete, it will be fitted out with new space-efficient collection housing furniture, and we will begin the careful and considered process of relocating the dress collection from Platt Hall.
- 10.11 At MAG, Phase 1 will start in earnest with work to the two entrances in the Atrium addressing water ingress into the basement staff room via the revolving door and bringing it back into use as a library/archive space and quiet room for staff. The refurbishment of the WCs will be phased to ensure that we retain male/female provision throughout the works. Once complete, we will have male/female WCs in the atrium, ungendered loos by the cafe, and a family room with large ungendered cubicles that will accommodate buggies and baby change facilities in each. The works to the lantern light will start later in summer. This will require external and internal scaffold. The latter will be installed overnight to ensure that use of the front entrance is retained throughout. The external scaffold will be similar to the survey scaffold and will not inhibit use of the ramp, or impact on the Jarman Garden. Work will also begin in the basement of the Athenaeum to create new collection storage (Art Store 2) for the decorative art and works on paper collections. This requires a new solid floor to be laid, replacing the current rotten ply boarded floor and addressing the drainage issues created by the Michael Hopkins new-build extension.
- 10.12 Further works at MAG are in development to remediate the damp in the basement (kitchen areas, and archive library) and address the ceiling and lighting in G17. These may be deferred to the Phase 2 of the building works (scheme under development) which will address exterior stonework repairs, the pedestal lighting (removed and in temporary storage), the loading bay doors, the moats/light wells, and other exterior areas within the curtilage.

### **Manchester Together Archive (MTA)**

- 10.13 The priorities for this year include:
- Completing the MTA catalogue, once a new archivist is appointed.
  - Review the options and benefits of an MTA digital platform (and opportunities for funding from AHRC and/or NHLF).

- Undertake a global survey of museums with spontaneous memorial collections.
- Develop a 2027 MTA plan to support public engagement work around the MTA for the 10th year remembrance.
- Work with cultural organisations in Manchester on developing the MTA into a joint resource.
- Undertake a review of the material and, in consultation with stakeholders and interested parties, develop options for the future housing and use of the material.

## **Our Town Hall**

### **a) Visitor Experience**

10.14 2024/2025 will focus on evaluating the submissions for the Fit-Out contractor work package and creating a detailed programme of work delivery. Alongside this, we will be writing exhibition content and developing associated graphics for the public offer. We will draw on the results of the engagement work that was undertaken in 2023/24 to ensure that community voices are heard within the exhibition interpretation.

### **b) Conservation and Collections**

10.15 We aim to complete the conservation of the majority of the furniture collection in 2024/2025 and make arrangements for any final conservation work that will be undertaken on site. This year will see the completion of paintings conservation and the planning of their safe reinstallation in the state and committee rooms. This will help to enhance the commercial appeal of events spaces and meeting rooms, as well as allowing the public to enjoy the collection in its original context.

10.16 In partnership with Lend Lease, 2024/25 will be a crucial time to plan the reoccupation of the building. The OTH Heritage team will ensure the correct environmental conditions are met before bringing any of the conserved collections back into the building. We will identify and procure the services of a suitable art transport provider to return the collection from offsite storage and an appropriate contractor to provide conservation and art handling services for the treatment of the sculpture collection.

10.17 The team will continue the work of rationalising the existing collection, documenting new additions, and planning the storage areas in the Town Hall. This work will ensure that any collection that is not in use or on display can be stored in an accessible, secure, and protected environment.

### **Earned and raised Income**

10.18 We recognise that 2024/25 will be another challenging year for income generation but remain relatively positive that we can generate the income to deliver the proposed level of programming.

10.19 We will significantly increase the charitable message in visitor/client communications, making it more explicit that the commercial profit (shop, café, events) directly supports the work of the gallery. This is in response to an

increased demand, particularly from event bookers, for assurance that their money will be ethically and responsibly spent in line with their own ESG (Environmental Social Governance) score targets. We will extend this messaging to shop and cafe customers, making them more aware of the work we do with Manchester residents, and which their purchases actively support.

- 10.20 We will also focus on the environmental sustainability of our trading activity, reducing energy usage, and food waste, and promoting reduced food miles, local produce and non-meat menu choices.

### **Fundraising**

- 10.21 We will continue to focus revenue fundraising activity on securing grants from public funders and trusts and foundations, primarily to support our learning and engagement programme. Capital fundraising will focus on additional elements identified for the improvements to Queen's Park and Manchester Art Gallery, and on improved storage and security for our collections.
- 10.22 Promoting individual giving, from large gifts to onsite (cash and contactless) and online giving is another area of focus. In particular, we will promote legacy giving through promotion to current supporters and by reinstating will-writing days. 2013/24 donation messaging is focused on the collection and how people can help support its future. Membership campaigns to increase the number of Friends and Patrons are ongoing and are supported by the Trustees of the Manchester City Galleries Trust, the charity through which most of our external income is raised.
- 10.23 As ever, we will maintain relationships with our existing funders and donors through good ongoing communication and timely reporting.
- 10.24 We are in the process of recruiting for a new Development Manager. We will advertise this vacancy widely to ensure we get the best possible applicants for this crucial grant-writing role.

### **Retail**

- 10.25 Priorities for 2024-25 include a refresh of the online shop with the aim of increasing the income generated from 5% to 10% of total turnover. We are continuing to explore opportunities to grow income from print on demand and licensing, through third parties such as Art UK and Bridgeman.
- 10.26 During this period of capital development, the minimal programme allows the retail team an opportunity to increase the number of collections-inspired products and ranges which link to the gallery's core activity. A wellbeing range is being developed in collaboration with the gallery's Creative Health and Wellbeing Manager, and we are also planning a refresh of our children's range to appeal to families and groups using the Lion's Den (Clare Studio Family Space).

### **Venue hire**

- 10.27 We anticipate challenges around event sales in the 2024-25 period due to the ongoing capital programme and the impact of building works. We've already

experienced some cancellations, particularly from wedding clients and are therefore focusing our efforts on increasing daytime business hire to offset some of these losses. At January 2024, there are confirmed venue hire bookings for 2024/25 to the value of c £80k.

- 10.28 Over the next year we will be focusing on sustainability and carbon reporting for clients, as well as undertaking a comprehensive review of standard operating procedures and risk management.

### **Cafe and Catering**

- 10.29 The appointment of a new General Manager for the café is our main priority for the new financial year. A new pricing matrix for both events and catering will be in place from 1st April and is averaging around an 10% increase across the board.
- 10.30 Work is ongoing to develop the cafe menu to reflect seasonal dishes with a lower carbon footprint and we will be submitting a funding application in March 2024 to Cultural Enterprises for their *Seeds for Change* programme, to enable us to work with Klimato on carbon reporting and reduction across our catering operation.

## **11 Key Policies and Considerations**

### **(a) Equal Opportunities**

- 11.1 The service is committed to equality of access and celebrating and promoting diversity. Our vision for 2024/5, based on our successes of previous years, is for the benefit of the widest possible audience, especially those least likely to engage with culture.
- 11.2 There is a strong emphasis on widening participation in 2024 and we will focus on equality, diversity and inclusion; working with children, young people and older adults with a focus on residents of priority Manchester wards where engagement is currently lowest and where the potential of art and creativity to change lives could have the biggest impact.

### **(b) Risk Management**

- 11.3 The service takes a robust approach to risk management and is fully committed to MCC's Risk Management Compliance Framework in all aspects of its operation, as well as keeping a risk log to manage other risks that may affect service delivery, reputation, and future funding.

### **(c) Legal Considerations**

- 11.4 None identified.

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