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MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2024
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Council Antechamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Committee Members only at 1.20 pm in the Council Antechamber, Town Hall Extension.

Access to the Council Antechamber

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Membership of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Councillors - Hitchen (Chair), Azra Ali, Appleby, Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo, H Priest, Rawson, Sheikh, Whiston and Wills

Agenda

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 — Pages 7 - 20
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024.

5. Manchester Indoor Sport Built Facilities Strategy Update — Pages 21 - 54
Report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

This report provides an update on the key findings identified in the Manchester Indoor and Sport Built Facilities Strategy (2023-2031) and short-term action plan, to be taken forward with partners over the next 18-month period.

6. Manchester Libraries Update — Pages 55 - 144
Report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

This report provides the Committee with an update on the library strategy and to present future plans.

7. Digital Inclusion Update - Bridging The Digital Divide In Manchester — Pages 145 - 254
Report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

This report provides the Committee with an update on the Council's digital inclusion work, since the last report to scrutiny in March 2023. This includes the development and implementation of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

8. Overview Report Pages
Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit 255 - 266

The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee examines the work of the Council and its partners relating to reducing levels of crime, community cohesion, older people and equality and inclusion.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. To help facilitate this, the Council encourages anyone who wishes to speak at the meeting to contact the Committee Officer in advance of the meeting by telephone or email, who will then pass on your request to the Chair for consideration. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

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Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

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

Further Information

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

Charlotte Lynch
Tel: 0161 219 2119
Email: charlotte.lynch@manchester.gov.uk

This agenda was issued on **Monday, 26 February 2024** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester, M60 2LA.

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Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 6 February 2024

Present:
Councillor Hitchen (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Azra Ali, Appleby, Doswell, Ogunbambo, Rawson, Sheikh and Wills

Also present:
Councillor Midgley, Deputy Leader
Councillor Akbar, Executive Member for Housing and Development
Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure
Karin Connell, Strategic Lead: Health Equity and Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership
Eamonn O'Rourke, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active
Anne Marie Errock, Business Development Lead, Manchester Active

Apologies: Councillor Good

CESC/24/8 Interests

Councillor Ogunbambo declared a personal interest in item 7.

CESC/24/9 Minutes

Decision: That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 January 2024, be approved as a correct record.

CESC/24/10 Annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2023/24

The committee considered a report of the Joint Director of Equality, Inclusion and Engagement which provided the draft Public Sector Equality Duty report prior to publication in March 2024 and provided an overview of the requirement for Manchester City Council to publish this.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- The Council's 3 Equality Objectives for 2020-2024;
    - Knowing Manchester Better
    - Improving Life Chances
    - Celebrating Our Diversity
- Progress made against these objectives through leadership and accountability' systems and structures; governance and reporting; people, culture and behaviours; digital, knowledge and insight; and measures and motivators;
- The need for an intersectional approach to analysing and acting upon data;
- Previous reports to the committee on Communities of Identity and the LGBTQIA+ Deep Dive;
- How the Council's equality objectives and plans were governed through the Corporate Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Group; and

- The work of Making Manchester Fairer andCommunity Health Equity Manchester (CHEM).

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Requesting clarification on statistics in the report relating to the percentage of households with at least one person who can speak English as their main language and the LGBT+ population in Manchester;
- The need for tangible case studies of how barriers were being tackled with marginalised groups such as black, Asian and minority ethnicities (BAME) and disabled people; and
- Welcoming the recognition of those experiencing homelessness, carers, care leavers, armed forces personnel and those living in poverty.

The Strategic Lead: Health Equity and Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, stated that the report provided an overview of what had been delivered by the Council and other stakeholders against the statutory equality duties. She highlighted how equality, diversity and inclusion had been embedded across the Council's work. She stated that good progress had been made and recognised that there was a scale and need that would be set out in new equality objectives for 2024-2028 to provide greater focus.

The Chair invited a member of the public to make representations to the committee. The member of the public requested clarification on how structural policies, processes and procedures that excluded sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, and that denies a person's identity, would be dismantled and where responsibility lay for compliance to the Public Sector Equality Duty when Council services were contracted out, with particular reference to GLL. They also highlighted the importance of wording, definitions, data integrity and monitoring. A full response would be provided outside of the meeting.

In response to a point raised by the Chair regarding statistics in the report, members were advised that this should read that English was not the main language for 97,192 residents. Of these, 75,760 (77.9%) could speak English well or very well, and 21,432 (22.1%) said they cannot. Further clarification on the LGBT+ population would be provided following the meeting.

The Strategic Lead: Health Equity and Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, stated that the Census was a useful source of information but that it had drawbacks. She highlighted that responses to some questions were not mandatory and that the Census took place at a time when students were not in the city. She stated that approximately 30,000 people were thought to be missing from the Census and commented that deep dives, like what the committee had recently undertaken into the LGBTQ+ community in Manchester, were useful in providing insights and lived experiences that the Census could not highlight.

In response to a query regarding case studies, the committee was informed that the report referred to the work of Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) and Community Health Equity Manchester (CHEM). The Strategic Lead: Health Equity and

Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership explained that Sounding Boards with BAME and disabled representatives had been established through CHEM to feed into programmes of work where inequalities of access, experiences and outcomes existed. It was stated that examples of the work of Sounding Boards could be shared with the committee.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report, and
2. looks forward to receiving a further update on progress against the equality objectives in the new municipal year.

CESC/24/11 Draft Equality Objectives 2024-2028

The committee considered a report of the Joint Director of Equality, Inclusion and Engagement which provided an overview of the approach to developing the Council's refreshed Equality Objectives for 2024-2028.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to the Council's existing Equality Objectives for 2020-2024;
- How the Council meets its statutory equality duties;
- The approach to refreshing the Equality Objectives through building on and strengthening existing strategies, successes and other work;
- Progress made against current objectives;
- Rationale and associated actions for each proposed Equality Objectives for 2024-2028, which were:
    - Promoting inclusive employment and work
    - Promoting timely and proportionate community involvement and engagement
    - Delivering inclusive and accessible services.
- How these objectives would be delivered and monitored; and
- Next steps and timeline for the publication of the 2024-2028 Equality Objectives.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the proposed new equality objectives;
- How the Council worked to foster good relations between those who shared protected characteristics and those who did not;
- How success would be measured, and requesting that the delivery plan be provided to a future meeting;
- Suggesting that the Council only enter into contracts with companies that share similar equality values or who sign up to the Council's equality objectives;

- When the socioeconomic disadvantage duty would be adopted by the Council;
- How success in reducing socioeconomic disadvantage would be measured and monitored;
- Welcoming plans for community engagement on the draft equality objectives;
- How trauma-informed work would be integrated with the objectives;
- How social mobility work could be embedded in North Manchester;
- Requesting statistics on the percentage of school leavers who were in care and were not in further or higher education, employment, or training 9 months after leaving school;
- The need to consider poverty and class, which were not mentioned in the report despite poverty cutting across many different characteristics and restricting access to employment; and
- When a further update could be provided to the committee.

The Head of Equalities stated that a whole-systems approach would be taken to developing the new equality objectives and that these would ensure that equalities were embedded in all strategic drivers across the Council. She stated that an intersectional approach would also be taken as the Council understood the layers of disadvantage within different groups and communities. The new equality objectives would build on the current three objectives to recognise successes and feedback from residents. She advised that the objectives would be strategically aligned and would reflect the commitments of the Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) programme, the Workforce Equality Strategy and the Work and Skills Strategy. Members were advised that the engagement process would expand on previous public engagement and to reach key communities.

The Head of Equalities explained that the draft equality objectives included inclusive employment and work; timely and proportionate community involvement and engagement; and delivering inclusive and accessible services. She stated that there would be a significant focus on metrics and measurements and a delivery plan was being developed.

The Head of Equalities advised that work to foster good relations between those with protected characteristics and those without had started under the current equality objectives. An example of this was the Council's involvement in and support of events which celebrated diversity and built awareness of different cultures in the city, such as Manchester Pride, Holocaust Memorial Day and Walk for Women. She stated that this would be continued under the new equality objectives to continue building good relations between different groups.

The Deputy Leader also stated that this work could link with the Community Cohesion Strategy to foster good relations and she recognised the need for this work to be cross-cutting across many Council services.

In response to a query regarding how success would be measured, the committee was advised that this could be undertaken through the equality impact assessment process. The Head of Equalities explained that the delivery plan was expected to be finalised in late March and this could be shared with the committee at a future meeting.

A member's suggestion that the Council only enter into contracts with companies that share similar equality values or who sign up to the Council's equality objectives was noted by officers.

The Head of Equalities acknowledged a member's point regarding integrating trauma-informed work into the equality objectives and explained that work was ongoing with the Human Resources and Organisation Development (HROD) team to create a learning and development programme across the wider equalities work and it was important to reference trauma-informed work and cultural humility within this.

In response to queries regarding socioeconomic disadvantage, the committee was advised that this would be addressed by building a culture of understanding around the disadvantages that different communities faced. Members were also informed that the Council's equality impact assessment process had been refreshed to have a greater focus on data and those involved in new policies or developments would need to be mindful of the local community and any disparities that residents may experience. The Strategic Lead: Health Equity and Inclusion, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, stated that socioeconomic disadvantage in Manchester was one of the driving forces behind selecting employment as an equality objective as this was critical to addressing some of the issues caused by poor social mobility. She advised that there was substantial data around employment status and economic inactivity which could be broken down by locality and compared by ethnicity and disability. This was addressed within the Council's Work and Skills Strategy and provided an example of work with Bangladeshi women in Cheetham, Crumpsall and Longsight.

Officers acknowledged a point raised by the Chair regarding the need to consider poverty and class as a barrier to employment and social mobility and they would endeavour to incorporate this into the objectives and delivery plan.

In response to a query regarding how the committee could continue to monitor progress with this work, officers explained that a working group would be established to develop metrics and identify the best way to demonstrate the impact of this work. The City Solicitor suggested that June 2024 would be an appropriate time to provide an update, which the committee welcomed.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests that a progress update be provided to the committee in June 2024, including the delivery plan; information on how success would be monitored; and information on the socioeconomic disadvantage duty;
3. requests further updates on a 6-month basis after June 2024;
4. requests further information on the percentage of school leavers in Manchester who were in care and were not in further or higher education, employment, or training 9 months after leaving school; and
5. recommends that further consideration be given to including poverty as a protected characteristic within the equality objectives.

CESC/24/12 Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Annual Update

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which highlighted the annual progress made by Manchester Active in the development and achievement of the Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. It also provided an overview of the progress made using sport and physical activity to enable Manchester residents to be healthier and happier.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to Manchester Active and the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy;
- The Strategy's vision, priority themes and enabling themes;
- Updates on walking and cycling;
- The Physical Activity Referral Service (PARS);
- Facilities and opportunities for young people and Holiday Activity Funding (HAF);
- Major sporting events held and scheduled to be held in Manchester;
- How residents are informed about sport, physical activity and health;
- An overview of completed projects that created new or improved existing built sports facilities; and
- Next steps.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Welcoming the promotional video and querying whether this could be displayed on advertising boards across the city;
- Highlighting positive developments in Withington parks and at Hough End Leisure Centre and House of Sport;
- The role of Neighbourhood Sports Officers;
- Noting statistics that 32% of children in Greater Manchester were inactive, and querying whether this included PE lessons in schools;
- What activities were offered to motivate and increase participation among children and young people;
- Take-up rates for free swimming;
- Whether free swimming was still offered to those aged over 60;
- Whether there would be any additional place-based activities offered through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme;
- The impact on HAF if the government did not continue to provide the Household Support Fund (HSF); and
- How the Council and Manchester Active could improve access to sports and leisure facilities for those least able to afford it.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure stated that Manchester Active played a strong and vital role in local communities and neighbourhoods in supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society that enabled residents to be healthier and happier. He stated that 2023 was a

landmark year for sport, physical health and activity in Manchester with over 25 major events held in the city. He commented that UK Sport would be providing £1.1m to the city and that Manchester retained its status as a global city of sport which would inspire positive change and ensure a legacy pathway for Manchester athletes to excel. He highlighted how the city had been named European Capital of Cycling for 2024, which would be a strong platform to secure additional funding and investment into cycling provision. The committee was also advised that over 20,000 children benefitted from the free Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme which delivered 150,000 meals. He also highlighted several other achievements.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure acknowledged some challenges and areas for improvement, such as strengthening the digital platform to enable residents to find and easily access activity opportunities. He stated that activities to encourage residents to lead more active lifestyles would be intensified and that work would be undertaken to grow and enhance local health networks.

The committee also received a video presentation of Manchester Active's work and key achievements. In response to a question from the Chair regarding whether this could be presented on advertising boards across the city, the Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active, stated that a digital campaign was being developed with partners and that snippets of the video could be included in this.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active acknowledged challenges with inactivity amongst children and noted that PE was not always followed through in the school curriculum. He stated that the HAF programme created a platform for children during school holidays to learn about activity. He advised that Manchester Active worked closely with other organisations to ensure that issues with inactivity were addressed in partnership and that there were also targeted activities in more deprived areas through Making Manchester Fairer and the Winning Hearts and Minds programme.

The Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets recognised national and local gaps in activity amongst children and young people and stated that the Council and Manchester Active had increased the number of place-based initiatives and commitments. She commented that many local authorities no longer offered free swimming and that Manchester was proud to have retained this. The committee was advised that a successful marketing campaign had been undertaken to raise awareness of this offer and that subsidised swimming courses were also offered. The Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets also highlighted how the Council extended the government's funding towards HAF to provide the scheme in every school holiday, which not every local authority did.

The Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets acknowledged a focus on girls arising from the Active Lives Survey and explained that work was undertaken with stakeholders, such as schools and sports clubs, to address stereotypes and to keep up to date with new and emerging sports.

It was also confirmed that free swimming was offered to people 16 and under and over 60s.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active explained that Manchester received £4.1m in funding for HAF, which was targeted through free school meals. He stated that this was delivered in collaboration with a number of partners in a range of locations across the city. He stated that the Council and Manchester Active had influence over where partners delivered activities and he endeavoured to work with the member for Higher Blackley regarding activities in his ward.

The committee was informed that the Household Support Fund had not been confirmed for 2025/26 and that this would be a significant loss to the Council and Manchester Active if not continued by the government. Assurances were provided, however, that Manchester Active would work with partners to ensure sustainability and would seek further funding streams to support the HAF scheme.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure stated that inability to afford access to sport and physical activity programmes was the fault of the government as a result of 14 years of austerity.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active stated that his organisation focused on how to impact areas where residents could not afford to access sport and leisure facilities. He cited the Winning Hearts and Minds programme in North Manchester as an example of free, targeted work with families who were unable to access sport and physical activities. He recognised that organisations needed to provide local communities with low-cost options and that Manchester Active could support and provide pathways for residents to access these. He gave an example of work with Sport England to provide approximately £83k to community sports clubs which could be used for equipment, maintenance and running free trials of activities for women and girls.

He also stated that the HAF programme enabled engagement with children and to create habits amongst them that could be continued. This work included providing healthy, low-cost recipes which could help to reduce reliance on cheaper, less healthy food. The Interim Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Active also explained that the HAF programme allowed organisations to gather information on where service users lived so that more targeted work could be undertaken. He explained that work was underway with FC United on a place-based, low-cost opportunity in Moston to support the Winning Hearts and Minds programme and that similar work was ongoing at Station South.

The Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets acknowledged that the cost-of-living crisis had intensified inequalities across the city and explained that the consultation initially undertaken when developing the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy indicated that residents wanted free or low-cost activities. She stated that efforts to encourage walking and cycling would be intensified this year.

In response to a request from the Chair regarding bike libraries, the Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets explained that a dedicated website for the European Capital of Cycling was now live and included information on where cycle libraries would be located.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report;
2. requests that the Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure writes to the government to emphasise the importance of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in supporting the Council's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and to request that HSF be continued after 2024/25; and
3. requests that an update be provided on the timescale for rolling out bike libraries across the city.

CESC/24/13 Community Events Fund 2023/24

The committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of the purpose of the Council's Community Events Fund (CEF) and included details on how it is administered, and an outline of events funded in the 2023-24 financial year.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background to community events;
- Criteria for receiving CEF;
- CEF was split into a Restricted Fund, for recurring and targeted annual events, and an Unrestricted Fund, which provided grants to support groups through the application process;
- An overview of each event in receipt of CEF, including how much funding was awarded;
- The community reach of the Caribbean Carnival, GobeFest, MACFEST and South Asian Heritage Month events, as previously requested by the Committee;
- Challenges currently facing the events sector; and
- Considerations that may influence the Council's approach to future funding for community events.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Why the Diwali Mela event did not meet the criteria for CEF;
- How the Council encouraged new groups to organise events and apply for CEF;
- Why a budget had been assigned to the Irish Festival when the total event budget and the CEF application request were still to be confirmed;
- What support and feedback was provided to organisations whose applications were rejected to help them improve future bids;
- Whether commitment was sought from major event holders such as Wythenshawe Games and Parklife Festival to provide funding for smaller community events;
- Welcoming the funding for the Wythenshawe Games, and querying whether this was a one-time grant or if it would be maintained year-on-year;

- Whether privately funded events gave the Council less leverage over and input into how parks and open spaces were used;
- How small events could be grown and encouraged whilst maintaining capacity for funding; and
- If the Council's Events team offered apprenticeships.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure explained that the report focused on the Community Events Fund (CEF) and that it also highlighted the challenges faced by the events sector and how CEF had been allocated in 2023/24. He explained that a review of applications for 2024/25 was underway and that it would be interesting to see what would be brought forward by communities. He recognised that the level of funding available would be unable to support all applications and that the Council continued to develop commercial opportunities in parks and open spaces that would create additional funding streams to ensure the continued delivery of a vibrant community events programme.

In response to a query regarding the Diwali Mela, the Head of Events Development explained that this event could not take place due to operational issues and that some funding from 2023/24 had been carried over. This was accounted for in the service's budget to ensure that the Mela would be financially stable if it was able to operate again in future years.

The Director of Neighbourhood Delivery stated that the Council recognised the fantastic work undertaken by community groups and stated that many events were held independently of the Council. He explained that many community groups sought support and guidance on organising events in their local neighbourhoods and that queries regarding more major events were directed to the central Events teams. He also advised that there was further information and guidance for community groups on the Council's website.

The Head of Events Development explained that work was still ongoing to organise the Irish Festival in collaboration with the Irish Heritage Centre. This event would include a parade and the Council was working with organisers on cultural content for this. He stated that the financial and budgetary implications of this were still being worked through.

In response to a query regarding what feedback was provided when applications were declined, the Head of Events Development explained that three applications were declined in 2023/24 but the Diwali Mela was expected to return. He stated that, of the other two applications, one did not meet the criteria for CEF, but officers would work with the applicant to discuss how a future application could be strengthened. It was also explained that the Northern Fashion Week event did not meet the criteria for CEF as it was a large-scale event in a commercial venue.

The Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets highlighted other funding sources for events such as the Neighbourhood Investment Fund. She also advised that the Parks Strategy included the commerciality of events held in parks, which was ringfenced for reinvestment. She acknowledged that inflationary costs had increased but that the Council was maintaining its revenue position and being innovative with its income generation.

It was also confirmed that there was a commitment within the service's budget to maintain funding for the Wythenshawe Games.

In response to a query regarding privately funded events and the Council's influence over these, the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) commented that the Council had ultimate decision-making power over how parks were used and, in consultation with ward members, it could reject applications to use parks if felt unfavourable.

The Director of Neighbourhood Delivery explained that the Council would continue to enable small events by working with partners, housing providers and organisations to support community groups and provide advice on developing events. He explained that the CEF was largely focused on events with a broader scope.

In closing the item, the Chair thanked officers for the help and guidance they provided to communities in organising events across the city.

Decision:

That the committee

1. notes the report, and
2. requests further information on whether apprenticeships were offered within the Events service.

CESC/24/14 2024/25 Budget

In opening the item, the Chair informed the committee that items 9 and 9a would be considered together and the committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer which provided an overview of the Council's updated budget position for 2024/25 and a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided a further update on the priorities for the services in the remit of this committee and detailed changes to the initial revenue budget options proposed by officers in November 2023.

Key points and themes within the reports included:

- Changes to the Council's budget position following the Autumn Statement and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement;
- After the application of approved and planned savings, and the use of c.£17m smoothing reserves in each of the three years, the budget is balanced for 2024/25 with a budget gap of £29m in 2025/26 and £41m by 2026/27. This position assumed that savings of £21.4m would be delivered next year;
- Actions totalling £15m, to ensure that the Council had a balanced budget for 2024/25;
- Highlighting that the Council had undertaken careful long-term financial planning which involved making some difficult decisions around cost reduction and doing things differently but that a significant and growing budget gap remained from 2025/26;

- Full analysis and results of the public consultation would be reported to the Budget Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee meeting in late February;
- Next steps in the budget process;
- Providing an overview and information on the priorities of the Neighbourhoods directorate;
- The services under the remit of this committee;
- The base budgets for each service area for 2023/24;
- Noting that a temporary reduction in the annual £40k contribution to the security measures for the Christmas Markets whilst Albert Square is unavailable would be re-introduced once the markets return to Albert Square;
- The proposal to reduce the book fund budget by £30k had been removed following the committee's feedback in November 2023;
- An annual £2m contribution from the Capital Fund would be used to support the events commission and funded through the growth in retained business rates;
- Government grants and the income they provide;
- Workforce implications;
- Future opportunities;
- The indicative medium-term budgets by service area;
- The indicative medium-term budgets by type of spend/income; and
- A breakdown of the Community Safety budget, as previously requested by the Committee.

Some of the key points and queries that arose from the committee's discussion included:

- Commending the work of officers in setting a balanced budget for 2024/25;
- Expressing concern over the uncertainty of the continuation of the Household Support Fund from government;
- Welcoming the withdrawal of a previous proposal to reduce the book fund budget by £30k;
- Expressing concern over funding for homelessness prevention and support and recognising how central government failed to provide appropriate funding for areas most in need, like Manchester;
- Recognising that households in Manchester were still feeling the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis;
- How the Council would reassure residents that there would not be cuts to vital services, particularly for those most vulnerable;
- Expressing thanks to officers within the Homelessness service for their work in reducing the use of bed and breakfasts as temporary accommodation; and
- Recognising that local councils provide a lifeline for residents.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the item and stated that the Government's approach to the Local Government Finance Settlement had been chaotic and only announced just before Christmas. He said the final announcement when announced had resulted in a cut of 84% in the Services Grant and this equated to a £6.1m loss for Manchester. He stated that this had resulted in an outcry from local authorities and MPs from all political parties. He stated that this

situation needed to be understood in the context of fourteen years of austerity and Government funding cuts and unfunded pressures such as inflation and population growth.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources added that the Government then swiftly announced an additional £500m for Social Care, however Local Authorities were still facing a £4bn budget gap nationally, resulting in a number of Local Authorities serving a Section 144 notice and it was anticipated that more would follow.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources commented that despite this Manchester had set a balanced budget and had been achieved through diligent planning and management that had witnessed the strategic investment in preventative initiatives; using financial reserves prudently and investment in activities that were important for Manchester residents.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources stated that although Manchester had been able to deliver a balanced budget this year, the Council's financial position is expected to become even more challenging. The projected budget gap, even after using reserves for 25/26 was £29m in 2025/26 and rising to £41m by 2026/27.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources concluded by stating that the Government had continually failed to listen to Local Authorities.

The Deputy Leader stated that significant work had been undertaken to reduce the use and costs of bed and breakfasts as temporary accommodation for those experiencing homelessness and that officers were looking at other ways to reduce costs within the service. She highlighted that budgetary pressures were a result of political choices at a national level, such as Section 21 eviction notices, and increased demand as a result of the asylum and refugee crisis, which the government had failed to provide adequate funding to address. She called on the government to provide adequate financial support to local authorities to tackle homelessness.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure also confirmed that a previous proposal to withdraw the book fund budget by £30k had been withdrawn, following expressions of concern from committee members' in November.

In response to a query, the Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that the revenue budget gap for social care and homelessness had increased since 2010. He recognised that it was impossible to protect and mitigate all services and that the government had changed the funding formula to benefit more affluent areas.

Much of the committee's discussion focused on the failure of government to provide adequate funding for authorities like Manchester. The Chair particularly expressed concern over budgetary challenges within the Homelessness service and stated that it was a fundamental right for people to have a place to live. She expressed disappointment that the current Conservative government prioritised funding for more affluent areas and called for an immediate general election.

In closing the item, the Chair asked officers to convey the committee's gratitude to all Council staff for their work in delivering a balanced budget.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

CESC/24/15 Overview Report

The committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

Decision:

That the report be noted, and the work programme agreed.

Manchester City Council
Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

Subject: Manchester Indoor Sport Built Facilities Strategy Update

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

This report is intended to update the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on the key findings identified in the Manchester Indoor and Sport Built Facilities Strategy (2023-2031) and short-term action plan, to be taken forward with partners over the next 18-month period.

The finding's identified Manchester has a strong network of indoor sport and leisure facilities, from the world class performance centres in East Manchester, to high-quality school and community facilities at a neighbourhood level. The successful capital renewal strategy and modernisation of the Indoor Leisure Estate, School, and Community facilities has enabled significant growth in participation and provided a fit for purpose offer that meets the bespoke needs of Manchester population.

The head line position is Manchester has a sufficient supply of facilities to meet current demand. When assessing future demand in line with the city's growth strategy, there are projected shortfall in some facility types, including indoor tennis courts, sports halls, and swimming pools. This is focused in the North and Central analysis areas of city centre and boundary areas, where population growth from planned housing development is expected to be significant. For all other facility types there is a sufficient supply now and in the future.

Together the Strategy and Action Plan provide the evidence base for Manchester Local Plan Review to guide the future development needs and investment projects to be realised over the Local Plan period. Priority projects will be taken forward in collaboration with partners and the community (funded primarily from external sources) and will be progressed at pace where there is a clear investment case and funding plan to take forward.

The final strategy will be published as a public facing document and will remain a live document managed by Manchester Active and partners, to update and monitor annually.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	Delivery of priority projects identified in the Indoor & Built Sport Facilities Strategy and Site Action Plan will contribute to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city. All projects will be subject to individual business case and agreed funding strategy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	As part of the Strategy development process, MCRactive has included the following to ensure we instill EDI within our work practices: Future investment and associated capital projects will be considered in line with the equality act 2010. The key drivers for improvement and / or development of indoor sport infrastructure with our partners includes: • Aims and objectives for improving health and well-being, tackling inequalities, and increasing participation from underrepresented groups. • Prioritisation of capital and revenue investment - targeting resources into places / communities with the greatest need. • Accessible indoor sport facilities to support and encourage use of by disabled people.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Sport and Leisure sector is a key economic driver within the city not only as an employer, but also in attracting inward capital investment to create sustainable world class sporting facilities and neighbourhood services that support to deliver a diverse sport and cultural offer for our residents.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Strategy identifies the need to investment in education and training and also contributes meaningfully to employment within the Manchester economy, creating new operating models to manage and deliver our playing field assets.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Manchester Indoor & Built Sport Facilities Strategy identifies the need to invest into our clubs and local services at the core of neighbourhoods and creates significant opportunities for all communities within the city to engage and participate at all levels of the sporting pathway. All of which contribute towards Our Manchester Strategy
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Manchester Indoor & Built Sports Facilities Strategy identifies the need to improve our indoor sport facilities, notably investment into sustainable technologies and facility upgrades to ensure buildings are on a path to decarbonisation and can operate community sport services, contributing to creating a destination of choice. The Strategy provides an evidence base to inform Sport and Leisure Capital Programme which sets out the plans for the refurbishment and replacement of indoor sport facilities over the next five years.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Sport and Leisure sector has over the last twenty years invested significantly in Sport and Leisure assets that have helped drive the city's growth agenda. The Strategy identifies a need for further investment to enhance and provide indoor sport facilities citywide. This will be done in a sustainable manner that will continue to support our growth ambitions over the next decade.

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There are no revenue consequences arising from the development of this strategy. Any future investment decisions for indoor sport facilities will be subject to an agreed business case and funding.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital consequences arising from the development of this strategy.

Contact Officers:

Name: Neil Fairlamb
Position: Strategic Director - Neighbourhoods
Telephone: 0161 219 2539
Email: neil.fairlamb@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Yvonne O'Malley
Position: Interim Lead for Leisure, Events and Specialist Markets
Telephone: 0161 219 6907
Email: yvonne.omalley@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Eamonn O'Rourke
Position: Interim Chief Executive Officer
Telephone: 0161 974 7841
E-mail: e.o'rourke@mcractive.com

Name: Louise Harding
Position: Facility Strategy and Capital Projects Lead – MCR Active
Telephone: 0161 974 7841
E-mail: l.harding@mcractive.com

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Manchester Indoor & Built Sport Facilities Needs Assessment Report May 2023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Manchester Active commissioned a new Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy on behalf of Manchester City Council and partners to guide the future provision and management of indoor sport facilities in Manchester Local Authority area.

1.2 The objective of the Strategy is to:

- Provide a robust up to date facility needs assessment to meet the requirement of the amended National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) to underpin:
- The protection, enhancement and improvement of the existing indoor sport and leisure stock.
- Improvements in community access to educational and non-local authority facilities.
- To reflect and address the needs and demands of local population that will grow in line with the changes defined by the emerging Manchester Local Plan, to ensure the adequate provision of indoor and built sports facilities in relation to population growth derived from new housing developments.
- Assist performance management and asset management.
- Guide investment priorities into indoor sport facilities; and
- Inform the requirements in the City's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

1.3 Whilst the Manchester Local Plan timeframe runs through to 2038, the timeframe applied to this strategy is 2023-2031. This is due to the significant expected population increases and high levels of residential development planned for the city over this period. The current resident population in Manchester is 588,560. By 2031, (the period to which this study projects population based future demand) the population is projected to increase to 673,5456. This represents an increase of 84,985, (or equivalent to a percentage increase of 14.4%) based on Manchester City Council population projections (MCCFM).

2.0 Background

2.1 Manchester BFS has been developed, following national Sport England Guidance 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' and in consultation with National and Local Stakeholders, Facility Users, and the Community. The Strategy is built on a detailed analysis of current provision, identifying the existing needs (demands) and gaps (deficiencies) in provision. The assessment also considers the future projected demand on existing facilities up to 2031, informed by population forecasts, numbers of dwellings, and extensive stakeholder and community consultation.

2.2 This strategy, provides a concise, robust, and up-to-date evidence base for current and future built sport facilities, and provides a clear strategic framework and action plan-based approach to the enhancement of existing, and creation of new, sporting provision to meet current and future needs.

2.3 The Strategy and Action Plan recommends several priority projects for Manchester which should be realised over the Local Plan period. It provides a framework for Improvement and whilst the analysis within the BFS will assist in determining the priorities for investment, it does not guarantee deliverability of projects. All projects will be subject to sources of funding (primarily from external sources) being made available to be developed in consultation with National Governing Bodies of sport and supported as appropriate by the Council.

2.4 In many instances, the Council will not be the agency which delivers these actions or recommendations; the BFS is not just for the Council to act upon, it applies to/for all the stakeholders and partners involved working collectively to ensure that residents continue to have the opportunity to be physically active and healthier, with appropriate facilities to meet physical, sporting, health and wellbeing needs within their local community.

3.0 Context

3.1 The Indoor Built Facility Strategy has been prepared within the context of 'Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025' and a number of key plans in sport and physical activity that will support delivery including:

- Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (2022)
  Greater Manchester Moving in Action (2021-2031)
- Events Strategy (2019-2029)
- Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2019-2028)
- Manchester School Sport Facilities Strategy (2018)
- Manchester Parks Strategy (2017-2027)

3.2 The key planning document for Manchester is the Local Plan (the key element of which is the Core Strategy 2012-2027). This, together with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), provides the strategic planning context for Manchester.

3.3 The vision set out within the Core Strategy refers to Manchester as a vibrant city with a growing population and economy, and a strong sense of place which recognises the importance of high-quality sustainable sport and leisure provision and its open parks and green spaces. This vision has been further developed through the cities "Our Manchester Strategy", which provides a framework for actions by our partners working across Manchester public sector organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector, and our communities.

3.4 Together the Indoor & Built Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy will be the key documents for the Local Plan review, alongside the Open Space Study to ensure that planning for leisure is supported by robust local delivery framework, compliant assessment, and underpins emerging local plan policy.

3.5 The strategic recommendations for action should be embedded into the emerging Local Plan to ensure residents continue to have access to high

quality indoor sport provision in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility, and location, and consider how best to meet the additional needs generated by the planned housing and economic growth.

Population and Housing Growth

3.6 Manchester is expected to experience significant population growth over the period 2021 to 2031. Central (24% additional population) and North (17% additional population) areas of the city are due to experience the most significant growth. Council projections, via its forecasting model (MCCFM), indicate an overall rise of 14.4% (84,985 over this period). Its housing strategy (2022-32) meanwhile allows for an additional c.36,000 dwellings over this period.

Manchester Capital Schools Programme (2021 – 2026)

3.7 A plan to create further and extra capacity has been developed to keep pace with continued rising demand. The 2018 Manchester Schools Sport Facility Strategy sets out key principles to inform the design and management of new community sports facilities.

3.8 There is a need to apply strategy principles when assessing the future pipeline of capital schools to inform the recommendation of new indoor sport facilities for Manchester Capital School Programme by site. Recommendations will need to be considered in the context of Department for Education school design principles, cost expectations, school requirements, and the availability of capital funding.

3.9 Planned school capital expansions and new builds of secondary schools will be key to improve and increase access to school sport facilities. This will be significant in the north of city with 2 new secondary free schools planned during the strategy period.

3.10 Given the strategic context of Indoor and Outdoor Sport Facility provision, population growth, housing growth, and education Growth, the Council is working in a strategic way with Sport England and Manchester Active to ensure that this strategic context is considered and that the optimum balance of meeting the needs of communities. The BFS, relationship with Sport England and the planning process provides the mechanism to this approach going forward.

4.0 Scope

4.1 The facilities and sports included in the Strategy covers, sports halls and associated indoor sports; swimming pools and aquatics disciplines including swimming, diving, and water polo; indoor athletics, health and fitness, squash, gymnastics, indoor tennis, cycling, indoor bowls, boxing, skateboarding, taekwondo, boccia, parkour and climbing education facilities.

4.2 Sports identified in the study scope were identified through a robust process using Sport England's Needs and Opportunities Guidance, Active Places toolkit, and local intelligence, to provide the current picture of sports participated in Manchester. Sports outside of scope have been discounted due to no current presence. As new sports develop, these will be captured by the Strategy Steering Group through the annual monitoring process.

4.3 For the purpose of this study, the city has been split into four distinct areas, termed analysis areas. The site-by-site action plans are also aligned to the four analysis areas:

- North area – population 155,189[1]
- Central area – population 188,634
- South area – population 137,396
- Wythenshawe area - population 74,522

4.4 The Analysis Areas fit in-line with the Council's Our Manchester Strategy and ward-based plans to support the Council's ambition to provide Manchester residents with access to high quality sport facilities at a neighbourhood level.

4.5 Whilst the analysis areas should be used for the basis of reporting, the strategy also addresses the sport specific geography of Manchester. Imported and exported demand have therefore been taken into consideration when producing the strategy.

5.0 Governance

5.1 A Project Steering Group was established to lead the development and implementation of Manchester BFS. It is made up of representatives from the Council, Sport England, Greater Sport, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University.

5.2 The steering group will remain operational for the lifespan of the strategy. The focus of work is as follows:

- Be a champion for indoor and built sport provision in the area and promote the value and importance of the BFS.
- Ensure implementation of the BFS recommendations and action plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the BFS.
- Ensure that the BFS is kept up to date and refreshed.

5.3 The project steering group will remain responsible for monitoring and implementing the strategy recommendations and actions. Sub Groups will be established as required to undertake specific Task and Finish projects. The Sub Groups will include representation from Manchester Active, Manchester City Council, Leisure operators (GLL, Everyone Active), Schools, National

[1] ONS Mid-2020 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales
[2] Link to Manchester Local Plan

Governing Bodies of Sport, Sport England, Community Groups, and Health Partners.

5.4 The BFS annual review process will align with the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. Annual Monitoring Reports will be produced and appended to the BFS and PPOSS to keep both strategies up to date.

5.5 The sports organisations and education establishments have a vested interest in ensuring existing indoor facilities can be protected and enhanced. Many of the objectives and actions will be delivered and implemented by sports organisations and education establishments in addition to the Council.

6.0 Needs Assessment Findings

6.1 This section includes summary findings from the needs assessment for sports halls, swimming pools, health & fitness, and other facility types.

6.1.1 Sports halls

- Sports halls are well distributed across the Authority. The majority of Manchester population has access to a facility within a ten-minute walk.
- Facilities are generally well used and in average-good condition. There are high levels of demand for basketball, badminton, netball, futsal, and indoor cricket.
- There is sufficient supply of sports hall to meet current demand; however, there is projected current and future unmet demand in the context of specific sports. This is primarily in Central and North analysis areas - for basketball and badminton plus other growth sports such as futsal, indoor baseball, cricket, and dodgeball. This in part can be addressed by increasing levels of community use at existing venues with targeted programming and development of new provision via Manchester Capital Schools Programme (2021-2026).
- There is a theoretical need to increase sports hall provision by seven halls or equivalent to 21 badminton courts to meet projected additional demand to 2031 generated from population growth. However, this does not consider existing spare capacity across the sports hall stock, where sports development interventions could create capacity. Further work is required to establish where capacity can realistically be created and where new provision is required.
- A bespoke Facility Planning Model study is recommended to enable further analysis of future supply and demand for sports halls taking account full impact of housing growth and anticipated new provision.

6.1.2 Swimming Pools

- Overall, swimming pool supply is sufficient to meet current demand. When considering future demand for swimming, there is a projected shortfall in Central and North analysis area. This is projected from 2028 onwards due to additional population demand generated from planned housing developments.

- In general, the current facility stock is in a good condition and sustainable operation can be maintained for the next 10+ years.
- The highest demand for swimming pools is in the city centre. Provision here is dominated by the commercial sector; the nearest public pool is MAC that is best placed to alleviate demand on return to full utilisation (on completion of capital refurbishment – September 2024).
- There is a need to alleviate the lack of capacity in the South and Wythenshawe analysis areas by redistributing current and future demand to neighbouring pools. This includes Moss Side, the MAC, and East Manchester Leisure Centre where there is some spare capacity.

6.1.3 **Health and Fitness**

- Overall supply of fitness provision and stations is sufficient to meet current and future projected demand.
- Health and fitness facilities are generally in good condition throughout the city and there are good levels of accessibility for Manchester residents.
- Some health & fitness facilities are very busy at peak times in particular Hough End Leisure Centre where the quality of the customer experience is being affected by overcrowding. Hough End LC development is targeted for completion in spring 24 - this will alleviate current overcrowding at the site.
- Consideration of Wellbeing Services should be assessed across Council Leisure Centres as part of the project monitoring and implementation steering group to determine needs and opportunities to expand and / or reconfigure spaces to tackle health inequalities across the city.

6.1.4 **Other Sports and Activities**

Squash

- Manchester has a good supply of squash facilities in terms of quality, coverage and in comparison, to neighbouring authorities. It also has relatively good access to pay and play courts, with four leisure centres containing squash provision.
- Manchester has a healthy squash club scene, with good levels of recovery from the Pandemic, GLL reports good levels of pay and play activity at public leisure centre sites.
- Current quantitative supply of squash court provision is considered sufficient to meet both current and future demand.

Gymnastics

- There is a relatively good supply of gymnastics facilities in the city, with the whole population being within 30 minutes' drive of a dedicated gymnastics facility. There are 16 dedicated facilities located in neighbouring authorities which fall within a 30-minute drive time from Manchester.

- There is significant demand for gymnastics facilities in Manchester across the three dedicated and three non-dedicated venues in the city. Most clubs have waiting lists and were expecting to return to full capacity in 2022/23.
- There is a need to work with facility operators to support clubs to maximise capacity in current facilities and look to access alternative venues such as school and community facilities. Long term ambitions could be to explore where and how clubs could be supported to acquire/gain access to dedicated facilities.
- There is an identified need for the City of Manchester Institute of Gymnastics Building (CMIG) in Central analysis area to be upgraded or replaced in the medium term to increase capacity and boost the overall gymnastics offer in the City.

Indoor tennis

- Current quantitative supply of provision is considered sufficient to meet demand, however there is insufficient supply to meet projected future demand.
- The two indoor tennis facilities in Manchester have eight indoor courts. These are located in the North and South analysis areas.
- Drive time catchment modelling confirms that the whole Manchester population lives within 30-minutes' drive of an indoor tennis facility located within the Authority.
- Current facilities are at capacity. It is suggested that future facility development is considered. The LTA will consider further development to aid growth in areas of greatest demand with a focus on central and north analysis areas.

Indoor bowls

- There is no indoor bowls facility in Manchester. There are three located in neighbouring authorities. All are within a 30-minute drive of the Manchester local authority boundary.
- There is demand for indoor bowling, however demand is mainly located in the North of the City with significant demand from neighbouring local authorities (Bury and wider Lancashire area).
- There is no current strategic recommendation for a standalone Manchester based facility, however indoor bowls facilities could be supported in the future if co-located with other sport and leisure services in the North area of the city.

Other Sports

- For all other sports including Boxing, Indoor Athletics, Climbing, and Cycling, the current quantitative supply of provision is considered sufficient to meet both current and future demand. For Action Sports such as Skateboarding and Free Style BMX there is a need to undertake further analysis to understand the needs and opportunities for new provision. This will be considered as part of Manchester Indoor and Outdoor Action Sports Facility Needs Analysis. The study will inform development need

consideration for investment, supported by the Council, British Cycling and Skateboard GB.

6.2 Overall, there is a good supply of indoor facilities across Manchester. Most community leisure facilities and swimming pools are of good quality condition and there is good access and geographical spread across the City. In the main, there is a sufficient supply of indoor facility types. In the future, there is projected shortfalls in indoor tennis courts, sports halls, and swimming pools. This in part will be addressed through increased access to school and community facilities. Overall, there is a need to protect the existing facility supply until current and future demand is met.

6.3 It will be essential to implement sustained qualitative improvements to indoor facility stock across the board to help increase levels of access to school / community facilities to meet current and future demand. At the same time, a targeted coordinated approach should be applied to programme development to address unmet demand and area-based needs, to reach and engage inactive people. A further review of the existing stock is recommended to understand the needs and opportunities to convert existing buildings / spaces to provide collocation of sport, physical activity, health, and wellbeing services to tackle health inequalities in areas of most need. This work will be led by the Project Steering Group.

7.0 Vision, Strategic Recommendations and Action Plan

7.1 Manchester BFS contributes directly to the overall Manchester vision – which is to be a city recognised for its high quality of life, with a network of quality, accessible and sustainable green spaces and world-class sports, leisure and playing pitch facilities. These offer inclusive services to all and support the sport, health, and wellbeing requirements of all residents across the life course; enabling the inactive to become active and allowing more people to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and well-being.

7.2 Aligning with the Vision, a number of strategic objectives and action plans have been prepared informed by the findings of the indoor sport analysis contained within section 5 and accompanying Needs Assessment Report.

7.3 A series of strategic and sport specific recommendations have been developed via a combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis have been made and can be found in appendix 1. These recommendations reflect the overarching and common areas to be addressed, which apply across the indoor build facility infrastructure and may not be specific to just one sport.

7.4 The Action plan priorities are categorised under one of three heading; protect, enhance, or provide - in line with Sport England objectives as follows:

- *Protect* - to protect the right opportunities in the right places.
- *Enhance* - to enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision.

- *Provide*- to provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- *Overarching* – broadly works across the three of the above

7.5 **Action Plan**

7.6 The table below sets out the recommended short-term actions to be delivered over the next 12 – 18 months.

Table 1 – Short Term Action Plan

Site/organisation name	Analysis Area	Recommended Action	Indicative costs
New School Build Extensions	All	Determine mix of new sporting provision and secure access through Community Use Agreement.	High
Indoor Leisure Centres	Various	Review existing indoor leisure facilities and consider needs and opportunities to provide health and wellbeing spaces and services to support to address inactivity and health equalities across the city.	Low-Medium-High
Various	All	Improve quality of sports hall in school / community facilities to maintain and sustain levels of use.	Medium
Manchester Tennis & Football Centre	North	Resurface 6 indoor tennis courts to maintain and sustain levels of use.	Medium
Sporting Edge Community Centre	North	Repair and replace the roof and sports hall floor to maintain and sustain levels of use.	Medium
Ardwick Sports Hall	Central	Improve quality of sports hall floor and building to modern standards to maintain and increase capacity of use.	High
Belle Vue Sports Village / National	Central	Review options to create accessible	High

Basketball Performance Centre		ancillary spaces to service sports hall and fitness spaces. Upgrade leisure centre sports hall to support both wheelchair basketball and performance squads.	
Parrs Wood High School	South	Improve condition of sports hall facility with an immediate need to upgrade / repair the roof to maintain and sustain current levels of use.	Medium
Disposal / Housing Developments	Various	Any disposals or housing development where section 106 funds are realised may result in a mitigation strategy to address any impact on the BFS. This may result in specific proposals coming forward over the 18 months.	Low-Medium-High

Note - Low - less than £50k; Medium - £50k-£250k; High £250k and above.

7.7 The action plan identifies there is a need to either protect, provide, or enhance existing facilities over the lifespan of the strategy, until current and future demand is met. Any development proposals that would result in a loss in existing supply would need to be mitigated with replacement strategy and associated section 106 funding agreed via planning process prior to any development.

7.8 The short-term action plan for majority of sites recommends maximising use through improved quality and maintenance to meet current demand. This will be taken forward in collaboration with individual school and community partners and investment cases will be prioritised where there is a need and opportunity to increase community use at school / community sites to meet local sport specific demand.

7.9 Manchester Active is identified as a key consultee to inform new school sport facility plans to ensure the right facilities are in the right place to deliver school and community priorities. Key actions will be the development of community use agreements for adoption by Manchester planning authority and working with schools to develop sustainable facility business plans and secure investment where required to open facilities for community use. All agreements will be underpinned by a local sport development plan to support delivery at neighbourhood level to be reviewed and updated annually.

7.10 Strategic sub groups will be established as required to undertake specific Task and Finish projects, this will include a new health and wellbeing sub group that will be responsible for establishing the core work streams and action plan to address inactivity levels and inequalities in participation citywide. The group will have a broader focus than facilities to include People and Programme to support sustained pathways into physical activity.

7.11 Manchester Active with partners will work to develop a 3–5-year action plan based around the Strategy recommendations for annual review and monitoring. This work will drive the medium-long term investment priorities, key work programmes and partnerships to guide programming, planning, and funding plans. This is on the basis that the Strategy is as much about how facilities are used, as it is about ensuring that local infrastructure is of a good quality.

7.12 All short-term facility priorities are identified in the Council's Leisure Capital Programme or currently being brought forward with external partners where there is a vested interest to deliver priorities.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Manchester BFS identifies the strategic recommendations and actions required to deliver and maintain a high-quality built facilities infrastructure for Manchester up to 2031.The current position is demand can be met from the existing supply. Over the lifespan of the strategy, there is future projected shortfalls for some facility types, including indoor tennis, sports halls, and swimming pools. This is linked to the cities continued growth strategy with future projected demand generated from population growth for planned housing developments in North and Central (city centre) analysis areas.

8.2 The project steering group will monitor and lead implementation of the BFS which will remain a live working document with updated annual reports to be appended to the BFS to reflect progress made, alongside any changes in supply / demand across Manchester in that period. Site specific plans will be added to the Leisure Capital Programme once the business case and investment strategy is brought forward.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report findings and recommendations for action.

10.0 Appendices

10.1 The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report.

Appendix 1 - Strategic and Sport Specific Recommended Actions

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Strategic objectives and recommended actions

Strategic objective	Recommended actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Implement a targeted growth strategy to promote access to water space for casual and lane swimming, swimming lessons and club swimming – where there is capacity to do so.	Develop targeted marketing strategy for Council Leisure Centres with a focus at the MAC, Moss Side and East Manchester leisure centres. Consider how proposed refurbishment of Stretford and Sale leisure centres (Trafford) could impact on import and export of swimming demand in the Wythenshawe and South analysis area as part of the Annual Project Monitoring and Implementation Steering Group.	Short	MCR Active. MCC, GLL, Everyone Active	High

Strategic objective	Recommended actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Working with partners in public health and the leisure operators, identify how built leisure facilities can further drive Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy outcome to address inactivity.	Establish a task and finish group to examine the following key issues: Develop an appropriate programme of training and development for social prescribing teams and leisure centre staff. Investigate the current role, coverage and improvement needs of smaller community activity venues in relation to the health referral pathway. Explore scope (including business case and funding strategy) to convert existing spaces within leisure centres and programme opportunity to create better opportunity for health consultation and social interaction. Consider how leisure centres can better link opportunities for walking and cycling, including installation of cycle parking, bike storage, better linkage with existing programmed walking and cycling initiatives.	Short / Medium	MCR Active, MCC, GLL, Everyone Active.	High

Strategic objective	Recommended actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Work with school and academy providers to: - Ensure the full return of community available sports halls to pre-Covid operating levels, utilising the Opening School Facilities Fund. - Explore the extent to which the availability of sports hall facilities could be extended, and what resources would be required to achieve this. - Ensure that new build sport halls are designed in accordance with Sport England technical design guidance for Sports Halls and community access.	Explore options to increase (where currently available but not fully utilised) or introduce (where not presently available) community use hours at sites where scope has been identified (see site by site action plan). Develop a site-by-site engagement action plan for schools with limited or no current community use. Develop school facility business plans to open facilities outside of school hours, utilising opening school facilities fund where needed to support operational viability. Promote the availability of current sports hall stock to more sections of the community. Continue to work with schools with good levels of community use to ensure complementary programming across the Authority. Ensure that any planned/delivered new sports halls, located in areas of unmet demand, are the community size of 690m2 and designed in accordance with Sport England technical design guidance for Sports Halls and community access.	Short / Medium	MCR Active, MCC	High

Strategic objective	Recommended actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Consider medium / long-term options for management of leisure facilities in order to best deliver on City Sport and Physical Activity Strategy outcomes.	Review management options in anticipation of the renewal of the Council's indoor leisure contract in 2028 and further align the customer approach of the leisure provider to agreed priority outcomes for physical activity and sport. The review process should follow the principles outlined within Sport England Leisure Services Delivery Guidance 1.	Medium / long	MCR Active, MCC	Medium
Work with leisure operators, educational establishments, and community organisations to ensure that indoor sports and physical activity facilities remain attractive and fit for purpose over the life of this strategy.	Implement site specific recommendations identified in this plan and ensure ongoing review of facility condition occurs. Develop long term facility business plans to identify and tackle ongoing investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.	Short	MCR Active, MCC, GLL, Everyone Active, schools, other community organisations.	High

[1] Link to Sport England website

Strategic objective	Recommended actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Work with MCC planning teams to ensure that strategy recommendations are fully embedded in Council Local Plan policies specifically: - Ensure new provision for indoor sports facilities is in accordance with BFS recommendations. - All new school sports facilities to have binding community use agreements as a condition of planning approval. - Prepare a process to. where required, obtain developer contributions to meet additional demand for indoor sport arising from housing growth.	Work with: City planning teams to prepare a process for obtaining developer contributions to accommodate the additional demand for sport arising from housing growth and embed in planning policy. Ensure that all new school, and relevant private sports facilities have a community use agreement as a condition of planning approval. Ensure that the recommendations of this Strategy inform sport specific and associated planning policies as part of the Manchester Local Plan Review.	Short / Medium	MCR Active, MCC Sport England	High

Table 2: Sport specific overview and recommendations

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Badminton	The audit identified one affiliated and two unaffiliated clubs. Considering its size, Manchester has a low number of affiliated badminton clubs. However, there is a substantial level of recreational play by non-affiliated players. Badminton England indicates further potential for clubs to grow/diversify their membership offer by targeting different audiences e.g., junior sections, No Strings, social club nights, adult beginners, and targeted women only sessions. It has funding available to support club-led initiatives – to ensure sustainability. Key challenges relate to (regular/reliable) facilities access and volunteer and coach development.	Support existing clubs to grow/diversify membership. Prioritise the development of new clubs. Support volunteer/coach development.	BE MCR Active	Medium	Enhance

[2] All recommended actions are made on a citywide basis. Refer to site by site action plan for facility specific recommendations for each analysis area.

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Netball	Wright Robinson Leisure is a key venue for affiliated netball usage accommodating extensive league provision, a weekly back to netball session and being the home of Greater Manchester's only Para Netball Club; Dominoes NC. The audit identified ten affiliated clubs in the City, with the majority reporting that membership numbers are returning to pre-Pandemic levels. Commercial leagues also have a strong presence in Manchester.	Support development of recreational products (e.g., Walking Netball, and Netball Now). Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer/coach development.	EN MCR Active	Medium	Enhance Provide.
Basketball	The National Basketball Performance Centre and Manchester Basketball Centre are key venues not just for Manchester but the wider Northwest region and England as a whole. Manchester Area Basketball League (MABL) reports a reduction in participating teams, primarily attributed to Covid-19. The audit identified 12 affiliated clubs.	Support development of recreational opportunity across the authority. Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development.	BBE MCR Active	Medium	Enhance

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Wheelchair Basketball	Manchester and the wider Northwest is a heartland for wheelchair basketball. Players from across the region travel to the city to play at Belle Vue Sports Village (Central analysis area). The sport has struggled demand wise post-pandemic. The NGB reports that ancillary facilities at the National Basketball Performance Centre are not fit for purpose and do not meet the requirements of Equality Act 2010, presenting poor accessibility for its participants. The two identified clubs in the audit are working through a merger.	Support Manchester Giants Mavericks and Owls Disabled Sports Club with their merger. Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer/coach development. Explore options to improve wheelchair accessibility at the National Basketball Performance Centre.	BWB MCR Active MCC	Medium	Enhance Provide
Dodgeball	The audit identified one club in the area. Manchester Bees has a member base of c.150 which expands to a further 500 individuals via recreational and school coaching sessions. Its primary sites are Moss Side Leisure Centre and Trinity Sports Centre (both in the Central analysis area). British Dodgeball aims to establish new clubs in both the north and south analysis areas. It notes that there are currently no dodgeball courts marked out in halls in Manchester.	When investing in new sports halls or resurfacing floors in existing venues, be cognisant of demand for dodgeball and look to match NGB court specifications in areas of demand. Work with BD to ascertain which sites would be the most suitable options.	BD, MCR Active, MCC, Schools	Medium	Enhance Provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Futsal	The one club is Manchester Futsal Club. It provides opportunity for adults and juniors. Main sites utilised include the National Cycling Centre, Belle Vue Sports Village (leisure centre hall), and MMU (Platt Lane Sports Complex). The National Cycling Centre is important to the Club as it can accommodate elite level fixtures with spectators. While it aspires to develop its own facility, the audit found that that there is sufficient provision across the existing sports hall stock to accommodate futsal activity.	Support club to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer/coach development. If/when investing in new sports hall facilities, be cognisant of demand for futsal and look to match NGB court specifications. Continue to monitor futsal demand.	FF MFA MCR Active	Medium	Enhance
Indoor cricket	Cricket in the form of winter club training and recreational activity takes place in seven sports halls in the area. There is no affiliated indoor league in Manchester, the nearest is in Trafford. Funding is in place for an indoor urban cricket centre at the redeveloped Abraham Moss School (North analysis area). This is targeted for completion by summer 2023 and will be the first urban cricket centre in Manchester.	Options to install cricket nets in existing or new sports halls should be considered where feasible. Ensure full usage plan is in place and support development of club activity at new urban cricket centre.	ECB, LCF MCR Active GLL	Medium	Enhance Provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Indoor Hockey	Currently no indoor clubs in Manchester offer indoor hockey. The nearest are located in Trafford. The audit identified that indoor hockey is not played in any sports halls in the area. Didsbury Northern Hockey Club wishes to start offering indoor hockey. England Hockey confirms that for indoor hockey to thrive side boards are required.	Support Didsbury Northern Hockey Club to commence indoor hockey sessions at a venue in the South analysis area. With facility operators in the South analysis area, explore options to install side boards.	EH, MCR Active	Medium	Provide
Boccia	Two facilities can accommodate Boccia in Manchester: Moss Side Leisure Centre and Denmark Road Sports Centre (both Central analysis area). Management of disabled parking was highlighted as an issue at Moss Side Leisure Centre. There is no formal Boccia club in Manchester, the nearest is in Stockport. Boccia England indicates an opportunity to develop a Manchester based Boccia Club.	Support development of a Manchester based Boccia Club, should there be sufficient identified local demand. Where possible focus Boccia provision at Denmark Road Sports Centre.	BE, MCR Active GLL	Medium	Enhance Provide
Handball	The two local clubs are University of Manchester and Manchester Handball Club. The University team only enters BUCS leagues. Desk research confirms that prior to the venue's planned closure, Manchester Handball Club used the National Cycling Centre (North analysis area) for training.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer/coach development.	EHB MCR Active	Medium	Enhance

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Indoor Baseball/ Softball	The NGB confirms that no softball is currently played indoors at sites in Manchester. The Manchester Softball League comprises 20 teams and until summer 2022 it was using Fives Trafford. Reportedly a significant proportion of the League's players are resident in South Manchester. Manchester Baseball Club is known to use the hall at Wythenshawe Forum for training during winter months.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer/coach development. Where possible support Manchester Indoor Softball League to find a new venue (demand is highest in the Central and South analysis areas).	BSUK, MCR Active, GLL, Everyone Active	Short	Enhance
Volleyball	There are five volleyball clubs in Manchester and volleyball takes place at six sports hall sites. No response to consultation requests was received from either the clubs or Volleyball England.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development.	VE MCR Active	Medium	Enhance Provide
Health & fitness	There is a current positive supply of provision in the Authority. However, the audit found that gyms at some of GLL managed sites are overcrowded, particularly Hough End Leisure Centre, where the customer experience is being adversely affected. There is a strong market of commercial providers in the City.	Expand health and fitness programme and activities as part of Hough End Leisure Centre Extension - for completion Spring 2024. Continue to monitor usage at public leisure centre sites. Ensure that provision/exercise class structure evolves in line with market trends.	MCR Active Council GLL, Everyone Active	Short	Enhance Provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Swimming / aquatic sports	Six accredited swimming clubs cater for swimmers of a range of abilities and across disciplines. There is limited spare capacity at pools in the South analysis area, although there is significant spare capacity in pools in the Central analysis area. MAC (Central analysis area) is currently undergoing a major renovation project and is due to fully reopen in 2024. The new Abraham Moss Pool (North analysis area) is scheduled to open in summer 2023 and will help to increase capacity across the stock.	Continue to review pool programmes at MCC sites in the context of increasing swimming participation and improving financial return and capability in the short term. Explore options to increase use at MAC, Moss Side Leisure Centre, and East Manchester Leisure Centre. Consider marketing MAC and Moss Side Leisure Centre in the South analysis area to alleviate overcrowding in neighbouring pools.	MCR Active, MCC, GLL, Everyone Active	Short	Enhance Provide
Taekwondo	Manchester's strategic importance for the sport is centred on the National Taekwondo Centre (NTC) at Ten Acres Lane Sports Complex (North analysis area). This is the home of Great British Team senior and junior elite performance squads. Four community taekwondo clubs use a range of facilities across the City; they report that sites cannot meet current demand.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development. Explore options to increase community use hours at NTC / Community Sites where there is demand to do so.	MCR Active, GLL, BT, GBT	Short	Enhance Provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Squash	Squash has high participation levels in Manchester. Clubs are strong and working to increase participation. There is a need to ensure that squash courts carry on being well used and are protected to enable the sport to continue to grow. A number of courts require investment, and clubs need to be sufficiently viable to plan for and undertake the necessary repairs. The National Squash Centre (North analysis area) is a key strategic venue for the country. Population increases are not likely to lead to demand for more squash courts as there is spare capacity now and to cope with growth up to 2031.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development. Ensure that existing squash courts in the Authority are protected and quality is maintained.	ES, MCR Active, MCC	Long	Enhance Protect

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Gymnastics	There are three dedicated venues and three non-dedicated facilities which accommodate gymnastics clubs/organisations in Manchester. CMIG (Central analysis area) has strong aspirations to formalise its tenure at its Gorton site via a formal lease arrangement. There is an identified need for the CMIG building to be replaced/ refurbished in the medium term. Due to the significant demand for facilities, there is a need to work with facility operators to support clubs to maximise capacity and current facilities and look to access alternative venues such as school and community venues. There is also potential demand for additional dedicated provision in Manchester.	Work with clubs to develop dedicated gymnastics facilities to help accommodate/ drive increases in participation). Explore options to develop more introductory gymnastics options at non-dedicated sites. Work with CMIG to evaluate the best option with regard to either refurbishing/replacing its current premises. Explore options for new dedicated smaller (e.g., 4-court hall size) gymnastics provision.	BG, MCR Active, MCC, Clubs	Short	Enhance Provide
Indoor bowls	There is no indoor bowls facility in the Authority.	Explore feasibility for indoor bowls development in the Authority to ascertain the most suitable location ensuring all viable options across the city are considered.	MCR Active, EIBA, BL BCGBA, MCC.	Medium	Provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Indoor tennis	The two indoor tennis facilities in Manchester (one in the North Analysis Area, one in the South) provide eight courts. Manchester Tennis & Football Centre (North) is very busy, with indoor courts booked to c.90% of used capacity at peak times. The North analysis area (non-site specific) has been identified as a prime location for future indoor provision to meet current and future demand. The LTA has indicated its support for future indoor tennis provision in the City. It reported that there is adequate demand in Manchester to (conservatively) sustain 25 indoor courts.	Maintain facility quality. Continue to work with the LTA to help drive up participation at existing sites. Explore options to develop another indoor tennis facility in the North analysis area. Ensure that indoor tennis facilities are available to all Manchester residents.	LTA, MCR Active, MCC, Clubs	Medium	Protect, Provide
Boxing	The 12 dedicated indoor boxing gyms and two rings at multi-sport facilities in Manchester are spread across the City. The Central area has the most clubs at six. Ardwick Lads Boxing Club is presently working on a project to modernise and extend its building which is leased from the Council. This will increase site capacity. Match funding had been earmarked for the project from the Council, Sport England (Small Grant Improvement Fund) and club fundraising. However, the project has been put on hold due to the Club's volunteer capacity.	Support clubs to grow/diversify memberships. Support volunteer and coach development. Support Ardwick Lads Club to re-start the extension project and where possible aid the Clubs volunteer capacity.	EB. MCR Active, MCC, Clubs	Medium	Enhance, Provide.

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Indoor athletics	The Manchester Regional Arena (North analysis area) contains an indoor, 200-metre banked indoor track with four lanes plus a 6-lane 60 metre sprint straight. There is also long/triple jump, a high jump area and nets for throw events. The track is now of poor quality and needs to be replaced. It is regularly used by three Manchester based athletic clubs and is an important space for elite performance and general personal trainers as part of the Regional Arena offer.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development. Monitor usage levels as demand returns to pre-Pandemic levels. Replace Manchester Regional Arena indoor athletics track.	MCR Active, MCC, EA GLL, Clubs	Short	Enhance
Skate-boarding	There are four park-based skate ramps and one dedicated covered facility in the City: two in Central, two in South and one in the Wythenshawe analysis area. SBGB is exploring feasibility options for a national skateboarding centre and Manchester is one of its alternatives. MCR Active's Indoor and Outdoor Action Sport Facility Needs Assessment is assessing the potential for this. SBGB is also working in partnership with MCR Active to develop a draft skateboarding strategy for Manchester. The process includes consulting local skateboarding organisations (such as Skate Manchester) plus MCC representatives. It is recognised that there is a limited supply of suitable, outdoor skateparks in Manchester. Increasing provision and the quality of outdoor public access skateparks is a key local and national SBGB priority.	Upon completion of the Indoor and Outdoor Action Sport Facility Needs Assessment, explore options to implement strategic recommendations.	SBGB, MCR Active, MCC	Short	Enhance, provide

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Indoor Cycling & BMX	Manchester is home to the National Cycling Centre. Its facilities include the velodrome, an indoor BMX arena, Clayton Vale Mountain bike trails and skill zone. It is a world class facility which is currently closed for building renovation - due to reopen in early 2023. The track was resurfaced in 2017 and is in good condition. The indoor BMX arena is international standard. There is also a closed-circuit BMX track at Platt Fields Park - in the South analysis area. The velodrome has recently re-opened for community use and building back the community programme; however, the indoor BMX arena is under-used with opportunities to grow participation. BMX Freestyle facilities are included in the Indoor Action Sport Facility Needs Assessment.	Explore options to increase usage of the indoor BMX arena at The National Cycling Centre. Upon completion of the Indoor Action Sport Facility Needs Assessment, explore options to implement strategic recommendations.	BC, MCR Active, MCC GLL	Short	Enhance, Provide
Climbing	Manchester has eight indoor climbing facilities; five climbing walls located within multi-use facilities, and three at dedicated indoor climbing centres. The three dedicated indoor facilities in Manchester are all managed by commercial operators. Two are located in the North analysis area and one in the Central analysis area. There is no dedicated facility serving the South or Wythenshawe analysis areas.	There is a strong commercial sector for climbing facilities in Manchester, demand should be monitored at key sites.	BMC	Long	Enhance

Sport	Overview and challenges	Recommended actions[2]	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
Parkour	Parkour activity in Manchester encompasses individuals picking up the activity on a recreational basis to groups working with qualified coaches. Manchester Parkour Academy reports an interest in an indoor venue to support its activities. Protectz is a parkour club which also delivers sessions in the City and across the wider Greater Manchester area. Both clubs report challenges in recruiting adequate numbers of qualified coaching staff/volunteers.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development. Where possible support Manchester Parkour Academy to source an indoor venue.	PUK, MCR Active, MCC.	Medium	Enhance, Provide
Table Tennis	Table tennis teams in the area typically use multipurpose venues. Manchester Table Tennis League is the primary league provision across Greater Manchester. Five clubs utilise Manchester venues for fixtures.	Support clubs to grow/diversify membership. Support volunteer and coach development.	TTE MCR Active	Medium	Enhance

Manchester City Council
Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

Subject: Manchester Libraries Update

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the library strategy and to present future plans.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	Libraries support the zero-carbon agenda. This includes high quality, low-carbon buildings that are community hubs to be used my multiple organisations, that libraries encourage books to be read by multiple people and the increase in eBooks – reducing the use of paper. We have signed up to the Green Libraries manifesto. More details contained within section 2.4.1
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	As this is an update report, an EQIA has not been carried out specifically on the report. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of the library service. Examples of excellent EDI initiatives are outlined in 2.48 and throughout the report.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Libraries enable people to improve their skills, apply for work on-line, offer and offer volunteering opportunities, increasing residents' employability. Libraries lead the Council's work on reducing digital exclusion amongst residents, supporting the new Economic Strategy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Libraries assist in raising literacy and skills levels, including enabling our youngest residents to become school ready, helping to deliver Read Manchester.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Libraries are at the heart of our communities and offer a wide range of services and activities for free that help to build and maintain community cohesion and place pride. Libraries have always supported those that need the help the most, and have continued to do so during the cost-of-living situation, as described in section 2.5
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Good local libraries are part of the fabric of neighbourhoods, helping to sustain pride in Manchester and its communities. Manchester Central Library is a regional, national and international visitor attraction. Manchester Libraries have signed up to the Green Libraries Manifesto.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Our libraries are a key location for residents to access digital technology and helping build skills that will assist future generation of Mancunians to sustain the growth of the city. Our digital inclusion work is increasing connectivity in homes.

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None.

Contact Officers:

Name: Neil MacInnes OBE
Position: Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth, Play and Participation Services
Telephone: 0161 234 1902
E-mail: neil.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Philip Cooke
Position: Libraries and Archives Lead
Telephone: 07773206277
E-mail: philip.cooke@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Manchester's libraries embody the Our Manchester Strategy, providing locally based, customer focussed services at the heart of communities. The service contributes greatly to Manchester Strategy Outcomes, as detailed in section 2.3. Manchester's Library, Information and Archives Service delivers leisure, cultural, learning and information services through a network of 15 neighbourhood libraries, 6 community partnership libraries and the internationally renowned world class Central Library – the most visited public library in the country. The service also operates 24-hour virtual library, HMP Manchester Prison library and Books to Go (housebound) service and supports several neighbourhood-based book collections. Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA which holds records from across the city region. Manchester Libraries also leads on digital inclusion for the Council and city. Manchester Libraries work alongside the other nine authorities in Greater Manchester, progressing joint projects which provide benefit for residents and improved value for money, such as a shared library management system, joint procurement of e-books and working together on priorities such as 'green libraries.'

1.2 In 2023 we produced a new vision for Manchester Libraries which is included in Appendix 1. The vision set out how libraries contribute to Manchester being a high-class city improving the lives of residents and neighbourhoods and sets out the priorities for coming years. The key priorities identified are: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. Appendix 4 also lays out how we've made progress in the first 12 months of this vision.

1.3 The library service has evolved and reinvented itself over the past decade and whilst seeing significant reduction in revenue funding we have seen nearly £100 million capital investment, including the £50 million transformation of Manchester Central Library. In the last 10 years, and we have relocated over 90% of our libraries into new or refurbished or co-located premises. The Libraries Capital Programme continues to see significant investment into the service, improving the estate and service further. The 2023 Adult Public Library User Survey reported that over 93% of customers were satisfied with the service – the highest satisfaction rating we have ever received.

1.4 As valued community spaces, libraries act as a shop front and access point for a range of other council, government and public services and partner organisations, enabling people to access these services at a local level. A wide range of council services are delivered through our network of libraries for example adult learning (including learning specifically aimed at getting people back to work), youth provision, councillor surgeries, benefits advice, subsidised food provision and many other advice sessions. This has been particularly beneficial to residents during the cost-of-living crisis, where libraries have been the Council's warm spaces, acting as the neighbourhood living rooms. The support provided in response to the cost-of-living situation is laid out in section 2.5.

1.5 Library services also provide significant support for key Manchester City Council objectives such as raising literacy levels (both reading skills and digital), reducing dependency, sustaining local neighbourhoods and creating economic growth, and have a critical and key role in supporting the City Council's priorities. Libraries manage Read Manchester with the aim of spreading the love of reading throughout the city and increasing literacy levels with children and adults. Manchester Libraries have a leading role with digital inclusion for the Council and city. We work with the VCSE sector to reduce digital exclusion across community venues and in people's homes. Libraries also play a vital role through the provision of free public access to computers, free Wi-Fi, access to information and advice sessions.

1.6 In terms of a strategic planning framework, Manchester Libraries continue to provide a strong, key and vital role in the heart of their communities and neighbourhoods supporting learning, literacy, economic opportunity and inspiration, through the 4 universal public library offers around reading, information & digital, health & wellbeing, culture & creativity. This ensures that we have a coherent structured offer which meets the current and future needs of our residents and also ensure that our service offer is aligned to support the delivery of Our Corporate Plan.

1.7 It is now a decade since Central Library reopened following its transformation. 2024 will feature a number of celebrations for the 10th anniversary of the reopening of Central Library and the 90th anniversary of Central Library in its current building in St Peters Square. The library continues to be the most visited public library in the country, attracting a diverse range of residents as well as being a key attraction for visitors from outside the city. Part of the transformation vision for Central Library was to be an inclusive space, the city's living room and treasure trove appealing to families, children and young people, aspiring entrepreneurs and visitors to the city, as well as traditional library visitors. Central Library's cultural programme, Library Live, exists as a busy and diverse cultural programme for everyone to enjoy, and Central Library remains the most visited public library in the country.

1.8 Across the city, our neighbourhood libraries and community partnership libraries - play an integral role in their local communities, acting as safe, trusted, socially inclusive, free, accessible, welcoming and non-threatening spaces, that play a significant role in helping to address deprivation and inequality. Research has shown that using libraries improves residents' health and wellbeing by combating loneliness and social isolation, as well as providing a quiet place to study and read. We support customers with reading for pleasure and literacy, and the level of borrowing is increasing – both books and eBooks/eAudio.

1.9 Libraries are the primary community venue for residents to access IT, and offer training, support and assistance to residents. This is done through staff, volunteers and partner organisations, for example Citizens Advice Manchester, which offers highly popular weekly digital-advice sessions at libraries across the city. The offer has been supplemented by the availability of free SIMs for residents – over 3000 being donated in the last 12 months.

1.10 Fundamental to our ability to provide a high-quality breadth and range of services is the need to work well and effectively with a broad spectrum of partners and volunteers. Our partnership working across the city ranges from local community groups such as The Bread and Butter Thing and Citizens Advice Manchester to specialist intellectual property lawyers who give their time pro-bono to support fledgling entrepreneurs, to the British Library, Manchester Metropolitan University, The University of Manchester, the Manchester College, Arts Council England and The National Archives. Over 200 volunteers enable us to make the best use of the resources available within the city; increasing the number of volunteers further is a key priority for 2024.

1.11 In 2022 the Government commissioned an independent review of public libraries. The review was undertaken by Baroness Sanderson. Manchester City Council and Manchester Libraries contributed to the review, and we were highlighted on several occasions in the report that was published in January 2024. We are supportive of the recommendations in the review and have included a summary of our responses to the recommendations in Appendix 13.

2.0 Delivering the Library Strategy in 2023 and beyond

2.1 Through investment in the previous Library 2020 strategy, the City Council has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining effective libraries at the heart of Manchester's communities. The key strands of Library 2020 strategy have been:

- Introducing and strengthening customer self-service transformation to all libraries.
- Introducing new Open Plus technology to increase opening hours
- Transforming Withington library.

2.1.1 To continue to progress and embed the strategy a 2021-2024 programme for citywide library renewal works to ensure that all libraries are in a strong position to serve their local communities for the next decade. Works include redecoration, refreshment and replacement of furnishings and equipment, and redecoration as required. This has included:

- Remodelling Newton Heath Library to create a new community meeting room and interview/advice room.
- Refreshing other libraries such as Central Library and Archives +, Hulme High Street, Forum Library, Didsbury Library and North City Library.
- Gorton Library opened in the new integrated Gorton Hub in 2022

2.1.2 In 2023 we have:

- Refreshed Longsight Library, 13 years after the last transformation programme, creating an improved childrens library and 2 new meeting rooms – this has allowed Barclays to have presence in the library, bringing much needed income into the service. Open+ has been installed, leading to being open 12 hours more per week.

- Opened the new Abraham Moss Library, as part of the Library and Leisure Centre, opened in August 2023 with the official opening in September 2023. It has proved very popular and is now one of the most visited libraries in the city.
- The opening of the new site for Northenden Community Library in St Wilfrid's Church Hall at the start of 2024. Its previous premises at Parkway Green became unavailable as Wythenshawe Community Housing Group are reviewing their estate however with the support of the church, we have retained library services in the village.

2.1.3 Significant capital investment is continuing in 2024. The grade 2 listed Chorlton Library will be fully refurbished during 2024-25, with a budget for capital works, supplemented by additional AMP works and Open Plus budget, making best use of Manchester City Council resources. The works include remodelling and refurbishment of the 1970's extension area, a new community meeting room and interview rooms, full redecoration, and the introduction of the Open Plus access system, whilst also restoring the historic dome over the lobby area that has been covered over in previous refurbishments. The library will operate a limited service for approximately 10 months whilst the work takes place, however additional hours will be introduced at neighbouring libraries.

2.1.4 All libraries across the city continue to thrive, acting as community hubs to serve the residents in their community. Appendix 2 gives examples from each library about services, initiatives and events that have taken place in the last 12 months. Providing access to reading material continues to be at the core of the library offer, and demand for books remains as high as ever. There is extremely high demand for books that are purchased from the bookfund. In 2022-23 a total of 695,000 books and 324,000 ebooks/eaudio were borrowed. There are waiting lists for thousands of the books. Currently over 10,000 books are reserved with customers waiting for them – this equates to approximately £112,000 of spend required to satisfy need. There are approximately 5,000 reservations on ebooks and 13,000 reservations on eaudio books from Manchester Libraries customers, equating to £150,000 and £700,000 additional spend if it was available respectively. These figures show the high level of demand for books, and the strain that brings upon the bookfund, and the increase in resident and customer expectation and demand.

2.2 In 2023 we produced a new vision for Manchester Libraries which is included in Appendix 3. The vision set out how libraries contribute to Manchester being a high-class city improving the lives of residents and neighbourhoods and sets out the priorities for coming years. The key priorities identified are: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. Appendix 4 also lays out how we've made progress in the first 12 months of this vision. Appendices 4 – 7 lay out in more detail some of the actions taken to deliver the vision. This includes library services to children, school engagement and Read Manchester; supporting start-up businesses; the culture and creative programme; health and wellbeing (including age friendly); Archives and Heritage

2.3 The library service contributes hugely to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes and other strategies, including the Our Manchester Strategy 2025-35, the newly launched Economic Strategy, Making Manchester Fairer, Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-27, Manchester Age Friendly Strategy, Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-26 and the emerging new Cultural Strategy which will place libraries as cultural hubs in their communities. Examples of our contributions follow below.

2.3.1 Investing in Success an Economic Strategy for Manchester

This strategy stresses the importance of inclusive growth. Libraries are a key contributor of this, with libraries contributing to a skilled local workforce through their role supporting lifelong learning and information provision. Specific work around digital inclusion, business support and the new generator spaces increase the role libraries play supporting this strategy.

2.3.2 Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-27

Libraries have always been a democratic space where support is given to those who need it the most. Use of the library computers is disproportionately from people who live in areas of most deprivation. Examples are given in section 2.6 below, of how this role has increased during the recent cost of living crisis.

2.3.3 Manchester Age Friendly Strategy

Libraries are heavily used by older people and contribute greatly to this strategy. This is detailed in Appendix 8.

2.4 The library service contributes hugely to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes.

2.4.1 **Contributing to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city**

Libraries are possibly the longest standing re-use and recycling programme through the borrow and use of a book by multiple people. The increase in lending of Ebooks and Eaudio books reduces the carbon footprint of reading in the city still further. We have signed up to the Green Libraries Manifesto https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=greenlibrariesmanifesto.

The library estate contains generally good quality buildings with excellent carbon emission standards, and the capital investment into several of the libraries improves this further. By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, supporting the Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approaches. They can also be used for

environmental and climate change campaigns, including Keep Manchester Tidy, which itself contributes towards carbon emission reductions.

Each library is now a collection point for old devices – these get refurbished by Community Computers and sold to Manchester residents for discounted price, benefiting the resident and reducing waste.

We hold events, workshops and activities for children that promote sustainability. These have included sessions from Biffa. During the Festival of Libraries, Central Library hosted The Roundview. This guides participants towards a sustainable and regenerative future, using a collection of puzzles. After the success at Central Library, The Roundview will be hosted at libraries around Greater Manchester later in 2024.

2.4.2 **Growth that benefits everyone**

Libraries develop and implement the Council's Digital Action Plan, which feeds into the Digital Strategy. This work reduces the number of digitally excluded residents in the city and increases the level of digital skills. People without digital skills are at increased the level of disadvantage – e.g. unemployment, low wage employment, social isolation, financial poverty. The Business & IP Centre (based at Central Library) and the Build a Business in GM Libraries initiative support the establishment and growth of start-up businesses, increasing the number of successful businesses in the city and the creation of jobs and opportunities. Libraries play an important role in supporting the business community in Manchester, and across Greater Manchester, offering insights and access to free resources, training and events. In 2023 the BIPC offered more activities and support than ever before. In January 2024 the Generator space opened on the ground floor of Central Library. This and other work supporting businesses is detailed in Appendix 6.

2.4.3 **Young People**

Libraries support young people from 0-18 years, as outlined in the Libraries Services to Children and Young people in Appendix 5. These include ongoing access and promotion of reading, joint initiatives with Read Manchester, events and activities including weekly storytimes at each library and Summer Reading Challenge, school engagement and developing more services with young people.

2.4.4 **Healthy Cared-For People**

People who use a library have improved health and wellbeing. A Central Library survey during the pandemic reported that 87% of respondents said they felt happier after using the library. The CIPFA Public Library User Survey of 2022 reported that over 80% of Manchester's respondents who sometimes felt lonely, felt less lonely after using the library. Libraries reduce social isolation for a whole range of its customers – from Mums and Dads attending storytimes with their children, to older people who use the library for social interaction in a welcoming environment, and Books to Go customers who are

housebound and may not see anyone else for a few days apart from the delivery driver who provides a range of books. Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. Libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions. All library staff have received training on dementia and are Dementia Friends. More on how libraries support health and wellbeing is detailed in Appendix 8.

2.4.5 **Housing**

Libraries contribute to the social infrastructure of successful and cohesive local communities. We work in partnership with Housing providers to reduce digital exclusion within their residents – to the benefits of the tenants and the housing providers. We work with organisations such as Lifeshare and Booth Centre to encourage and enable homeless people to access library services. As part of our Digital Inclusion Action Plan we have encouraged housing associations and homelessness organisations to embed digital inclusion in their work, with more than 10 venues establishing themselves as National Databanks in 2023 and are now able to give free data sims to their clients.

2.4.6 **Neighbourhoods**

Libraries are the beating heart of communities, being used and owned by the communities they reside in. They are well used venues key to successful and cohesive local communities. As community hubs they are used to gain access to skills, creative opportunities, digital access and access to a wide range of services at neighbourhood level. Libraries are increasing becoming community hubs used to meet a whole range of priorities of people in the neighbourhood. The existence of a library within the neighbourhood is a critical factor to the quality of life of communities and residents in the neighbourhood. They are vital in the Council's response to the current cost of living crisis, with each library acting as a 'warm space' - more details in section 2.5.

2.4.7 **Connections**

Libraries ensure residents are digitally connected – particularly those who do not have Internet access at home. Each library offers free Internet access and high-speed Wi-Fi. Libraries are digital hubs where residents can access other services through video technology – for example Citizens Advice Bureau. We are currently upgrading all PCs across our libraries to ensure that we have the best access possible and will be upgrading Wi-Fi provision in line with wider MCC plans.

2.4.8 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Equality**,** Diversity and Inclusion are at the forefront of everything libraries do. Libraries are representative of the diverse communities in which they are located and are a key means to increase community cohesion. The book stock is diverse, including the recent 'See Myself in Books' initiative and the events programme outlined contains artists and authors from diverse backgrounds

and is attractive to all. Key EDI events are celebrated in libraries such as Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, International Women's Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and International Mother Language Day. In 2023 we hosted the Black British Book Festival where hundreds of people attended a vibrant programme of black authors and speakers. Manchester Libraries are accredited Libraries of Sanctuary and will re-accredit in 2024. We are supporting Manchester City Council to become a City of Sanctuary.

2.4.9 **A Well Managed Council**

By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, in an Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approach. Libraries are front door to council services, and other partner organisations. This can range from supporting a wide range of key messages from the council – including Keep Manchester Tidy, Budget consultations, to supporting residents with accessing specific initiatives online, including applying for parking permits and applying for a Voter Authority Certificate.

2.5 Cost-of-Living support

2.5.1 Libraries have always supported those that need the help the most and have continued to do so during the cost-of-living situation. Libraries have been pivotal in the support that the Council has given to residents at this time. Over the last 2 winters each library has been a registered warm space. From October-February free hot drinks have been given, to complement the existing offer of warm, welcoming, non-judgemental space with a vast range of services always available from libraries. Many residents have become digitally excluded at this time as they've not been able to afford data charges. To alleviate this, we have donated over 4000 data sims offering six months free data over the last year. Organisations such as Citizens Advice Manchester use libraries to deliver welfare, debt and housing advice – the number of sessions per week has increased because of higher demand – with new sessions at Longsight Library and Gorton Library. Libraries have supported residents with food poverty. The Bread and Butter Thing operate successfully from four libraries and each library is now a donation point for food, with donations going to the local foodbank. We are supporting residents with period poverty, giving women free sanitary products in each library.

2.6 The priorities for future actions are outlined in the library vision, included as Appendix 3. We will continue to ensure that libraries improve the lives of residents and the communities in which they reside. We will maximise the use of services and ensure the investment made into Manchester's libraries bring the best outcomes for residents and the city. We will continue to develop and deliver services that deliver the priorities of: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. We will continue to promote our services to residents and increase awareness of the huge variety of services. We'll continue to produce e-

newsletters, social media, hard copy leaflets, and work with partners to promote services, for example building on a successful partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, where a post about Manchester Libraries was their most viewed Instagram post in August 2023. Widening access and participation and visits to libraries remains crucial to Manchester Libraries strategy.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

4.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Libraries 2023 infographics
Appendix 2 - Examples of service delivery per library
Appendix 3 - Library vision 2023-28
Appendix 4 - Library vision action plan
Appendix 5 - Read Manchester, Children, Young People & school engagement
Appendix 6 - Supporting business
Appendix 7 - Cultural and creative programme
Appendix 8 - Health and wellbeing (including age friendly)
Appendix 9 - Archives
Appendix 10 - Manchester City of Literature
Appendix 11 - Performance figures and Heat Maps
Appendix 12 - Public Libraries User Survey 2023
Appendix 13 - Manchester Libraries response to the Sanderson Review of Public Libraries

Appendix 1: Infographics of Libraries performance in 2023

Appendix 1a: Manchester Libraries 2023

Appendix 1b: Items borrowed from Manchester Libraries in 2023

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Appendix 2 – Range of Services per library: Feb 2023 – Feb 2024

Library	Example of service / initiative
Abraham Moss	In August 2023 following a multi-million investment from Manchester City Council, the brand-new state-of-the-art Abraham Moss Library and Leisure Centre which is open to the public for 96 hours a week was launched. The library is an ultra-modern open plan space, offering cultural and creative space for the whole community with great books, free access to wi-fi and the internet and an exciting and diverse event programme for all ages. This facility plays a significant role in helping to address deprivation and inequality for the local communities. The official opening day featured an advance taste of our forthcoming programme of health / wellbeing events including HAF for the community. Activities included Heart Valve Voice who offered heart health checks and advice for everyone with their trained clinicians. Manchester Libraries' Archives+ archivists showcased precious original archives from Crumpsall Workhouse and historic photographs from the Crumpsall Memory Box. Among our special guests were the Abraham Moss Community School pupil librarians, reading ambassadors and staff. National Poetry Day saw our very first guest author event for schools in the new library with Year 3 children from Abraham Moss Community School enjoying meeting engaging poet Dominic Berry who came along to perform poems from his new book "Make Some Noise" and encouraged the children to think about stories in a creative way. Library Staff joined the Read Manchester team at the Family Hub Launch at Woodville Children's Centre to engage families with our literacy and reading offer, and to promote The Summer Reading Challenge Ready, Set, Read! Parents and children could also choose a free book to take away and join the new Library and receive a new library card.
Arcadia	We continue to work in partnership with GLL, offering a 7 day a week service to customers. We provide a coffee morning which continues to remain popular and well-attended. The toddler story times also continue to be popular with parents in the area. We have continued to build on our schools programme to encourage children to read for pleasure, develop a love of books and the written word, in all formats. The Levenshulme Youth Project is expanding its provision at Arcadia Library. They currently provide a session on a Friday evening 6pm - 8pm within the library space. They have now expanded this to include a Monday evening and there is a new integrated activities programme. The library is the hub for this activity programme and aims to tackle some of the anti-social behaviour problems in the area; instil a sense of responsibility, empathy, and community pride among young people, contributing to a safer and more harmonious Library space

Avenue	Avenue is an Open Plus Library offering access to customers outside core library opening hours. It is a packed programme of events and activities. We held creative workshops with writer and naturalist Joe Shute to discover the history of the River Irk in October. The workshops explored the river through creative writing, storytelling and textile weaving. The first workshop got off to a great start with a group of local residents who contributed ideas, memories and creative written responses to the river Irk which runs through Middleton, Blackley and Blackley Forest, and, via the Irk Valley, through Crumpsall and Harpurhey into the city centre under Victoria Station. The ladies from the two Craft groups at Avenue Library played a starring role in making a huge success of the World's Biggest Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Macmillan Centre at North Manchester General Hospital.
Barlow Moor	Library staff launched a new story time in the Autumn, offering stories and rhymes for pre-school children and their adults. At Christmas we ran a special Christmas session, and each child was gifted with a book. Library staff attended Mersey Fest with a library stall where young people could do crafts and there were many books gifted for them to take home. As part of Chorlton book festival we did jewellery and Key ring making craft session at the after-school club.
Beswick	Students from The East Manchester Academy were invited to an event in the library to see a Miles Platting and Beswick Gasholder Films Screening by National Grid and Manchester Libraries. The screening included two short films made during the recent dismantling of the Saxon Street gasholder in Miles Platting. There was a photographic exhibition with historic and contemporary photographs, including previously unseen areas of these iconic industrial structures, alongside artefacts of the gasholder that have been donated by National Grid. This was a unique opportunity for the to learn about this important episode in Manchester's industrial heritage, since the second and last of these gas giants will begin its dismantling process this year and was a chance to ask questions of the engineers and professionals involved in the process and to spark a new generation of engineers or historians. Beswick Library is working with The Bread and Butter Thing to bring a mobile affordable food pantry to our community every Wednesday morning.
Brooklands	As part of our Black History Month events, we had a fantastic Saluting our sisters workshop delivered by Archives +, it researched Greater Manchester Pioneering Women of colour. The children and young people taking part learnt a lot and had great fun. We held an end of term Graduation Storytime session in July, over 20 families joined us for our final session and 10 children received a graduation certificate as they start school in September. The children dressed up in one of our Graduation gowns and caps. They all enjoyed stories, rhymes, crafts and the gifted books. Brooklands library staff have visited Button Lane primary school talking about the library and gifted the children with books
Burnage	In October the library celebrated its 10th Birthday as a Community run Library. We provided a full day of Childrens entertainment with two local artists Mandy & Caroline providing fun art workshops, it was super busy all day with all having a great time. Library staff arranged afternoon tea with the Lord Mayor for the Volunteers to celebrate.
Central Library	Central Library is the hub of the city's 22 libraries and delivers an outstanding collection of cultural activities throughout the year. We hosted the fantastic Jill

	Furmanovsky exhibition which was a great success. We worked with multiple partners this year to deliver our programme including Manchester International Festival, Literature festival and were part of the piano trail for the Jazz festival. We have refreshed the Archives+ exhibition, turned the film pods into sound and vision pods for easier access to the content delivered within them from the Northwest Film Archive and Sound archives. We have installed a new set of digital screens to promote the activity that is happening within Central Library to our visitors. School visits have proven to remain incredibly popular, and over 110 school groups have visited this year. Story times have proven incredibly popular, and we have doubled the capacity by running four sessions over two days to keep up with demand. We also run monthly Sensory, Mandarin, French and Spanish story times. We have launched new activities this year which help with users' wellbeing, including the biweekly vinyl listening group and monthly crochet club. Both activities see a diverse audience coming together to share an activity and chat.
Chorlton	To celebrate World book day, author Mark Bradley gave a talk to a local school. Dom Berry performed his new show to 90 local school children as part of our Take 10 Day. Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeolo also showcased their brand-new book Speak Up! to local school children. As part of our Carbon Literacy action day program, we ran a Family recycled Christmas event, we made Christmas tree decorations and Christmas boxes from repurposed stuff, Biffa also made recycled Christmas cards, our Carbon literacy champion was also on hand to help educate people. Flapjack Press performed at the Edge, which was one of the highlights of the ever-popular Chorlton Book Festival. Some great authors have visited Chorlton Library this year for talks including at the Edge Theatre where we ran a family fund day as part of the Chorlton Pride celebrations, which involved three craft stalls making Rainbow mobiles, friendship bracelets and heart wands. Libraries staff visited six Primary schools to promote the Summer Reading Challenge, talking in assemblies telling the children all about how they can get involved in the challenge.
Didsbury	In May to celebrate Local History Month Archives+ ran a workshop in the library, it inspired people to start their own family research. The library helped to facilitate Didsbury Arts Festival including a first for Manchester of a Flight Simulator on the forecourt. The library took part in the Disbury Pride event, running a rainbow themed craft activity aimed at families and children. Library staff attended the Sustainability fair at the Parish Hall, running a recycled Christmas tree decoration craft session
Fallowfield	Library officers continue to train and work with volunteers to run the library offer. The volunteers get a great understanding and learn new skills. Over the years many volunteers have gone on to get paid library jobs.
Forum	Forum Library continues to be a creative spaces venue, putting on and celebrating large events such as International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palace. The events are gaining in popularity with a record number of just over 700 people attending the last Fun Palace. We have delivered sensory Storytimes for Ashgate Specialist primary school, the school has brought groups of children into the library, and we have also visited

	the school to provide the sessions. The school also comes to the library most weeks to read and choose books. School visit still prove to be very popular at the library, we have delivered introduction to the library visits and storytelling sessions. We were proud to be part of Wythenshawe games again this year, attending all three Fridays with a full library offer including crafts, storytelling and book gifting. The library continues to visit Village 135 and deliver the Reading Friends sessions, it's always a lovely afternoon doing crafts and talking about books. Planning is well underway to transform the upper floor of the library into a cultural and creative hub, using Arts Council funding.
Gorton	Strong community partnerships continue at Gorton Library with lots of community events and activities on offer to local residents. There has been a focus on school engagement since moving into Gorton Hub, promoting the beautiful space available to local children, their families. To encourage our local youngsters to read for pleasure, we have facilitated numerous author visits. We have also worked with one of the Making Manchester Fairer Kickstarter priority schools which included a 'pop up stall' at parents' evenings to promote library/Hub services to parents and children. The Bread and Butter Thing delivers sessions every Friday in the library meeting room with an average of 65 residents benefitting. We delivered HAF sessions during Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. Young people have enjoyed a variety of activities with artists, cultural & STEM organisations. This allows young people to experience activities that may not always be available to them. The community rooms continue to be popular, particularly with organisations who are looking for venues where they can deliver sessions that are of societal benefit to the community, such as health and wellbeing; arts and crafts etc. We work in partnership working with other partners in the Hub and regularly contribute to atrium events.
Hulme High Street	The library continues to work well with our leisure partners on delivering events such as International Womens Day and other community activities. The library has a well-attended Storytime session for 0-5 year olds and over the past year GLL have set up a soft play session just before storytime. The over 50's coffee morning offers different activities every week such as talks from professionals on pensions, health, careers, volunteering as well as craft activities. The group has helped combat loneliness and isolation in the community. The Talk English session in partnership with (Manchester Adult Education service), continues to grow, helping our residents develop lifelong skills. As well as being of an educational benefit, the learners enjoy the session and benefit from the social aspect of being together.
Longsight	Longsight Library has recently undergone a refurbishment that has provided: • An additional 2 community meeting rooms • A new children's area, proving to be popular with families • New comfortable seating

	• A drinks machine The Library continues to be a bustling community space. Event highlights this year have included International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces. The 4 meeting rooms provide a valuable space for local community groups to meet on a regular basis. The rooms are also available to organisations who are looking for venues where they can deliver sessions that are of societal benefit to the community. For example, Save the Children are currently working on a project to research and improve provision for families with children under 5 in the Longsight area. As part of this project, we have been able to increase the LEGO stock and provide LEGO gifts to local children. Several new local groups using the rooms include Maximus (a group dedicated to jobseeker refugee help), Bollyfit, Women's Empowerment through the arts, Support for women suffering domestic abuse and LMCP with a range of health and mental health related support groups. We have recently partnered with Barclays Bank, who will be using our interview room to deliver some services that don't involve cash, to the local community. As well as providing a service need to local residents, this has provided the library service with a source of income. When the ground floor meeting rooms are not in use, they are opened up for customers to use as a quieter study space and are in demand as Longsight is a popular library destination with the student population.
Miles Platting	This is a popular community library working in partnership with local housing provider Jigsaw which offers regular Family Fundays. Activities include weekly Children's Art Clubs. There is a popular walking mums club every week that meets to walk along the canal, they then come to the library for tea & coffee and Sure Start staff deliver a storytime and rhyme session for the children. There was a meet and greet Santa event at Xmas with a real reindeer! A Bike Library will be launching later in 2024 – bike maintenance is already happening. There are plans to offer some activities in the fabulous outside space this Summer, including planting and outdoor games.
Moss Side Powerhouse	The library has a community offer 11-2 Mon-Thu and Sat 12-5. This includes a regular adult reading group, our age-friendly coffee morning as well as community advice and guidance sessions. The young people's offer runs 3-7 Mon-Thu, including a well-attended homework club run by volunteers, a chess club, and a popular craft club/comic club. The library attracts lots of volunteers who help us deliver a wide range of services to children. We work closely with local schools and had over 2,500 children visit the library with their schools this year.
New Moston	The library runs weekly coffee mornings and Age Friendly hour with crafts and board games. There is also a monthly coffee with a copper event for local residents to pop in and speak to local PCSO's about their concerns. We continue to strengthen connections with local schools and offer holiday activities for families which are always well attended.
Newton Heath	Newton Heath Library is a popular and well-loved local library in a verdant spot on the Rochdale Canal, close to the city centre and a haven for nature watchers where you can watch colourful canal boats and native wildlife float by. It is always vibrant and busy and is a real community hub providing a lifeline for local people. The two new meeting rooms, created in 2022 are heavily used by the community.

	Sessions include social groups, craft sessions, the popular weekly coffee mornings, Councillor Surgeries, NHS/MCC customer services consultations, Citizens Advice Bureau advice sessions and job interviews. The Bread and Butter Thing operate an extremely busy weekly service on Saturdays. Library staff have worked hard with local partners McrActive and Winning Hearts and Minds to reshape our teen offer and engage local young people with creative and positive activities including ping-pong, games, canoeing skills, karaoke and music. A table tennis tournament was very popular with all ages! The Women's Euros championship in July 2023 saw the library host the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to create a Manchester anthem and offer an orchestral taster session for all ages.
North City Library	North City Library is a Creative Space library which is co- located with partners The Manchester College. The Fun Palaces event had fun games about climate change delivered by MCC Climate Change Officer, we focused on recycling crafts (planting trees and wildflowers in a decorated pot made from a recycled plastic bottle and a bag to creatively decorate and take home using existing resources plus reuseable jigsaws and games in our other activities. Everything we did aimed for minimal impact on the environment – no glitter or new plastic in the craft decorations, paper or reuseable cups in the refreshments, recyclable plastic wrappings where necessary. As a local event, many families could walk or use the bus to get to the library rather than driving so transport was also a green aim. We had a singalong with the M9 Choir and Italian dance masters Matrafisc came back with a cool dance activity for families and children. We also displayed a LEGO Photo Exhibition and hosted a Challenge to see who could build the most imaginative Fun Palace from LEGO – with a prize for each of the winners. We launched our Summer Reading Challenge at Lily Lane Primary School with author James Campbell. Library staff delivered a Summer Reading Challenge assembly to help enthuse children with this year's Challenge "Ready, Set, Read!" and to invite them to our summer holiday activities. This school is one of our Make Manchester Fairer Children's and Education Kickstart priority schools. Library staff worked with partners GLL to offer a Summer Reading Challenge themed Treasure Hunt at North City Family Fitness Centre for children aged 5 – 10yrs and their families.
Northenden	Northenden Community Library has relocated to St. Wilfrids Church Hall, retaining the same amount of stock. Visitor numbers are on average slightly up from the previous location. Storytime and other activities continue at St.Wilfrids Church Hall. Some health and Children's books are now also located in Northenden Health Centre for people to borrow.
Withington	Withington Library ran a men's health event aimed at Caribbean and African men, and their family and friends. The event had some fabulous stalls offering and promoting free Health checks, social prescribing, health awareness, information on Prostate and Bowel cancer. We screened two amazing thought-provoking films, this really got people talking. People also got to eat some tasty Caribbean food, allowing them to enjoy, relax and share conversation. Holiday activity fund sessions take place in school holidays, with the young people got to enjoy activities such as Drama, football skills and clay modelling to mention a few, they also got lunch. A Withington customer gifted us a fantastic Lego model he had designed and built of the library, it is getting a lot of attention from customers and is very inspiring for the children that attend the busy Lego club.

	Library staff ran a library session with stories, crafts and library information at St Paul's stay and play sessions. The library was out and about again at Old Moat little Feast, the event had lots of activities for all ages, we ran a library stall and crafts.
HMP Manchester Prison Library	The past 12 months have brought a number of changes within the prison which have had a direct impact on the offered library services, including the introduction of the Reading Strategy for all prisons in England & Wales. The library manager worked with the Learning Work & Skills Lead and the Head of Education to create a local strategy ensuring that it meets the needs of the prison population. The library has worked with all areas of the prison to help them develop reading areas in the wings, workshops and programs departmets, including securing a donation from Borderline Books of 400 books to get the individual collections started, creating promotional displays for the Shannon Trust Reading Program in all Reading Areas, training over 50 Shannon Trust mentors, provided collections from publishers such as Diffusion Books, Ransom and Barrington Stoke that ensure low level reading needs are met and are Dyslexia resources list with all Prisoner Information Desks workers so that they can share the library offer. The library has commissioned a series of workshops by Tony Sheppard for 2024. We have increased links with public libraries. All men being released into Greater Manchester area are now offered a public library card useable across the 10 Local Authorities,
Books To Go	We have delivered books and other resources to approximately 450 people with mobility difficulties this year. We attend outreach events, promoting the service, including Africa Day Windrush open day, Caribbean Carers group North, Caribbean Carers Group Central, Mental Health Support Group South Longsight Hub Festive event, and St Mary's hospital optical unit. Winter warmth bags have been delivered to customers. The service continues to be a lifeline for customers, with the delivery drivers often being the only people that they will speak to all day.

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OUR VISION FOR
Manchester Libraries 2023

The possibilities are endless
manchester.gov.uk/libraries

Manchester Libraries

the beating heart of our communities

Manchester Libraries and Archives Service deliver leisure, cultural, learning and information services through a network of neighbourhood libraries, community partnership libraries and the internationally renowned, world-class Central Library – one of the most visited public libraries in the country – HMP Manchester Prison library and Books to Go for housebound people.

People are at the heart of everything at Manchester Libraries. Each library helps to make its neighbourhood a vibrant place and serves the whole community, offering a warm welcome to all. Our high-quality buildings have received investment of several million pounds in recent years and are high-quality buildings that enable a fantastic service to be delivered.

We want everyone to get the most from our libraries. In recent months people have been facing a cost-of-living crisis that will last for months and possibly years to come. Libraries are helping Manchester residents more than ever. They provide welcoming spaces that improve people's lives by offering a free service for all in the community, as well as a warm welcome, support and resources. We have recently abolished fines for late returned books.

There are so many reasons to use libraries, including:

- A vibrant, exciting and diverse events programme for all ages
- Book stock that promotes reading for pleasure and literacy
- High-quality Internet, Wi-Fi and printing at each library
- A skilled workforce, dedicated to offering an excellent service to customers.

Manchester Libraries in 2022

2.2million
visits to libraries

1.6million
books issued

1.1million
internet-use sessions

2million
social media views

772,000
e-books and audiobooks issued

114,000
books gifted via Read Manchester

143,000
event attendees

20,000
free hot drinks with our warm spaces offer

The library is a place of refuge to me – a world of knowledge, with the latest books to read and fantastic events.

Forum Library customer

Our priorities for the next five years

Our Manchester, Our People

Our libraries will continue to focus on people, helping to make our neighbourhoods great places to live and Manchester a world-class city.

We will:

— Be neighbourhood venues where local residents are welcome, can talk to people and be helped by skilled hospitable staff
— Provide a warm welcome to all, helping people to live side by side, and be Libraries of Sanctuary
— Be fully accessible, increase opening hours through Open+, and deliver books to people who are housebound
— Support people's skills and job prospects
— Increase engagement with young people
— Support local businesses and start-ups through the BIPC and other projects
— Implement the Green Libraries Manifesto, contributing to Zero Carbon
— Continue to invest in high-quality buildings – refurbishing libraries and outreach venues
— Support safer and stronger communities and thriving neighbourhoods
— Tackle poverty and social exclusion, combating disadvantage.

Literacy and reading

Reading remains at the core of our library service. Literacy is key to life chances.

We will:

— Run Read Manchester as a National Literacy Trust Hub
— Provide access to books for all ages, in all formats, including ebooks and books in different languages
— Ensure that libraries and archives stock represents our diverse communities
— Run Storytimes in every library
— Manage Bookstart
— Engage with schools, running class visits
— Run the Summer Reading Challenge
— Gift thousands of books to children
— Support book clubs
— Host book festivals, eg. Chorlton Book Festival, Manchester Literature Festival
— Work with the Shannon Trust to improve prisoners' literacy
— Work in partnership with Read Easy, improving residents' literacy.

Digital inclusion

Our libraries provide free, high-quality access to Wi-Fi and the internet, and help residents with their skills and confidence.

We will:

— Provide drop-in and structured learning and skills sessions
— Support residents with specific initiatives, eg. parking permits, voter ID
— Provide higher-level skills sessions through the Business and IP Centre
— Seek opportunities to provide free data and devices for residents
— Continue to provide and improve services and resources online that are available 24/7.

The library stops time and noise, broadens my mind, and it makes me explore and discover new things. It excites my little boy and he feels happy. I love my library because it's always there.

Central Library customer

Culture and creativity

Our libraries are neighbourhood cultural and creative spaces where people can enjoy creative activities and events on their doorstep.

We will:

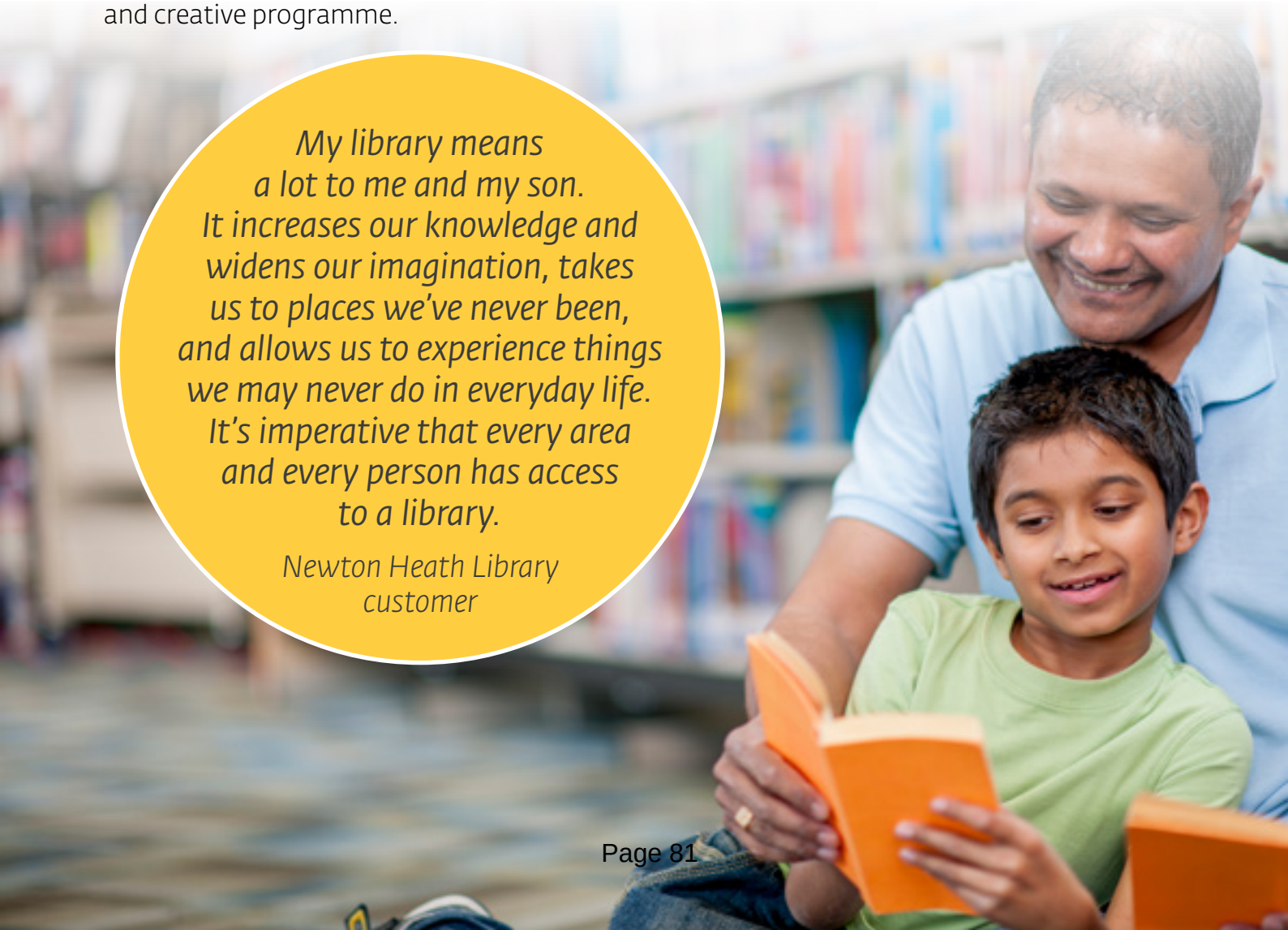
— Programme vibrant, diverse and exciting events, accessible to all ages, including International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces.
— Encourage and foster creativity and participation for all ages
— Widen access and opportunities by partnering flagship organisations, such as Factory International, HOME, and Royal Exchange Theatre
— Run Holiday Activity Fund sessions
— Host exhibitions
— Bring archives and local history to neighbourhood libraries and Central Library
— Present Library Live, Central Library's cultural and creative programme.

Health and wellbeing

Using our libraries makes people feel better.

We will:

— Encourage people to use our safe, warm, free spaces, helping to reduce loneliness and make people feel better
— Be Age Friendly libraries
— Run social clubs, reading groups, coffee mornings
— Provide access to health information in the library and online and through signposting
— Provide and promote health books and books that improve wellbeing
— Host organisations that support people's health
— Increase the number of volunteers
— Be a trusted ear to residents
— Increase people's pride in their local area through archives and local history.



My library means a lot to me and my son. It increases our knowledge and widens our imagination, takes us to places we've never been, and allows us to experience things we may never do in everyday life. It's imperative that every area and every person has access to a library.

Newton Heath Library customer

"Manchester Libraries are extremely popular, well-used and well-loved, and we take pride in helping to make people's lives better. We will continue to improve our services in the future, including our online resources."

Councillor John Hacking – Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure, and
Councillor Adele Douglas – Deputy Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

If you have any questions about this vision, or any of its contents, or want to make suggestions or comments on how we can improve further, email **libraries@manchester.gov.uk**

MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Appendix 4: Manchester Libraries Vision 2023-28 Progress document

This document shows the progress with actions listed in the Libraries Vision document since Feb 2023

1. Our Manchester, Our People

Our libraries will continue to focus on people, helping to make our neighbourhoods great places to live and Manchester a world-class city. We will

No.	Action	Progress
1.1	Be neighbourhood venues where local residents are welcome, can talk to people and be helped by skilled hospitable staff	Support to use computers, free Internet and Wi-Fi, a wide range of books to borrow, place to relax and meet people, offering a wide range of events for all ages. Somewhere to study and get help with homework.
1.2	Provide a warm welcome to all, helping people to live side by side, and be Libraries of Sanctuary	Warm Spaces, including free hot drinks, delivered from Oct 23-Feb 24. Libraries of Sanctuary reassessment to take place in 2025
1.3	Be fully accessible, increase opening hours through Open+, and deliver books to people who are housebound	Opening hours increased by 11 hours per week by introducing Open+ at Longsight Library. 450 residents with mobility difficulties currently receive library books through the Books To Go service
1.4	Support people's skills and job prospects	Libraries are key element of City of Learning initiative – offering community venues to partner organisations and promoting online learning opportunities
1.5	Increase engagement with young people	Youth Friendly Libraries - new standards currently being developed. Training received by libraries staff from the Youth, Play and Participation team
1.6	Support local businesses and start-ups through the BIPC and other projects	Manage the Greater Manchester Build a Business project, including delivery in Manchester. Enterprise Hub opened in January 2024 in the ground floor of Town Hall Extension
1.7	Implement the Green Libraries Manifesto, contributing to Zero Carbon	Signed up to manifesto. Green Libraries week events delivered in October 2024. 'Green' is embedded into the delivery of library services. Increasing number of sessions for children delivered around 'green' themes. The Roundview activity piloted at Central Library in June 23
1.8	Continue to invest in high-quality buildings refurbishing libraries and outreach venues	New libraries and libraries refurbs: • Abraham Moss Library & Leisure Centre opened on 12/08/2023 • Central Library refresh underway including IT, furniture, signage, archives storage and AV equipment • Northenden Library opened in St Wilfrid's Church Hall in January 2024 • Chorlton Library will be transformed in 2024-25
1.9	Support safer and stronger communities and thriving neighbourhoods	Over 5000 meeting room bookings in libraries across the city. The use of these rooms provides community groups with a venue in the heart of communities and residents receive a range of services and participate in a huge variety of groups and activities.

1.10	Tackle poverty and social exclusion, combating disadvantage	19 of our libraries are now food collection points, for their local foodbank. The Bread & Butter Thing operate from 4 libraries. Initiative launched to combat period poverty at all libraries, using public health funding Bookgifting via foodbanks

2. Literacy and Reading

Reading remains at the core of our library service. Literacy is key to life chances. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
2.1	Run Read Manchester as a National Literacy Trust Hub	See Appendix 5 for the highlights of the Read Manchester programme
2.2	Provide access to books for all ages, in all formats, including ebooks and books in different languages	Total amount of items borrowed in 2023 is 1.48 million • 228k Adult fiction books • 173k Adult non-fiction books • 412k Children's books • 142k Ebooks • 214k Eaudio books • 300k Emagazines & enewspapers
2.3	Ensure that libraries and archives stock represents our diverse communities	See myself in books children's collections rolled out in libraries; neurodiverse collection being prepared. More diverse archives collections being collected – for example the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People archive.
2.4	Run Storytimes in every library	Well attended storytimes are run at every library.
2.5	Manage Bookstart	Over 10,000 packs are delivered to babies and 3-4 year olds – value of £130,000
2.6	Engage with schools, running class visits	70,000 attendees of class visits in 2023 – a combination of face to face and virtual libraries. 68% of schools have class visits with libraries 53,000 children receive the transition read book
2.7	Run the Summer Reading Challenge	Over 35,000 books were read by children who joined the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge 42 schools were part of the schools engagement pilot in 2023. In 2024 the school pilot will include all 10 Making Manchester Fairer early years kickstarter schools
2.8	Gift thousands of books to children	138,000 books and magazines gifted to Manchester residents and community groups
2.9	Support book clubs	We currently support 30 book groups across the city, most of which take place in non-library venues
2.10	Host regular author events, book festivals, e.g. Chorlton Book Festival, Manchester Literature Festival	153k attendees of events in 2023. Major book festivals supported, including for the first time the Black British Book Festival in September 2023
2.11	Work with the Shannon Trust to improve prisoners' literacy	The library in HMP Manchester has worked with all areas of the prison to help them develop reading areas in the wings, and host workshops. Borderline Books has donated 400 books to get the individual collections started, creating promotional displays for the Shannon Trust Reading Program in all Reading Areas. Over 50 Shannon Trust mentors have been trained. The library has provided collections from publishers to ensure low level reading needs are met and are dyslexia friendly
2.12	Work in partnership with Read Easy, improving residents' literacy	Read Easy promoted at all libraries and sessions run at Forum Library and Withington Library

3. Digital inclusion

Our libraries provide free, high-quality access to Wi-Fi and the internet, and help residents with their skills and confidence. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
3.1	Provide drop-in and structured learning and skills sessions	Each library has at least one session per week where extra support is given. AbilityNet sessions for over 50s launched in 5 libraries
3.2	Support residents with specific initiatives, eg. parking permits, voter ID	Library staff support residents online – both in libraries and telephone support via the digital inclusion team. Internet computers in all libraries being replaced in 2024 to ensure high quality Internet access continues to be offered
3.3	Provide higher-level skills sessions through the Business and IP Centre	Start-up businesses supported in the BIPC and through the new Generator space. More details provided in Appendix 6
3.4	Seek opportunities to provide free data and devices for residents	Over 4000 free data Sims and 50 free devices provided to residents. 30 devices provided to community organisations to lend to residents
3.5	Continue to provide & improve services & resources online that are available 24/7	E-Press is launched enabling emagazines and enewspapers to be available alongside ebooks and eaudio books

4. Culture and creativity

Our libraries are neighbourhood cultural and creative spaces where people can enjoy creative activities and events on their doorstep. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
4.1	Programme vibrant, diverse and exciting events, accessible to all ages, including International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces	All the events mentioned held with high levels of attendance. In total 153,000 people attending over 8,000 creative opportunities.
4.2	Encourage and foster creativity and participation for all ages	A full, regular programme of creativity took place across libraries providing social, fun and learning activities. Programming is delivered by library staff, community volunteer groups and cultural organisations. It has included: early years Storytimes, school holiday activity, exhibitions, discussions and talks, painting clubs for adults, knitting, crochet and other craft clubs aimed at older residents.
4.3	Widen access and opportunities by partnering flagship organisations, such as Factory International, HOME, and Royal Exchange Theatre	Example this year have included: Beswick Library is a partner in the Royal Exchange's 4-year Local Exchange programme for Beswick, Ancoats and Clayton. The library has hosted local Culture Ambassador meetings, a youth company session, Grand Day Out group, attendance with a subsidised ticket for a mainhouse matinee and supported the success of theatre's mobile auditorium – the Den with a 9-day programme of performance, events and activities. Central Library was a venue for Factory International's The Welcome Roadshow, introducing residents to Aviva Studios through creative activity and the Manchester International Festival event The Find by Ryan Gander.

4.4	Run Holiday Activity Fund sessions	Well-attended HAF sessions offering a range of activities and a packed lunch were held in 6 libraries during Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.
4.5	Host exhibitions	Highlights from Central Library programme include: Jill Furmanovsky 'Photographing the Invisible' Exhibition, 50 years of rock photography. Curry Mile – A changing neighbourhood "You can see me, but I don't exist" A photography exhibition about refugees. Neighbourhood libraries have hosted numerous exhibitions in the last year, including the gas holder exhibition at Beswick Library
4.6	Bring archives and local history to neighbourhood libraries and Central Library	Several libraries host interactive touch screen kiosks that enable residents to access videos and sound recordings around their local area. Libraries with these so far are Gorton Library and North City Library. Events were held in several libraries for Local and Communities History Month is May 2023.
4.7	Present Library Live, Central Library's cultural and creative programme	An extensive, vibrant diverse programme has taken place, listed in more detail in appendix 6. A highlight this year was the Black British Book Festival which was hosted at Central Library for the first time in September 2023.

5. Health and wellbeing

Using our libraries makes people feel better. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
5.1	Encourage people to use our safe, warm, free spaces, helping to reduce loneliness and make people feel better	Libraries are a place to relax and meet people, offering a wide range of events for all ages. All Libraries registered as warm spaces, offering free hot drinks from October 2023 – Feb 2024.
5.2	Be Age Friendly libraries	Manchester Libraries are Age Friendly Libraries, offering a variety of activities and social groups. All libraries also offer an Age Friendly Hour drop -in session once a week.
5.3	Run social clubs, reading groups, coffee mornings	Wide variety of clubs for all ages held in libraries across the city, including age-friendly sessions in each library
5.4	Provide access to health information in the library and online and through signposting	Health information provided, both in the library and via the Manchester City Council website. Increasing number of partnerships developed, and sessions delivered and promoted in libraries
5.5	Provide and promote health books and books that improve wellbeing	Health books and wellbeing books promoted in libraries, including the Reading Well collections. Health book collection established in Northenden Health Centre.
5.6	Host organisations that support people's health	Heart valve sessions run in libraries in September 2023. 350 people over 50 years old had heart checks.
5.7	Increase the number of volunteers	Volunteers provided 12,000 hours of volunteering over the last 12 months. This is a 20% increase from the previous year. It is a key priority to improve this further over the next year
5.8	Be a trusted ear to residents	All libraries act as community hub with staff and volunteers ensuring a warm welcome in libraries

5.9	Increase people's pride in their local area through archives and local history	An increasing number of archives+ sessions and resources held in libraries across the city, including during Local and Communities History Month 2023. This will be increased in the next 12 months, including engagement with the Assheton Collection. BFI Replay promoted in libraries across the city.

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Libraries engagement with children, young people and schools, and Read Manchester

Libraries work with Read Manchester to promote reading for pleasure and the outcomes of literacy, wellbeing, and life skills, which lead to improved health, educational attainment and jobs. The library offer spans all age groups from baby storytimes and rhyme and an active partnership in Baby Week, right through to young people in our high schools.

The core offer includes the Bookstart offer, weekly storytimes at each library, class visits, author visits and national campaigns including the Summer Reading Challenge, World Book Day, Empathy Day and National Storytelling Week. Local and regional events including Chorlton Book Festival and the Festival of Libraries also include programming for children and families.

The Summer Reading Challenge supports 4-11 year olds to continue reading over the summer holidays and avoid the literacy slide that can occur during the break from school. Libraries again offered an integrated model of working, with 42 primary schools signing up their pupils directly to the challenge and receiving materials in school to support this. Children from all other schools were able to join via their local libraries, as part of a universal offer. Over 35,000 books were read by all the children taking part.

Manchester Libraries and BookTrust continue to gift book packs to over 10,000 babies and 3-4 year olds every year to encourage family reading and an early and enduring love of books. The baby pack goes to every baby in the city via the Registrars, whilst the Toddler and Preschooler are targeted via the Early Years partners.

Engagement with schools has continued to grow. During the academic year September 2022 to July 2023, 143 schools engaged with libraries (68% of total schools). Almost 70,000 children attended class visits (in-person and virtual) in the academic year 2022/23. Read Manchester's book gifting programme supported schools and pupils by giving them over 53,000 brand new books as part of their transition read and other book gifting programmes.

Six of our libraries were venues for the Holiday Activities and Food programme in Easter, Summer and December. Sessions involved lunch and activities such as arts and

crafts, reading, music and other positive, engaging activities, and were aimed at ages 11-16. Each holiday young people participated in sessions at Forum, Miles Platting, Withington, Central Library, Gorton and Newton Heath. These aimed to keep young people fed and entertained over holiday periods when they were out of school, and to engage them with libraries.

Working with the Youth, Play and Participation team, training has been rolled out for library staff across the city in working with and engaging young people. Youth-friendly library standards are being created and will include consultation with young people.

Read Manchester

For the last seven years Libraries and Education have worked together to support literacy and reading for pleasure through the Read Manchester campaign, a partnership with the National Literacy Trust. This helps us work with all age groups and focus certain campaigns on specific areas to provide maximum impact. In this way we can improve literacy levels across different ages and communities in Manchester.

Ensuring equal access to books through our **bookgifting campaign** has been a central aspect of this offer. These have been donated by publishers and have been given to residents via community groups, foodbanks, youth groups, churches and refugee groups. As far as possible, choice of books is encouraged so that recipients can choose books that appeal to them; owning a book has been shown to be important in encouraging enjoyment of reading.

Some of the feedback from our recent Christmas bookgifting campaign included the following:

From a parent: "*This is my child's first book. I can't believe she can take this home. I am so happy, thank you!*"

Another organisation said: "*It makes a huge difference to our vulnerable families*."

And from Message Community Grocery: "*Children loved recognising familiar characters, people were overwhelmed with the fact that they were gifted and the choice they had. It has been such a blessing to a community finding it tough to make ends meet. It was great to see pre-teens walking proudly out of the store with a book under their arm*."

Promoting inclusive and diverse books is the driver behind Read Manchester's **See Myself in Books** campaign. These mini libraries of 25 books by authors of colour feature central characters from ethnically diverse backgrounds which reflect the population of Manchester. Forty schools have benefitted from these collections, with a further 20 collections to be gifted in 2024. The collections are accompanied by our programme of author and illustrator school visits. A further set of books have been put together to reflect neurodiverse characters and will be promoted over the coming months. For both projects, a resource for teachers has also been prepared.

The 4th year of our year 6 Transition Read again saw all year 6 pupils (over 7,000) receive a copy of *The Lion Above the Door*, to keep along with teaching resources to support the move to high school. Pupils in SEND schools also received a copy of Sophy Henn's book '*Super Duper You*.' In 2023 a new transition read was launched for early years with children moving up from nurseries and private settings to reception receiving a copy of Dr Ranj's book '*A Superpower like Mine*.' Every 4-year-old received a copy of the book through Making Manchester Fairer funding. The celebration event was held at Moss Side Powerhouse.

Libraries and Read Manchester were the national partner for Empathy Lab UK's live Empathy Day event. Held at the National Cycling Centre velodrome. Over 500 pupils were heard top children's authors speak about their books and writing, as well as talk to the children about the empathy message and how children can find their own empathy superpowers. Each child received a book. Schools attending were supported with empathy-themed books to share back at school.

Partnering with Transport for Greater Manchester, World Book Day was also a highlight of the year and demonstrates the reach and impact of Read Manchester. World Book Day UK supported the partnership by bringing two top children's authors to the city to meet local school children. Over 7,000 books were placed on tram seats across the network, and children could exchange their book tokens for a World Book Day book in all libraries, instead of having to go to a bookshop or supermarket.

Appendix 6: Libraries supporting enterprise.

Business & IP Centre (BIPC) GM

The BIPC in Central Library goes from strength to strength. In 2022-23:

- Delivered over 600 activities including one to one support, workshops, networking events, and webinars.
- Over 5,000 attendees came to events – more than twice our annual target and the most attended BIPC outside London.

The recent report published by the British Library, *Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0* reveals the national impact the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Network has had over a three year period from April 2020 to March 2023. The report shows how the BIPC GM has continued to support entrepreneurship and economic recovery at a local level, contributing to a payback of £6.63 for every £1 of public money spent across the BIPC Network.

Between April 2020 and March 2023, the BIPC GM:

- Helped to create 2,170 new businesses and 357 additional jobs
- Generated £17, 900,000 Gross Value Added (GVA)
- Supported a range of entrepreneurs, of which:
    - 62% were women
    - 42% identified themselves as from a minority ethnic community
    - 15% were disabled
    - 24% were aged 35 and under
    - 36% were from the most deprived areas

In addition:

- 96% of BIPC supported businesses are still trading after their third year (national average 40%).
- 65% of attendees have only used BIPC services for business support.

At a national level the BIPC GM made a significant contribution to the overall targets of the national network, including the addition of some of our case studies in national marketing campaigns.

The launch of the Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0 was held at the House of Lords in July 2023, where Jonathan Ebbs, manager of Libraries' business services spoke about our success.

The success of the BIPC network also featured in the recent Public Libraries Review conducted by Baroness Sanderson – included as Appendix 13.

Build A Business in GM Libraries

Launched in autumn 2021, this ERDF part-funded programme of business support supported over 1,000 individuals across 8 GM authorities by the end of June 2023. As a result of it's success, the project was awarded UK Shared Prosperity Funding and continued seamlessly from July 2023 with funding until March 2025. In addition the service has expanded to all 10 GM authorities with Rochdale and Wigan joining.

Highlights from the Summative Assessment:

- Very successful engaging with individuals from very diverse/underrepresented backgrounds, including female entrepreneurs, people from BAME groups and refugees. In many cases, the SME Champions have adapted to meet the needs of particular groups, e.g. refugees.

- Access to BIPC resources and expertise has been of great value to beneficiaries in developing and exploring their business proposals.
- Pre-starts and early-stage businesses lack funding and the project has provided access to resources such as databases and other BIPC resources at no cost to the participant.
- Successfully brought beneficiaries together, for example through workshops and networking events. Knowledge and experience to be shared and business connections to be developed. It has also enabled a business community to be developed.
- Successful in facilitating business creation and growth.
- Delivered in supportive and relaxed environments which has made participants feel at ease.
- The team working on the project, both centrally and across the participating local authorities. have been fully committed to delivering a successful project for the benefit of participants.
- Many beneficiaries have continued to engage following completion of the support programme by speaking at events and passing their knowledge to other participants.
- Enabled the eight local authorities and their respective Champions to work together and to learn from each other's experiences.
- Enabled the SME Champions to develop lasting relationships with participants by ensuring that participants have a single point of contact on the project.
- Raised the profile of business support delivery through libraries with a number of key agencies. This has given this approach to business support more credibility.
- The Enterprise Officers played a significant role in improving the confidence of participants with regard to developing their business ideas.

Feedback from clients:

"Best training I've ever been on"
"I didn't realise IP was so important to my new business"
"It was so good, can't believe this is free "
"Interested to learn more about IP and how it may affect my business ideas"
"Session was brilliant!! More value than I expected."
"Extremely insightful and useful - great for networking too"
"Passionate, confident and totally involved our interest."
"Brilliant content, food for thought, very approachable trainers."
"Pitched at the right level & very engaging - really good"

Enterprise Hubs:

The Enterprise Hubs are funded through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Funding (£1.8m) with four centres in the City to redevelop unused space to support local entrepreneurs to develop and grow their business.

- Town Hall Extension - The Generator, the flagship space
- Royal Mills in Ancoats offering meeting and networking spaces
- The Yard in Cheetham Hill will be a sustainable fashion/atelier hub
- 422 on Stockport Road Longsight provides local space for small businesses and local start ups in a community setting.

The Generator offers:

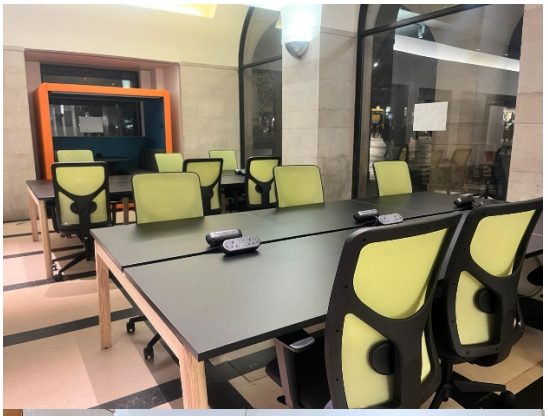
- Space to develop the business
- One to one business information support from the onsite Enterprise Officer
- Programme of events and workshops
- Networking and peer support opportunities
- Community building with members and users

The Enterprise Officer is available in the Generator for 1-2-1 support. These support sessions help identify the individual guidance, development and resource needs of the entrepreneur and help them improve their chances of business success by being

referred to relevant support and resources within the programme, including the resources available at BIPC Manchester.
The Generator is aimed at early stage business founders looking to make connections, collaborate and learn from each other - and meets these needs at a low entry cost for members who can benefit from the wrap around business support and be incubated to move into the wealth of mainstream facilities the City offers. It is also an ideal space for freelancers and hybrid/remote workers who want to take a break from working from home or coffee shops.

The team are working hard on a second Generator Space based in Ancoats which will further strengthen business support in the heart of the city.

Generator
Startup WorkSpace + Support



Appendix 7: Cultural and Creative programme

Manchester Libraries are an important part of the city's cultural and creative infrastructure, often providing access to resident's first cultural experience. Libraries are the most visited cultural venue in the city. The Central Library cultural programme, Library Live, is complemented by activities across all libraries, including three libraries badged as Creative Spaces – North City, Longsight and Wythenshawe Forum. The cultural and creative programme has been developed through several successful Arts Council England funding grants, establishing strong relationships with the city's cultural organisations and groups and supporting library staff's skills and confidence in programming creative events.

Alongside the busy events calendar delivered by library staff, such as cultural festival days, Sunday Fundays, school holiday crafting, Holiday Activity Fund sessions, weekly storytimes, author events, age friendly groups etc, the cultural programme provides access to other high quality creative experiences and opportunities on residents' doorsteps, as well as an introduction to the citywide offer. The cultural programme is delivered in partnership with the city's cultural organisations and artists, supported and informed by library staff.

Some examples of this activity include:

Beswick Library is continuing their four-year partnership of community engagement with the Royal Exchange Theatre which so far has included staff and customers actively participating in their Ambassador programme, Chatty Cafe, Young Ambassadors and Elders group. In August 2023 staff and volunteers from Royal Exchange Theatre produced the very successful East Manchester Community Festival at the Den, their pop-up theatre, which was co-hosted by Beswick Library and neighbouring East Manchester Academy. The programme continues with GM-wide Ambassador get-togethers, social events, free theatre seats for community participants and Young Company workshops.

The Force of Nature project, facilitated by Community Arts Northwest, supported Manchester-based women musicians Sarah Yaseen, Emmanuela Yogolelo and Meduulla to create music around the themes of climate change and climate justice in the Global South. First performed at Festival Square for Manchester International Festival 2023, the performance is now touring to North City Library and Longsight Library accompanied by a series of workshops engaging communities in creative climate conversations, song writing, singing and music making in each library.

Manchester Histories has established a hub in Manchester Central Library, it is a welcoming space that has a focus on wellbeing and highlights lesser-known histories and heritage through exhibitions, performances, installations, workshops, and events. The Hub also promotes the HiDDEN Network, a group of smaller historic buildings, museums, and libraries with rare collections and archives such as the Working-Class Movement Library, Victoria Baths, the Transport Museum and the Jewish Museum.

The library service has secured a grant of approximately £200k from the Arts Council's Libraries Improvement Fund (round 2) programme. The investment will contribute to a transformation of the first floor of the library in 2024, to create a flexible community creative and social space. It will be equipped for small scale live performances and screen presentations, as well creative, digital and music activity and engagement. The space will be a resource for young people as well as the wider community. The library is engaging with colleagues delivering the Cultural Hub planned for Wythenshawe Town Centre as part of the Levelling Up Round 2 initiative to ensure complimentary.

Highlights of the cultural programme: Feb 23 – Feb 24.

Jill Furmanovsky 'Photographing the Invisible' Exhibition, 50 years of rock photography.

For the last 50 years, Jill Furmanovsky has been photographing music's greatest icons. In March 2023 Jill opened her retrospective exhibition, guest curated by Noel Gallagher, 'Photographing the Invisible' at Manchester Central Library displaying some of her most famous works and hidden gems from her extensive archive.

Manchester City of Literature's Festival of Libraries.

This celebration of Greater Manchester's 133 libraries featured a vibrant programme for all ages that highlights the library network's full offer, across wellbeing, culture and creativity, digital and information, and, of course, reading. Events were held in most of Manchester's Libraries including family fun days at Central Library, North City, Longsight and Wythenshawe Forum. The festival featured the 'Look for a book' initiative which engaged people with reading in non-library venues.

Manchester Celebrates World Book Day 2023

Thousands of free books were given away on Manchester's trams to celebrate World Book Day in March 2023. Commuters across the Manchester Metrolink network were in for a treat as the books went out to help promote a love of reading amongst children and their families.

Empathy Day 2023

550 children from across the city were invited to the National Cycling Centre (Velodrome) to be part of our exclusive author event celebrating Empathy Day. Manchester Libraries and Read Manchester hosted the live schools event with Empathy Lab, who brought top children's authors Rob Biddulph, Sophy Henn and Rashmi Sirdeshpande to the Velodrome, hosted by poet Paul Jenkins.

Black British Book Festival

Manchester was one of cities taking centre stage in a summer tour to celebrate the Black British Book Festival. The festival is Europe's largest celebration of black literature with storytelling, workshops. Central Library hosted the festival on Sunday 17th September with talks from key black authors including Jackie Kay, Kehinde Andrews, Ore Agbaje-Williams and Lola Jaye.

Chorlton Book Festival

Chorlton Library was preparing for an exciting refurbishment, so events were popping up all over town in 2023 bringing the folk of Chorlton a smaller but perfectly formed festival for 2023! Highlights included creative writing workshops, fantasy writers, diaries of a football fan, local history walks and spoken word performance night.

Brushstrokes of Bridgerton

A special evening discussing the TV show, colour-blind casting, changing the narrative and discovering more about the panels experience within the world of theatre, TV and film. Panel members included Keisha Thompson, Contact Theatre, Kevin Dalton-Johnson, International artist and curator, Cllr Prof Erinma Bell MBE DL, Peace Campaigner and Carol-Ann Whitehead, Ubuntu Festival Director.

International Mother Language Day

Every February we celebrate UNESCO's International Mother Language Day (IMLD) with our partners Manchester City of Literature. It is a day to champion language diversity and its connection to cultural and traditional heritage. During half term in 2023 libraries across Manchester held special events including dancing, food, storytelling sessions.

Central Library Author Events

We work with local and national publishers and writers to programme our own diverse range of literary events. High profile authors we welcomed to Central Library include bestselling thriller writer Harlan Coben, Booker Prize winning author Douglas Stuart, queer fantasy fan favourite TJ Klune, Succession creator Jesse Armstrong and much-loved romance writer Tessa Bailey.

Manchester Literature Festival

Once again, Central Library was the lead venue for the festival. Authors appearing in 2023 included Natalie Haynes, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Kate Mosse, Sebastian Barry, Sheena Patel, Simon Armitage, DJ Annie Macmanus, MP Lisa Nandy, musician Thurston Moore and comedian Doon Mackichan.

Fun Palaces

Fun Palace events were held at four libraries across the city on Saturday 7 October for this national celebration of sharing passions and skills. Almost 2,000 people attended these hugely popular family fun days packed with creative activities.

South Asian Heritage Month

This year's theme was 'Stories to Tell'. Manchester Libraries planned a range of events, including Chabba making workshops, Yoga classes, marionette puppet workshops and a new exhibition on the history of the Curry Mile.

Re:Sound

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver the Re:Sound project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music at Central Library.

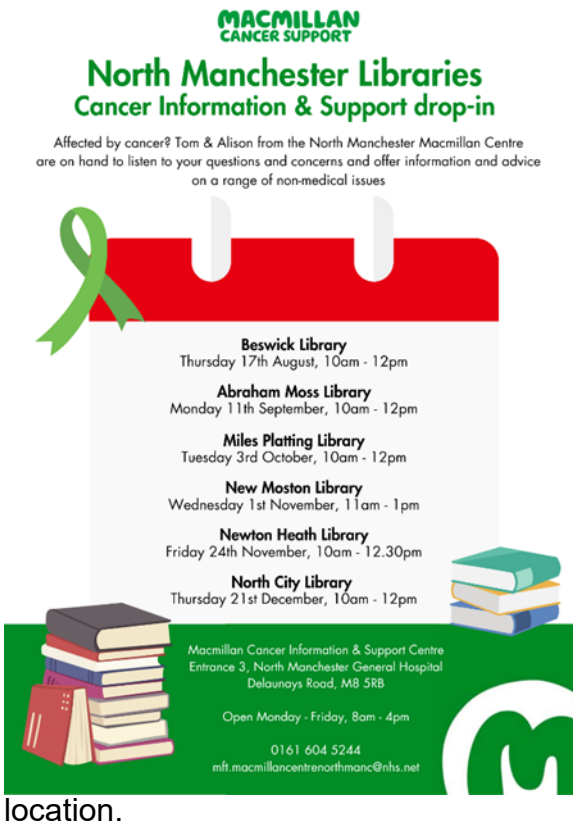
Appendix 8: Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Libraries offer a wide range of health and well-being activities that have a primary effect on improving people's health and also have a broader impact on well-being for the individual and the wider community.

Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. As community venues, libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions.

Direct provision of health promotion and support services

Libraries offer a range of health activities such as Be Well sessions, diabetic workshops, Staying Well this Winter events, armchair exercise sessions, COVID and flu vaccination sessions, blood pressure checks, dementia carer cafes and Macmillan advice sessions. The MacMillan sessions are offered across North Area libraries and are tied in with our age friendly coffee morning drop-ins.



In September 2023, we teamed up with Heart Valve Voice to offer free heart checks at nine libraries across the city. As its primarily people over 50 who are affected by heart valve failure, we aligned the checks to our Age Friendly hour at most locations. Across nine libraries, the medics listened to 341 hearts, with 56 people found to have a previously undetected cardiac condition. Those people were given a letter to take to their GP to get further checks and advice and were followed up by the Heart Valve Voice team. We will explore other similar offers by health providers as this has demonstrated the value of having preventative health care checks in libraries as we are a neutral community-based location.

Social isolation, loneliness and mental health support

Loneliness and social isolation are now recognised as having significant impacts on people's physical, as well as mental health. The recent Public Library User Survey showed that 80% of customers who feel lonely regularly, feel less lonely because of using the library. People of all ages feel lonely but can feel as a sense of belonging in libraries – this is the case for many young people. For older people, loneliness and

social isolation can be chronic issues - according to Age UK, more than a million older people go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. Being socially isolated is a key risk factor for older people in terms of dementia and other mental health conditions, and libraries can offer safe spaces for older people to meet others, and either engage in activities, or just have a chat and a natter. We have an Age Friendly hour and an Age Friendly space at all libraries to provide a friendly accessible space, and social activities for older people.
Keeping the brain active in later years is known to reduce the risk of developing dementia, and reading can help prevent the onset of dementia by 35%. For people who are unable to physically access their neighbourhood library, the Books to Go service provides reading and listening resources direct to people's homes, with the visits of our staff also providing a small respite from loneliness and social isolation. For people who are digitally literate, our on-line services also provide 24 hour access to bibliotherapy books and music resources.

Making Manchester Fairer

Libraries play a key role in the Making Manchester Fairer programme to reduce health inequalities in the city. As free, welcoming, non-judgemental spaces, libraries are recognised as community venues that are crucial to supporting the aims of this programme. Libraries play a key role in all the Making Manchester Fairer kickstarter projects – particularly the early years kickstarter. Libraries are crucial to the Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Warm spaces

Throughout the winters of 2022/23 and 2023/24, all libraries across the city have acted as warm spaces, providing somewhere warm and a free brew for people who may be struggling with the cost of heating at home. This benefits health by helping keep people warm and socially active.

Package for Val

We know that women and girls in our communities are facing period poverty. According to a representative survey of 1,000 girls and young women aged 14-21 by Plan International UK, in the UK, 1 in 10 girls can't afford to buy menstrual products, while 1 in 7 have struggled to afford them. Manchester Central Library has been trialling #APackageForVal campaign for the last year, which supplies anyone that asks with 2 sanitary towels in a discrete paper bag, with no questions asked. Using £3500 of Public Health funding we have rolled out Package for Val across 18 of our neighbourhood and community libraries in early 2024.

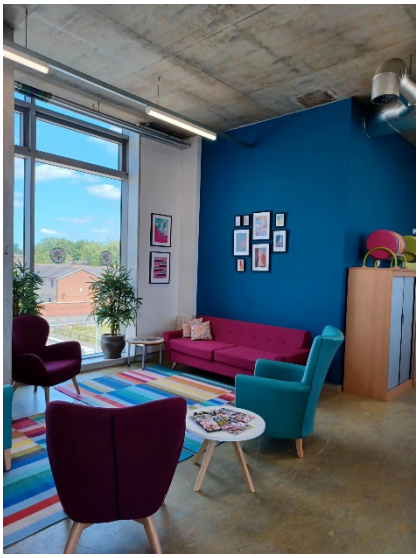
Domestic abuse training

We have worked with the Domestic Abuse Team to develop bespoke training for library staff to be delivered in 2024 on how to best assist people fleeing domestic abuse who ask for help.

Manchester Libraries – Becoming Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries are absolutely committed to making sure that we provide services that meet the needs and aspirations of our older customers. Alongside other local facilities and services, libraries are seen as an important and crucial feature of an Age Friendly neighbourhood. In partnership with Age Friendly Manchester we agreed and adopted a set of Age Friendly standards - attached below - which set out how we ensure that our services and buildings are Age Friendly. We were audited by older people against these standards and are proud that all Manchester Libraries have been designated as Age Friendly since June 2022

Age Friendly Hour and Age Friendly Spaces



Since we re-opened after the pandemic, we have been offering an Age Friendly Hour at all our libraries offering social activities and a brew. In most places, we've timed this to be directly before or after our toddler storytimes, to enable inter-generational crossover - watching the children singing and enjoying their storytime can give a positive boost to older people who may be feeling a bit lonely. We also know how important it is for people to stay connected so in most libraries, we have created vibrant Age Friendly areas with new seating and refreshment trolleys, offering older people a safe, enjoyable and positive experience when they visit, with comfortable places to sit and enjoy the company of others.

Age Friendly Notice Boards

We know how important it is for people to have easy access to information in different formats, so in addition to our online information we have made sure we have an Age Friendly noticeboard on display in all libraries. Our noticeboards are kept up to date, are easy to see and read, and ensure that we are promoting activities and information across the community. They are also portable so that they can be on prominent display in coffee mornings or Grand Day Out sessions. During lockdown, libraries were used by partners as a means to cascade vital to information regarding COVID and Health matters to everyone in the local community.

Age Friendly Audits

As part of the age friendly designation process, library staff conducted a detailed self-assessment for each of our libraries, covering the physical space as well as our service offer. These assessments highlighted some areas for change around

seating, signage and activities offered which we acted on. This was followed up by Customer Service audits, carried out by older people who engaged with other older service users, listened to their feedback and produced an action plan specific to each library.
From June 2022 all libraries in Manchester were given 'Age Friendly Libraries' status and now proudly display the new Manchester Age Friendly Library logo, which was specially designed for us, and reflects our commitment to welcoming and supporting older people within each of our libraries.

Staff Training

All library staff are aware of our age- friendly aspirations and of the issues that can affect people as they age. We developed a bespoke Dementia Friends session, and this is part of our induction for new staff. Workshops have also taken place training staff in how to set up and facilitate Age Friendly groups, activities and events.

Age Friendly employer

Manchester Libraries commit to supporting Manchester City Council becoming recognised as an Age Friendly Employer. Nearly 60% of library staff are aged over 50. We have supported staff who want to reduce their working hours or take flexible retirement, and we have a number who have retired but keep working for 7 hours a week with us – giving them a continued small income and interest, whilst retaining their skills and experience within the service. Since 2020, through open recruitment events, we have taken on a number of new staff over the age 55, with several new starters being well into their 60s, and bringing the benefit of their experience to our service.

Manchester Libraries Age Friendly Standards

We are Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries have committed to a Set of Age Friendly Library Standards which clearly defines the level of service older people can expect from their library.

Our Age Friendly Manchester Libraries offer the following commitment to older people using our service. **We will:**

1. **Ensure you feel welcome.** Our staff will ensure your visit is a safe, enjoyable and positive experience. Services inside the library will be well signed for better wayfinding. This is your Library, please do let us know how we can help you.

2. **Encourage Social Engagement.** We offer a diverse range of activities, some are aimed specifically at older adults. Our libraries are comfortable places in which to sit, socialise and enjoy the company of others.

3. **Be accessible.** Our libraries are well lit and clutter free with no services only accessible by stairs. We will pay attention to the needs of those with mobility issues by offering: supported access through doors, flooring that is even and clutter free and an accessible counter service.

4. **Have places to sit.** You will find a sufficient range of seating throughout each of our libraries and we will ensure seating is always available near entrance points where you may need to rest or await transport.

5. **Offer volunteering opportunities**. We want to hear about the skills you have that you want to share with others.

6. **Have large print books, talking books and e-books.** We will ensure our stock is age appropriate and meets the broad needs and tastes of Manchester's diverse communities. We will promote our Books to Go Service to those not able to get into the library.

7. **Support you with your computer use.** Our staff and volunteers will patiently support those who need additional IT support. Our "IT Drop Ins" are designed for new users. We will work with partners to offer additional IT training.

8. **Provide information.** Where we cannot support you with your enquiry we will signpost you to someone who can help.

9. **Display leaflets and posters.** We know how important access to information is. We will keep our notice boards up to date and relevant. They will be easy to see and interact with. We will promote our activities across the community.

10. **Have toilet facilities including accessible toilets.** These will be checked regularly for cleanliness and supplies.

Appendix 9: Archives

Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA, holding records from across the city region. We manage two partnerships – The Archives+ partnership with colleagues at Manchester Central Library and the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership with the nine other GM Local Authorities.

In 2023 we Manchester Libraries and Archives successfully reaccredited as a Place of Deposit with The National Archives. The assessors described the archives service, based at Central Library, as 'unparalleled' throughout the country.

Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure and Alison Gill, Manchester Libraries and Archives, receiving the Accreditation certificate from Jeff James, Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of UK National Archives.

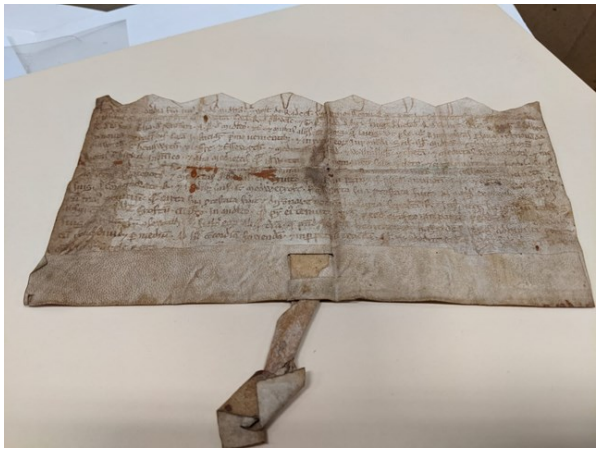
Using Manchester City Council capital funds, the Archives+ exhibition area was overhauled this year to ensure it is sustainable for the next seven years. The film pods have been transformed into Sound and Vision pods which feature sound archives for the first time alongside the North West Film Archives films for the first time. This includes Unlocking Our Sound Heritage archives and Manchester Voices material – a Manchester Metropolitan University project that explored the accents of Greater Manchester.

This has been a particularly rich year for Archives+ exhibitions, including Manchester Voices (analyzing Greater Manchester's accents), various exhibitions in the Manchester Histories Hub, the Manchester Hip Hop Archive displayed in Spinningfields and the Manchester Ship Canal exhibition. Curated by Martin Dodge from the University of Manchester, the exhibition contains visually striking adverts created by commercial artists in the twentieth century to promote the Manchester Ship Canal and the Port of Manchester around the world.

The Manchester Histories Hub, in the lower ground floor of Manchester Central Library, has been developing as a centre for heritage & wellbeing. It has hosted several Come & Chat workshops giving people the opportunity to come together and learn from one another about Greater Manchester's history and heritage using archives & collections. Workshop feedback from those taking part suggests the sessions have had a positive impact on their mental health, and new friendships have been formed combating social isolation and loneliness. The hub has also hosted several small exhibitions & events over the past year. This has included the Manchester Histories Salon, archives from the HiDDEN network, Rooms of Our Own, which celebrated the story of the women who saved the Pankhurst Centre and Manchester City of Literature, International Mother Language Day Exhibition, showcasing their international connection to the other UNESCO Cities of Literature and celebrating Manchester's creative work.

The Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Helpdesk has been extremely busy throughout 2023, assisting 3500 customers - the same level as pre-pandemic.

Archives+ has been awarded £100k from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a new website for the Manchester Local Image Collection and digitise 10,000 more images using local volunteers. The two-year project began in January 2024 and will bring together online for the first time all the library's digitised local photographs.



Articles of Agreement 1197

In 2023, the Greater Manchester County Record Office purchased the Assheton collection. This collection is Greater Manchester's oldest surviving archive collection and has long been deposited with us. We managed to raise £100k to purchase it and to engage customers with it. The funding has been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, V&A Purchase Fund, Friends of National Libraries and the Manchester Central Library Development Trust. It includes material from the 12th Century and relates to the Assheton family of Middleton.

Archives+ is the digitisation partner on the Royal Northern College of Music's Throwing Open The Concert Doors project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project is digitising over 1300 important and at-risk concert recordings held on obsolete open tape reels going back 50 years, transforming access to them while engaging the local community with the College's musical heritage. As part of the project Archives+ receives £55k to cover an Audio Preservation Engineer and conservation costs for 15 months. At January 2024 digitisation is ahead of schedule and is projected to reach as many as 2,000 tapes. Many of the concerts online can be listened online at https://on.soundcloud.com/qdp51.

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver the Re:Sound project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music. The community groups were Afrocats, KYSO Talent Group, Pendleton Sixth Form College, The Sebene Project, Young Identity and 42nd Street.

This year saw the official launch of the British Film Insititute's BFI Replay product that gives access nationally via every library computer and library Wi-Fi to a fascinating collection of video clips and films. One of the Archives+ partners the North West Film Archive (Manchester Metropolitan University) provided material for this website and has created toolkits to help customers make the most of BFI Replay.

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People were successful in their bid to the Wellcome Trust in 2021, in partnership with Archives+, to catalogue, digitise and make accessible their Disabled People's Archive. The project continues and highlights of the collection are now available at: https://disabledpeoplesarchive.com/in-the-archive/.

Beswick Library was pleased to host a fascinating exhibition for the National Grid Gasholders from the Bradford Road gasworks. These historic structures, some dating back to the 1890s, are being demolished and will vanish from the East Manchester skyline. Beswick Library partnered with National Grid to hold a celebration of these local icons, showing films about their history and the demolition process. Actual sections of steelwork from the Saxon Street gasholder, have been donated by National Grid and were displayed at Beswick Library and Miles Platting Library, alongside an exhibition of contemporary and historic photographs. Visitors said: "I had no idea it was going to be so fascinating! I'm so glad I stayed to hear this." and "Seeing the steelwork pieces was amazing – they really gave you a sense of the scale of the gasholders and how gigantic they were!"

A launch of the Greater Manchester rate books and electoral registers project with Findmypast happened during May’s Local and Community History Month. This new resource makes thousands of indexed family history archives accessible online for free at Greater Manchester archives and libraries for the first time.

Appendix 10: Manchester City of Literature Update

This report is a summary of activity carried out under the UNESCO City of Literature designation since the last report to Scrutiny Committee in January 2023.

The report gives an overview of the commitments to UNESCO and the benefits the designation brings; the governance model for Manchester City of Literature, the independent organisation that coordinates the designation, and its vision, achievements and impacts for residents, local writers and for international initiatives.

It also shows how high-quality community celebrations such as Festival of Libraries have impacted on wellbeing and engagement for residents (59.7% reported improved wellbeing; 37% will visit their libraries more often and 47% will encourage other people to visit and use libraries). It shows how Manchester City of Literature has generated an additional £250K+ of external investment in literary activity in the city and supported and created new partnerships. It shows how Manchester is contributing to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Background to Manchester City of Literature

31 October 2023 was the sixth anniversary of Manchester being designated a UNESCO City of Literature. Manchester's successful application to become a UNESCO City of Literature was led by Manchester City Council, The University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University (the 'Commissioning Partners'), working with a range of literature sector partners from across the city.

The new independent organisation established in 2019 to coordinate the designation became a registered charity in 2020.

The designation, which is awarded to Manchester City Council in perpetuity (subject to successful review every four years), brought Manchester into a global network of (now) 350 UNESCO Creative Cities across seven creative fields: literature, design, crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, music and gastronomy. There are (now) 53 Cities of Literature across six continents.

Commitments to UNESCO

Member cities of this UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) recognise the value - economically, socially and environmentally - of placing creativity and culture at the heart of their sustainable development. The City Council retains a key role in the realisation of the UNESCO designation, including a commitment to UNESCO to strengthen participation in cultural life and to integrate culture into city strategies to meet the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This global plan for a sustainable future where no one is left behind shares many features with Our Manchester and other Council policies.

The Council was the lead applicant to UNESCO for the designation in 2017 and will retain responsibility as the official holder of the designation in perpetuity. Manchester is also bidding to be a UNICEF Child Friendly City and a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning. It is important for success that all three initiatives are strongly aligned.

The UNESCO designation links with a range of other strategic priority areas, including but not limited to: international; skills development; children and families; economic development; social inclusion; and community cohesion.

Now the charity is established City Council officer level involvement has changed from a leadership and initiation role towards grant monitoring to safeguard our investment; partnership working on shared priorities and initiatives; and support for the Council's representative on the Board.

Manchester is required to attend two international conferences with other Creative Cities each year to share the city's best practice and exemplar creative projects on sustainable development. At the Annual UNESCO Conference, attendance by a senior political figure from the city is required. The cost of travel for this is paid for by Manchester City of Literature.

Benefits

- Whilst there is no funding attached from UNESCO, the designation and active participation in the UCCN is already bringing a range of benefits to the city for example:
- Raised profile of the city and its cultural offer regionally, nationally and internationally;
- Raised profile of the city's publishing sector and related creative industries, attracting new businesses and inward investment;
- A stronger voice in policy development on the international stage, and opportunities for sharing best practice, with regards to culture and sustainable development;
- Development opportunities for local residents and cultural organisations such as international artist exchanges and residencies;
- Increased potential to lever new funding into the city for cultural activity, including work that promotes literacy.

Vision and Governance Model for Manchester City of Literature

Manchester City of Literature's vision is to create *an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing, where diverse voices are celebrated, creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.* The ambition is for Manchester City of Literature to be owned by the whole city, with literary organisations empowered to develop and promote Manchester's literary and cultural offer through a consistent but diverse collective voice and shared branding.

Manchester City of Literature has already helped support, connect and add value to existing activity; encouraged partnership working and joint fundraising; raised the profile of the sector; ensured the city's active participation as a member of the UCCN; and enabled Manchester's diverse range of voices to be represented and celebrated, with everyone in the city benefiting from the designation.

The values that underpin the designation are:

- Distinctive – creating distinctive cultural experiences inspired by Manchester's unique, radical character and rich cultural heritage whilst looking to the future;
- Inclusive – celebrating the rich diversity of voices in the city, building on the strengths of Manchester's people and widening participation in literary activity;
- Transformative – developing skills, nurturing creative talent & transforming lives;
- Connected – linking and supporting literary activity and enabling collective advocacy for Manchester's literary community and international collaborations;
- World-leading – a beacon for high quality, culturally democratic, truly diverse literary activity.

A Board of Trustees oversees the work of Manchester City of Literature and ensures it delivers its charitable objectives and obligations to the Commissioning Partners. Following an open recruitment process, Manchester writer Zahid Hussain was appointed as the first Chair of the Board. Each of the Commissioning Partners nominate a trustee for the Board: currently Cllr Luthfur Rahman for Manchester City Council; Professor Jess Edwards for Manchester Metropolitan University; and Professor John McAuliffe for the University of Manchester. They are joined by 6 Community Trustees selected via open recruitment.

There is a staff team of four (2.6 FTE): Ivan Wadeson, Executive Director; Hawwa Alam, Community Engagement Manager; Jo Flynn, Partnerships and Communications Manager, and Rachel Fallon, Operations Manager. Freelance project staff are engaged for funded initiatives such as Festival of Libraries.

Manchester City of Literature Partners

Manchester City of Literature works with and through a partnership network of over 30 organisations including HEIs, publishers, writing agencies, libraries, festivals and booksellers. Manchester City of Literature has continued to grow the Partnership Network with publishers Bent Key and Honford Star and bookshop The House of Books and Friends joining the Network. In this period, Manchester City of Literature issued 12 monthly newsletters sharing news and events from across our Partnership Network and hosted over 14 Network meetings bring literary partners together: 38 organisations attended in this period. Events including working with schools with a presentation from First Story, collaborative work with publishers, on literature centres including a presentation from the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne and on writer residencies including a presentation from Ljubljana City of Literature.

Partners: Manchester City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Manchester, the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Bent Key, Carcanet, Central Library, Centre for New Writing, Chetham's Library, Commonword, Comma Press, Creative Manchester, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, Flapjack Press, Fly On The Wall Press, Honford Star, House of Books and Friends, John Rylands Library, MACFest, Manchester Children's Book Festival, Manchester Libraries, Manchester Literature Festival, Manchester Poetry Library, Manchester University Press, Manchester Writing School, Muslim Writers North, Pariah Press, Poets & Players, Read Manchester, Saraband Press, The Portico Library, Working Class Movement Library and Young Identity.

Manchester City of Literature Project Activity

Manchester City of Literature highlights the city's literary and cultural strengths to local residents and to global stakeholders. Through programmes and projects, it amplifies the city's strong history of literary expression and free speech, its linguistic diversity, its world-class literary education, its vibrant creative industries sector, its innovative spirit and its ambition to ensure more people engage with culture than ever before. Independent research by The Audience Agency showed that in 2022, 1 in 5 of Manchester residents were aware of the UNESCO Creative City designation. A selection of community projects include:

International Mother Language Day (IMLD)

IMLD is an annual celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. Since 2018 over 12,000 adults and young people have engaged with IMLD events created by partners including Manchester Libraries, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester, Community Arts Northwest, Instituto Cervantes and Comma Press. The programme of IMLD events for February 2024 features over 22 events including a multilingual writing exhibition about textiles and identity in Central Library from 12 February. The Threads exhibition features nine other Cities of Literature Reykjavik, Granada, Leeuwarden, Wrocław, Melbourne, Odesa, Tartu, Exeter and Nottingham alongside work from Manchester writers Keisha Thompson and Hafsah Aneela Bashir.

Multilingual City Poets

To further promote Manchester's linguistic diversity, three Multilingual City Poets were appointed in February 2021 to create new poetry in English, Urdu, Arabic and Spanish. In 2023 poems were created about Manchester's history of protest, Gaza and on the South Asian diaspora contribution to UK life (the latter to be premiered at Manchester Indian Film Festival in May/June 2024.

Festival of Libraries

This is a unique Festival in the UK that celebrates the role of public, heritage, specialist and medical libraries. 2023 saw the third edition of the Festival across Greater Manchester. In 2023, there were 111 events and exhibitions over 5 days, from 7-11 June. For the five days of the Festival, footfall in libraries was 58,000+ people and 5,120 people attended individual, bookable in-person events or exhibitions. High profile appearances at this year's festival included Poet Laureate Simon Armitage with a masterclass at Manchester Central Library, author and presenter Nadiya Hussain in Rochdale, and drag artist Cheddar Gorgeous at Chetham's Library.

The independent evaluation showed that 98% of visitors agreed that libraries are an essential community service. 74% felt the Festival had shown them their library had more to offer than they had previously thought. 50% said they would now encourage other people to visit and use libraries.

"My children hugely enjoyed it. The poet was brilliant and really knew how to connect them to the content."
"The staff were really welcoming and it was nice to spend time with my son in the library."
"Such friendly staff, lovely and informal. Thank you so much for doing this event, we enjoyed it!"
"Truly amazing, well-organised and presented event. Beautiful building and very welcoming ambience."

Two MA students from the University of Manchester undertook placements on the Festival of Libraries creating digital content including bespoke family tours and trails.

Schools Writing Trail

The Manchester City of Literature Schools Writing Trail showcased the 'best of the best' of student writing, offering a city centre literature trail in parallel with Manchester's Festival of Libraries.

The Schools Writing Trail was an indoor and outdoor exhibition of some of the very best student writing in Manchester. Over 100 young writers were featured, writing in 12 languages, with 152 pieces of writing. The Trail was a walkable constellation of young voices connecting community arts centres, schools, universities, and libraries with over 40 schools in Greater Manchester. The Schools Writing Trail project was a celebration of the young writers who are a vibrant part of what makes Manchester a UNESCO City of Literature.

There were 6 locations in the city centre where audiences could read work that was generated from 8 Manchester-based initiatives: First Story's Connect Event, Z-Arts Story Stars, The Portico Library's annual Sadie Massey and Art of the Book awards, the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester's annual Schools Writing

Competition, Manchester Metropolitan University's annual Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition, Saturday Club and, in conjunction with the Comino Foundation, Comino Poet in Residence program.

NHS Windrush Untold Stories

Working alongside Manchester City of Literature Community Champion, Jackie Bailey, Manchester City of Literature devised an exciting programme of workshops for African Caribbean NHS workers (past and present) and their families and communities to explore their experiences of contributing to the NHS Story. This was in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University and the parallel NHS Untold Stories programme. NHS staff took part in a series of workshops led by industry-leading writers including Shirley May, Micah Yongo and Keisha Thompson to develop writing to be exhibited at the Manchester Poetry Library. Following the initial workshop phase, seven NHS Windrush Stories writers received follow up mentoring to develop their work. They worked alongside the writers who delivered the initial workshops to prepare their writing for publication and exhibition. The creative work spanned genres including poetry, creative journaling, fantasy and music.

Re: Sound

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver this project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music. The community groups were Afrocats, KYSO Talent Group, Pendleton Sixth Form College, The Sebene Project, Young Identity and 42nd Street.

Stories of Gorton

Local residents were recruited to explore Gorton by walking its streets and sharing stories about the neighbourhood. Five residents accompanied writer Sarah Butler each month between September 2022 and March 2023. Each month a different person led the walk around the parks, houses, work places, neglected corners and vanished buildings of the neighbourhood. Writing created during the project was collected together into a pamphlet published in June 2023 and shared at the Festival of Libraries.

Our Stories LGBTQ+ Conference

Our Stories in November 2023 championed the bold steps publishers are making to advance equality, to amplify the stories of LGBTQ+ writers and illustrators and to explore routes into publishing for aspiring authors By bringing together young people, writers and illustrators working in every form of literature, and publishing folk

from the UK and Ireland, Our Stories sparked a conversation with the industry, and made steps to empower the next generation of LGBTQ+ writers and illustrators to take up pathways into publishing.

A selection of international and writer residency projects:

17 Books for 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

With this digital campaign delivered in December 2023, we highlighted a book associated with Manchester each day on our social media platforms which ties in with a UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal.

International Mother Language Day in February 2023

International activity included:

- A collaborative multilingual chain poem called ‘Words from the Childhood Home’. Anjum Malik, a Manchester-based poet who writes in Urdu and English, began the poem with a four-line stanza on the theme of ‘the childhood home’. Each following poet was then asked to respond to the previous stanza in their mother tongue, with a translation into English. Eight other UNESCO Cities of Literature took part: Dunedin, Edinburgh, Heidelberg, Lviv, Melbourne, Montevideo, Nottingham and Tartu
- Post-COVID Cities’, a comic art exhibition from Angoulême City of Literature, shown during IMLD in Central Library featuring artwork from Nanjing, Quebec City, Reykjavik, Bucheon, Slemani & Angoulême. Alongside the exhibition, films were screened from Tartu, Nottingham and Reykjavik Cities of Literature
- Four other UNESCO Cities of Literature programming events in their city for IMLD: Bucheon, Norwich, Edinburgh and Gothenburg

Tartu European Capital of Culture 2024

Manchester writer David Hartley was selected to represent Manchester as Writer in Residence with Tartu City of Literature for a collaborative project for the city’s European Capital of Culture programme in 2024. The residency saw David Hartley paired with Estonian artist Henri Hütt. They worked together during David’s residency in Tartu to create a collaborative work called A Forest Of Ink And Skin to be shown in Tartu as part the 2024 Prima Vista International Literary Festival for the European Capital of Culture programme. Parallel to this project, David Hartley and Henri Hütt will be working with other Manchester and Estonian artists on The Embassy of Utopia, a two-day event for Festival of Libraries in June 2024. Taking place in Central Library, The Embassy of Utopia invites the people of Manchester to take the stage and share their vision for the future of our city.

Slamovision 2023

Manchester City of Literature was represented at the Slamovision global poetry slam in November 2023 by Esther Koch. Esther went head-to-head with entries from eight other Cities of Literature; Exeter, Iowa City, Kuhmo, Tartu, Dublin, Ljubljana, Nottingham, Quebec City and Vilnius. The event was hosted in person with livestreaming by Nottingham City of Literature. Esther Koch won Slamovision for Manchester meaning Manchester City of Literature will host the 2024 final.

Writer Residencies and Presentations

For the Festival of Libraries 2023, award-winning Icelandic Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir was hosted by the John Rylands Library for an in-person writing residence. Auður returned to Manchester in October 2023 to talk about the residency and her work as part of Manchester Literature Festival.

Manchester writer Bria Cotton was selected for a virtual residency with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Australia in November 2023. Bria will be working with them virtually to explore the collection and create new original work as part of her residency, supported by Melbourne City of Literature. The residency will also include opportunities for meetings with all the writers in residence and facilitated further connections with Melbourne as a City of Literature.

Three Manchester artists were featured in events in Quebec City, Canada, alongside the annual Cities of Literature conference. Writer Yusra Warsama wrote and recorded a poem which was featured in a thirty-minute soundtrack to Multivox, an outdoor dance piece for 29 performers which was the opening event of Quebec's literature festival Quebec En Toutes Lettres.

A public art exhibition called Toponymy showed new and different stories for where a city's name comes from. Manchester City of Literature commissioned a new original text from writer Shamshad Khan and an illustration by Audrey Albert, explaining and expanding on the origin and the meaning of how Manchester got its name. The exhibition opened in September 2023 in one of the main squares in Quebec and will move around to other outdoor locations until October 2024.

Global Profile and Influence

The Manchester City of Literature team attended the annual UNESCO Cities of Literature Conference, hosted by Quebec City of Literature over five days in October 2023. Manchester shared a best practice case study on the Schools Writing Trail. Manchester City of Literature representatives have also represented the city in global showcases in person in 2023 including in Gdansk, Bremen and Bucheon.

Manchester was also represented on the UNESCO UK Sites Illustrated Map. For the first time a map bringing together all of the Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites across the British Isles that are waiting to be discovered has been published. Manchester is one of the 58 sites represented

and took part in this national and global tourism development project supported by the GREAT campaign and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

UK Ambassador to UNESCO

In July 2023, Manchester City of Literature coordinated the visit to Manchester of Anna Nsubuga, UK Ambassador to UNESCO. Together with James Bridge, Secretary-General of the UK High Commission to UNESCO, Anna visited Central Library, The Portico, Manchester Poetry Library and John Rylands Library meeting reps from University of Manchester, Man Met Uni and literary organisations. She had a tour of Central Library and Archives + with Neil MacInnes and on the second day of her visit she gave a keynote address at the ISPA Conference organised by HOME and Manchester International Festival alongside Cllr Rahman.

Securing Additional Investment

Manchester City of Literature has been highly effective at leveraging investment into Manchester's literary sector. Since 2020, Manchester City of Literature has secured over £337,000 of new investment into literary activity from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, British Council, Granada Foundation and corporate sponsors, with a decision on an additional £98,660 due in February 2024.

Conclusion

This report shows the impact of the designation on Manchester since 2020 and the multiple benefits delivered to residents and local creative industries. It shows how the city is living up to its commitments to UNESCO and how the opportunities that the designation bring are being realised.

The Schools Writing Trail at Central Library and Z-Arts Hulme.

NHS Windrush Untold Stories

Re:Sound community groups on stage in Central Library.

Toponomy Exhibition in Quebec City

International Partnerships and Presentations 2024

Threads Exhibition | 12 February - 23 March
Organised by Manchester City of Literature, features 9 other UNESCO Cities of Lit: Reykjavik, Wroclaw, Melbourne, Exeter, Granada, Nottingham, Tartu and Leeuwarden.

International Mother Language Day | 21 February
Online Panel discussion with Manchester, Leeuwarden and Gothenburg Cities of Literature.

Rising Tide at Pearse Street Library, Dublin | 22 February
Manchester's Slamovision winner Esther Koch appears the bill at this Dublin City of Literature spoken word night.

Not Just Words: Reading for Odesa | 24 February
Readings of classic and contemporary Ukrainian literature in solidarity with Odesa and Lviv Cities of Literature. Events taking place in Manchester Central Library and simultaneously in Dublin, Edinburgh, Exeter, Krakow, Kuhmo, Iași, Lviv, Melbourne, Nottingham, Reykjavík, Tukums, Wrocław.

World Poetry Day | 21 March
Manchester will contribute to this global celebration alongside UNESCO Cities of Literature.

Granada Book Fair, Spain | 19 - 21 April
Manchester is the guest city at the Granada Book Fair taking part of three days of events and workshops.

A Forest of Ink and Skin at Prima Vista Literature Festival, Estonia | 11 May
Manchester writer David Hartley & Tartu artist Henri Hutt have created a performance piece as part of Tartu's European Capital of Culture programme on Estonian folklore, the natural world and storytelling as a power for good.

Bremen | 8th June
Manchester's Multilingual City Poet Jova Baglioli Reyes will feature at this German Poetry Slam Evening as part of Poetry on the Road Festival.

Festival of Libraries 2024 | 13 - 16 June
- MONUMENTS from award-winning Québec poet and performer Vanessa Bell in which voices, texts, photos and videos meet around a real territory, Newfoundland, and an imagined road trip.

- The Embassy of Utopia is a two-day open forum of utopian-themed speeches and sharings as the people of Manchester share their vision of the future of the city alongside UK and Estonian artists.

-Danish Comics exhibition from Art Bubble Festival gives an overview of the history of Danish comics and then introduces nine contemporary artists from Denmark in an vivid and accessible way. The exhibition is in English and Danish.

-From Ink To Action and Collectives For Change are two comic art exhibitions in partnership with Lakes International Comic Art Festival featuring artists from from Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria.

Annual Conference of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network
1-5 July
Braga Portugal

Annual Conference of the UNESCO Cities of Literature
21-25th October
Edinburgh, Scotland

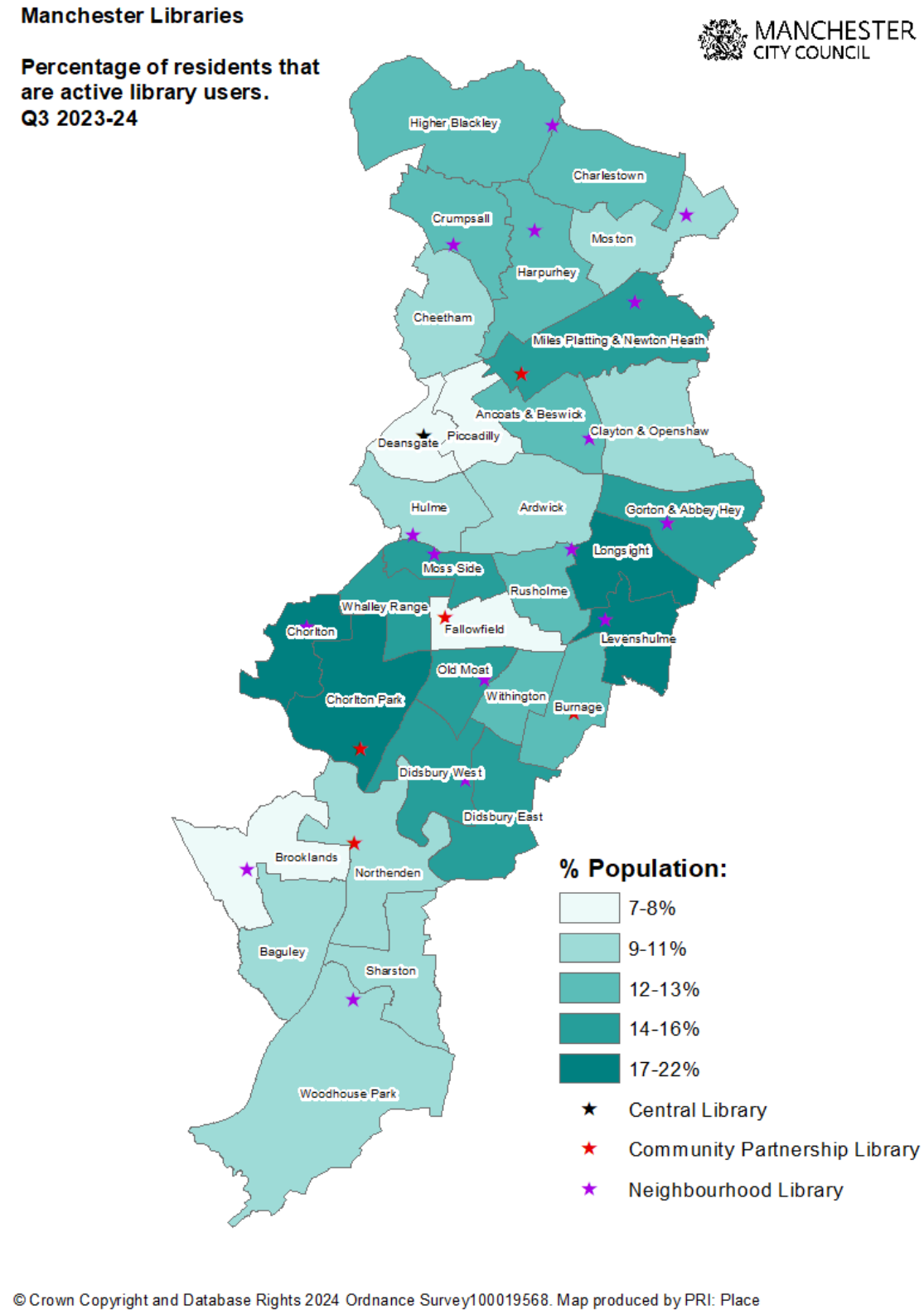
Slamovision | Date TBC
Poets from across the Cities of Literature network compete in a Eurovision-style slam, hosted by last year's winner Manchester.

MANCHESTER A UNESCO City of Literature

Manchester Libraries Performance 2023

2023	Visits	Loans	PC Usage (hours recorded)	Wi-Fi (authenticated sessions)	Education Session (participants)	Events and Activities (attendees)	Active Members (borrowed stock and/or used PC)
CITY-WIDE							
Online/Telephone	-	209,137	-	-	-	-	128
Ebook/audiobook	-	656,375	-	-	-	-	-
Books to Go	-	42,989	-	-	-	-	454
Outreach (non library based sessions)	-	-	-	-	29,774	2,626	-
BRANCHES							
Abraham Moss	88,025	21,114	7,037	-	1,348	5,962	6,219
Arcadia	95,978	28,899	9,964	56,324	963	2,582	3,328
Avenue	44,257	21,202	8,280	4,625	1,017	6,136	2,995
Barlow Moor	2,900	1,383	1,091	3,704	31	170	142
Beswick	44,232	10,829	5,142	21,664	976	3,761	2,638
Brooklands	17,926	13,750	3,191	5,926	597	3,015	1,223
Burnage	15,487	10,310	579	2,344	2,022	3,504	1,189
Central Library	1,387,608	117,877	121,372	728,352	8,055	40,230	28,771
Chorlton	112,447	74,093	8,564	10,860	1,075	3,551	8,671
Didsbury	98,725	60,312	5,705	17,236	896	4,392	5,801
Fallowfield	70,223	6,075	5,750	1,085	654	6,251	1,713
Forum	130,988	42,912	18,727	16,442	1,927	15,328	5,966
Gorton	78,221	30,457	15,880	2,319	2,423	4,146	4,254
Hulme High St	134,725	17,582	11,371	7,885	-	3,740	1,894
Longsight	171,071	37,409	24,433	16,514	3,246	5,979	7,184
Miles Platting	6,291	2,522	585	394	-	1,552	422
Moss Side Powerhouse	19,366	13,331	10,739	8,088	2,139	3,326	1,783
New Moston	3,850	2,105	443	1,383	-	712	490
Newton Heath	61,081	11,370	7,159	3,997	794	9,845	2,525
North City	57,176	20,445	12,131	18,973	452	7,065	3,824
Northenden	5,048	4,466	869	1,032	12	1,394	329
Wells Centre		-	11,770	-	-	-	
Withington	84,709	35,350	10,167	39,925	398	5,967	5,198
Z-Arts		3,818	-	-	-	-	279
Branch Totals	**2,730,333**	**587,611**	**300,949**	**969,072**	**29,025**	**138,608**	**96,838**
Total (including City-Wide)	**2,730,333**	**1,496,112**	**300,949**	**969,072**	**58,799**	**141,234**	**97,420**

Percentage of residents who are library members – January 2024



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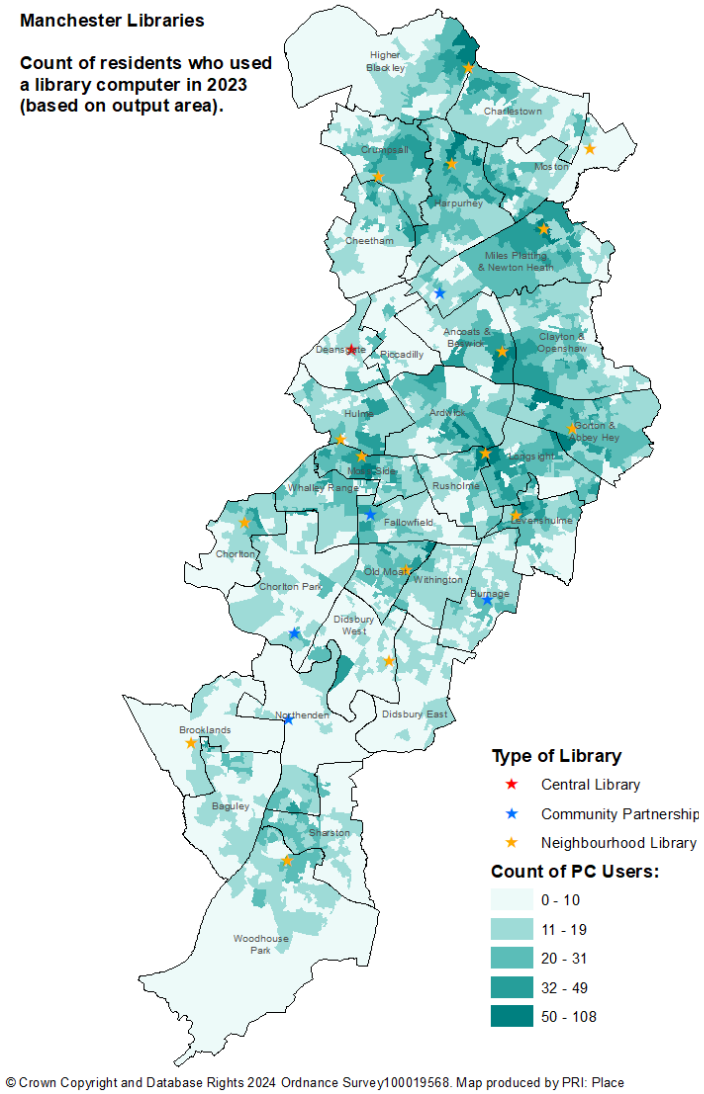
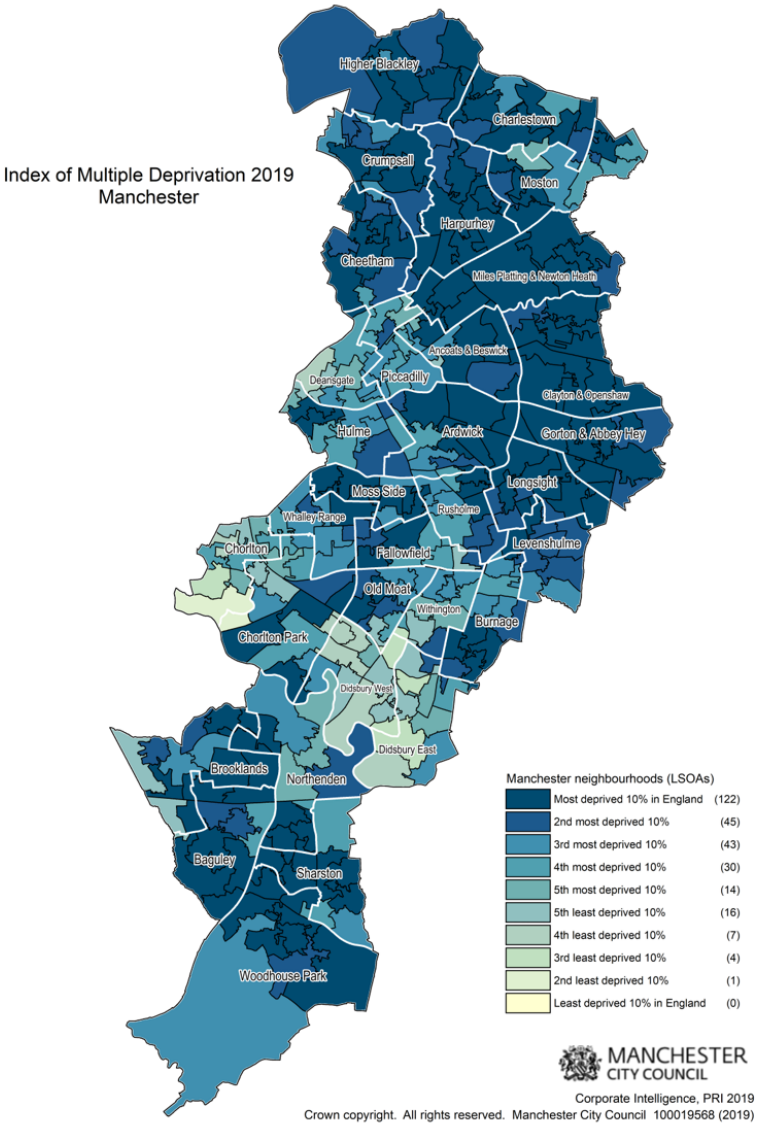
An active member is someone who has borrowed a book or used a library computer in the last 12 months.

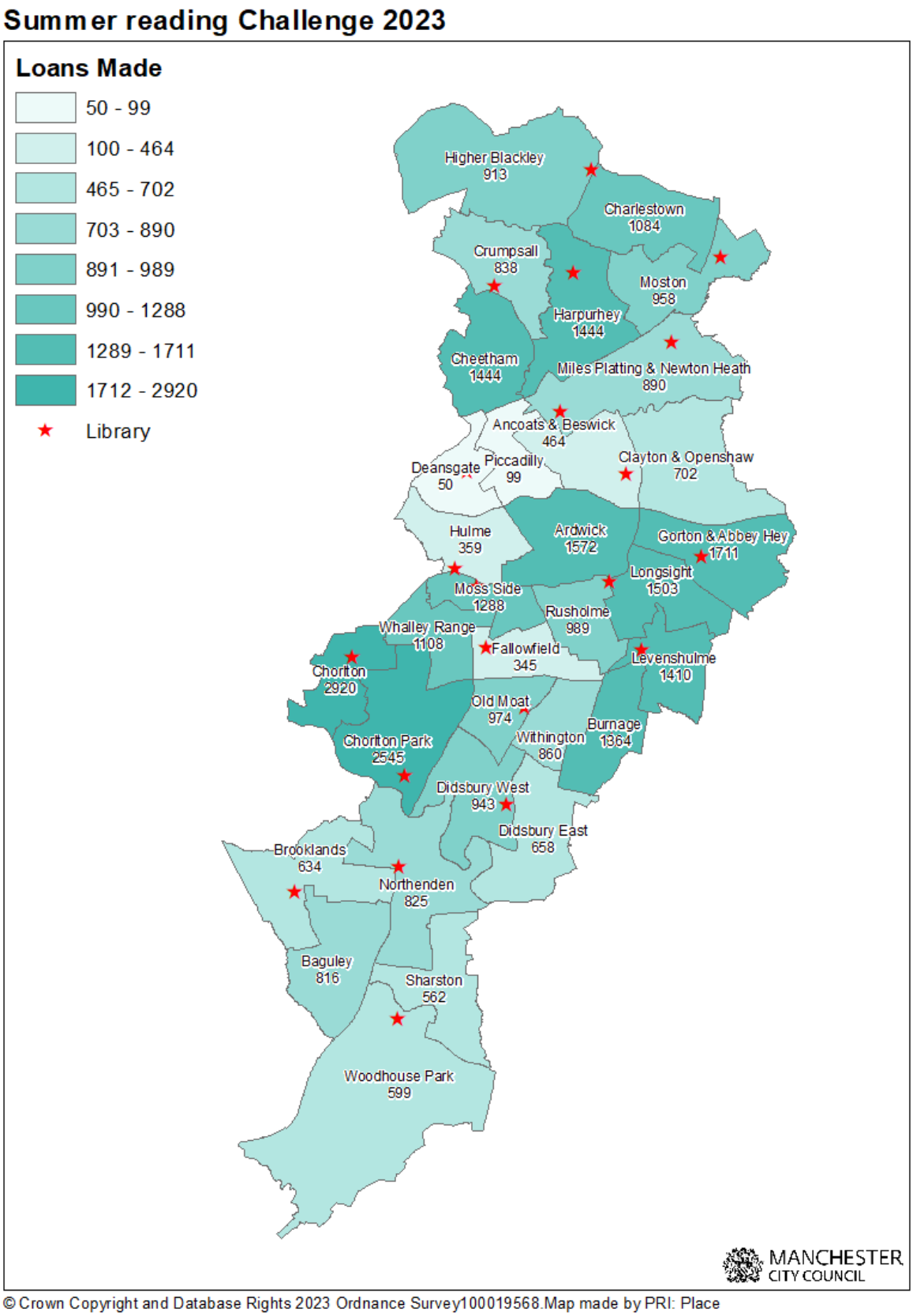
Library computer users in 2023 compared to Index of Multiple Deprivation





The darker areas are generally the same on both maps, showing that the libraries computer users tend to live in the more deprived areas of the city.

Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Number of books borrowed by children during the Summer Reading Challenge



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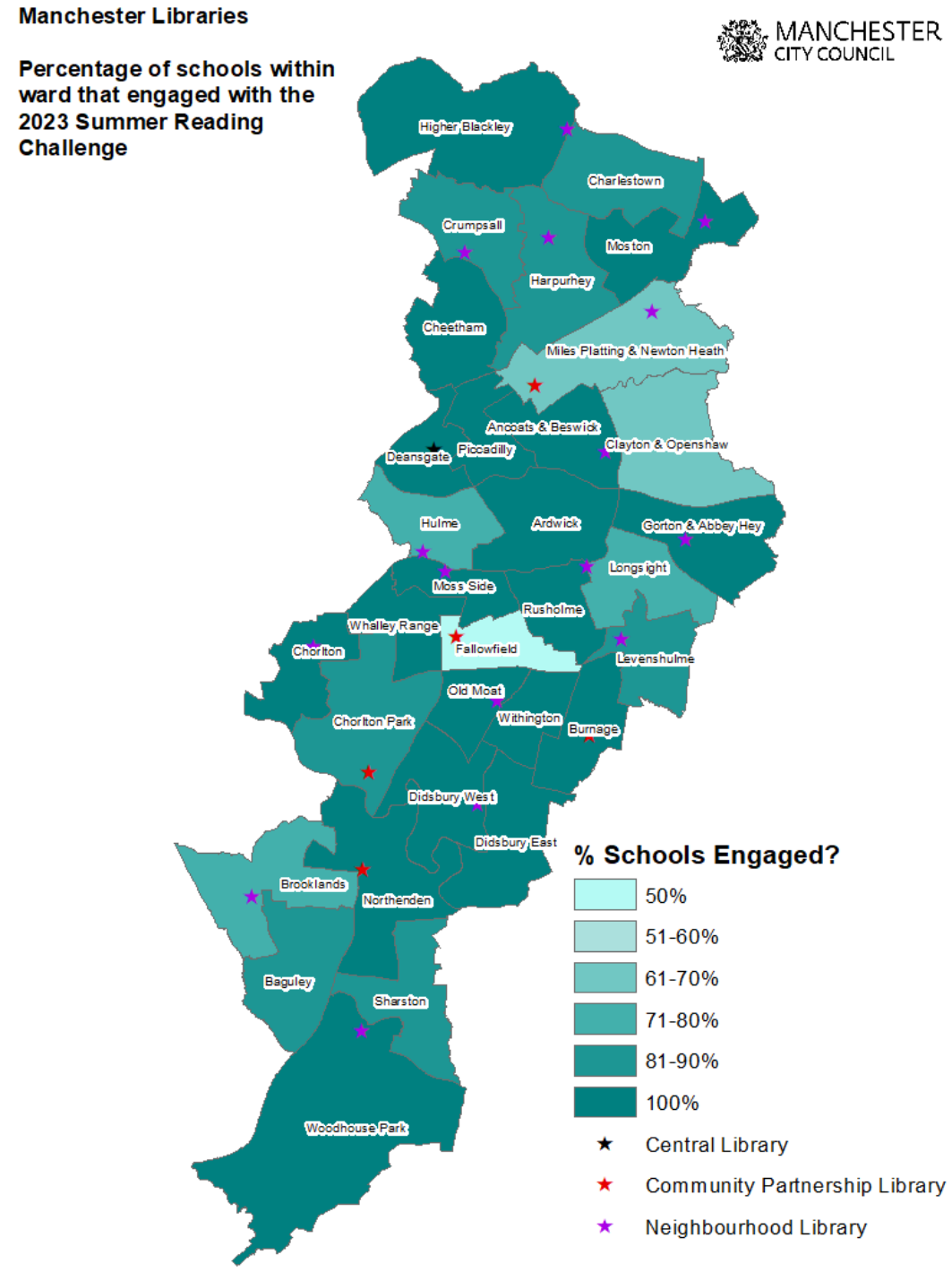
Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Percentage of schools engaged through Summer Reading Challenge



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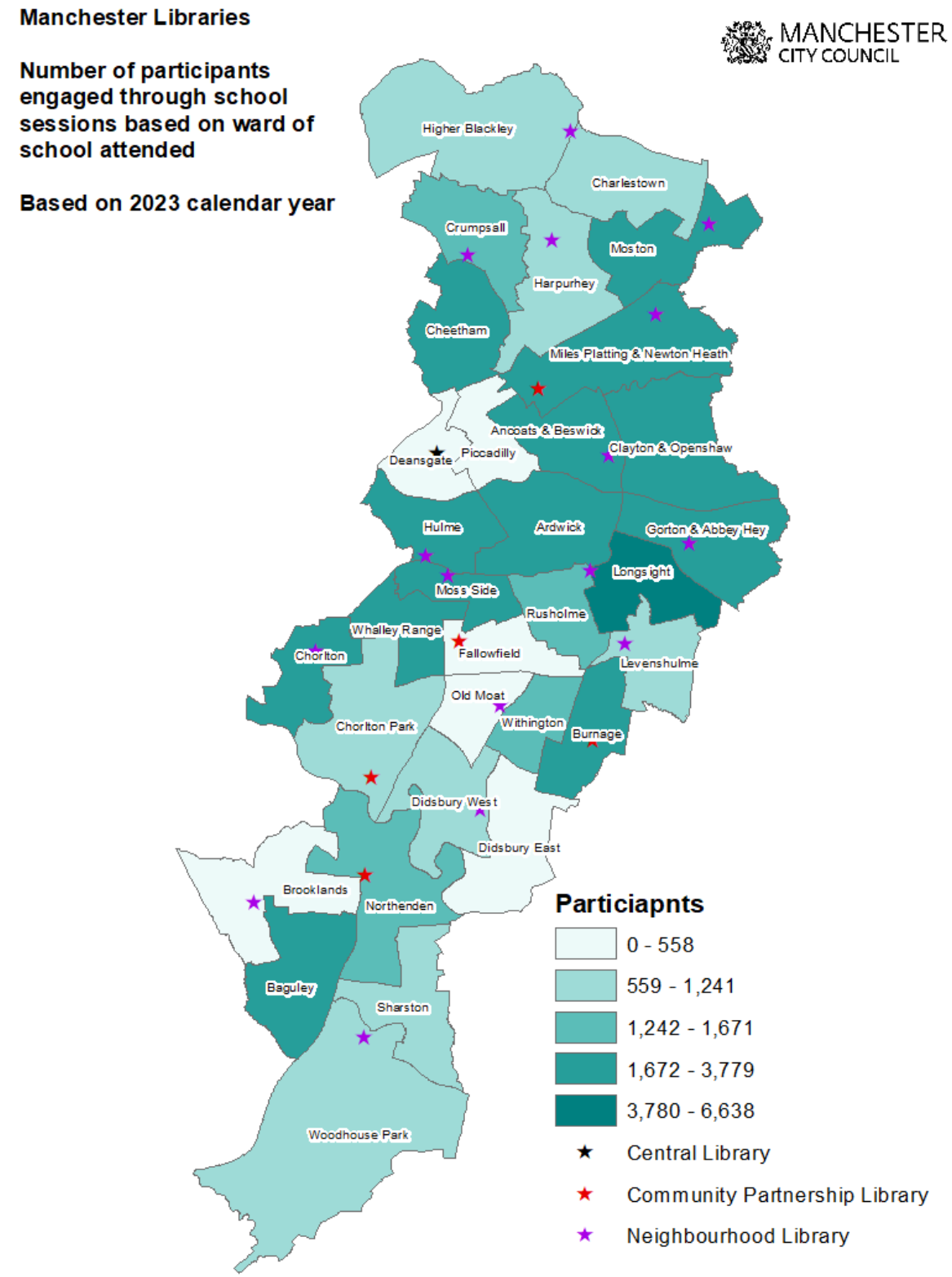
School engagement – 2023



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Manchester Libraries:

Adult PLUS 2023 Results

Analysis by PRI: Place
May 2023

CIPFA MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Introduction

The CIPFA Adult Public Library User Survey was carried out across all Manchester libraries during the week beginning 13th February 2023. 3182 questionnaires were received back, achieving a response rate of 71%, 3% lower than in 2020.

The survey consisted of 28 questions. Customers were invited to rate their satisfaction of the key areas of their library's service, including books, computers, and information services. A new section for 2023 focused on digital exclusion and asked how if at all respondents accessed the internet at home. The final part of the questionnaire related to demographic information about the customer. Customers were also given the opportunity to provide any comments for improving services, which will also be analysed and forwarded to the relevant managers in due course.

Some library results are not statistically viable; as when compared to the recorded library visits, there are too few responses to a question to get a reasonable sample for analysis. A total of 9 of the Manchester libraries received an error rating over 5% and therefore caution must be taken with these results. For example, Barlow Moor (18 responses), Abraham Moss (67 responses) and Fallowfield (54 responses) were amongst the libraries that cannot reliably be measured by this survey for any of the questions because of their low response rate.

Conclusions referenced in this report that are drawn from statistically unreliable results have been indicated with an asterisk*.

In contrast to the last survey (2020) in which Arcadia and Hulme High Street, had the two highest response rates, a total of 6 libraries received over 95% response. In the 2023 survey, Burnage library led the response rate with 99% (82 surveys), followed by Didsbury with 96% (190 surveys). A further 4 libraries had a response rate of 95% (New Moston, Miles Platting, Brooklands & Avenue).

Results Summary

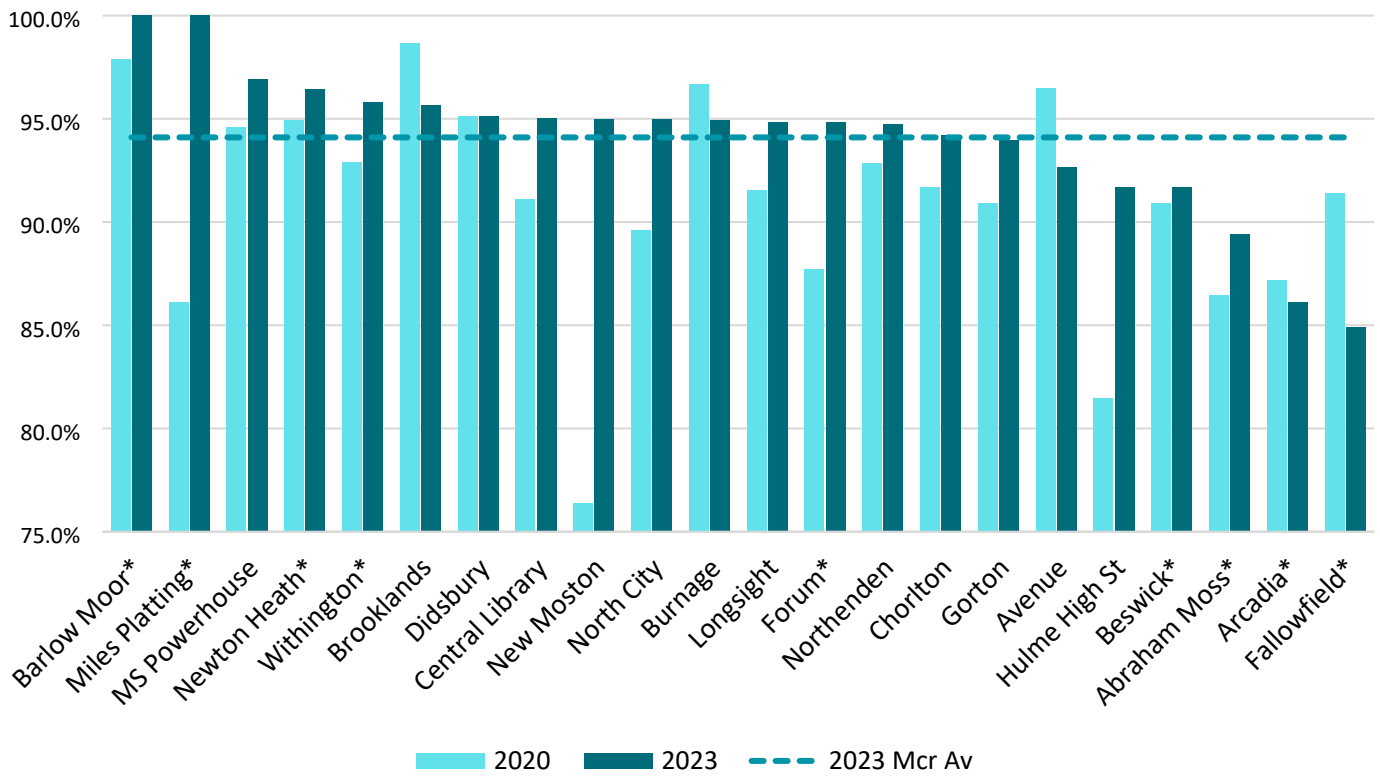
Customer satisfaction with their library – satisfaction is defined as users rating services as either good or very good.

Library	Number of Responses	2020	2023	% Change
Central Library	406	91.1%	95.0%	4%
Abraham Moss*	67	86.4%	89.4%	3%
Arcadia*	108	87.2%	86.1%	-1%
Avenue	139	96.5%	92.6%	-4%
Beswick*	49	90.9%	91.7%	1%
Brooklands	70	98.7%	95.7%	-3%
Chorlton	139	91.7%	94.2%	2%
Didsbury	190	95.1%	95.1%	0%
Forum*	298	87.7%	94.8%	7%
Gorton	170	90.9%	94.0%	3%
Hulme High St	188	81.5%	91.7%	10%
Longsight	377	91.5%	94.9%	3%
MS Powerhouse	68	94.6%	96.9%	2%
Newton Heath*	114	94.9%	96.4%	2%
North City	190	89.6%	95.0%	5%
Withington*	267	92.9%	95.8%	3%
Barlow Moor*	18	97.9%	100%	2%
Burnage	82	96.7%	94.9%	-2%
Fallowfield*	54	91.4%	84.9%	-6%
Miles Platting*	20	86.1%	100%	14%
New Moston	101	76.4%	95.0%	19%
Northenden	67	92.9%	94.7%	2%
Weighted total	**3,182**	**90.9%**	**94.1%**	**3%**
2020 Results	4,193		91%	
% Change	-24%		3%	

- ✓ The overall satisfaction rate for the city was 94.1%, compared to 90.9% in 2020. This 3% rise can be heavily attributed to the positive increases at library level from: New Moston (+19%), Miles Platting (+14%) and Hulme High Street (+10%).
- ✓ Miles Platting* and Barlow Moor* tied with the highest overall rating, with 100% of customers considering the libraries to be good or very good.
- ✓ Barlow Moor* is the only library to have attained above 95% satisfaction in both 2020 and 2023.
- ✓ Positively, sixteen of the branches saw an increase in overall satisfaction rates.
- ✓ Didsbury was the only library to maintain their exact satisfaction rating.
- ✓ Fallowfield* saw the biggest decrease in overall satisfaction, from 91% in 2020 to 84% in 2023.

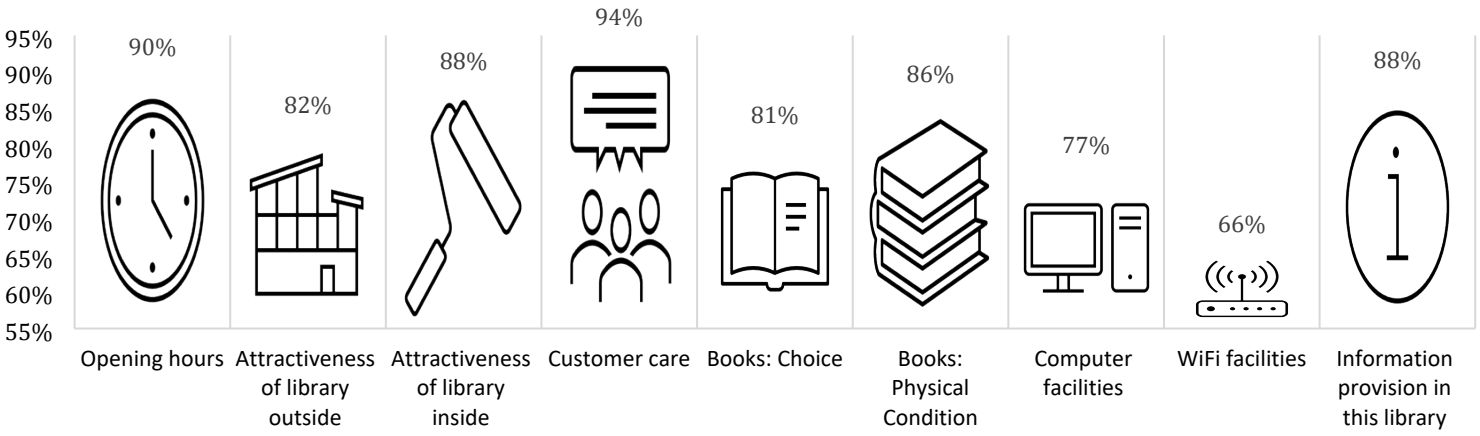
Libraries: Overall

- The library with the most questionnaires completed was Central Library with 406 responses, followed by Longsight library with 377 responses.
- 15 libraries were above the Manchester weighted average for overall satisfaction of 94%, with Barlow Moor* and Miles Platting* having the highest proportion who felt the library overall was good or very good (100%).
- Encouraging progress in overall satisfaction levels can also be seen at New Moston and Miles Platting*, increasing by 19% and 14%* respectively, placing them both above Manchester's 2020 average.
- There was also salient improvement in satisfaction from customers of Hulme High Street library, in which scores increased 10% from 81.5% to 91.7%.
- Fallowfield library recorded the lowest overall satisfaction level: 85% of respondents rated the library as good or very good, this was 6% decrease since 2020. However, it must be acknowledged that only 54 forms were completed.
- Of the libraries with statistic viability, Moss Side Powerhouse had the highest overall satisfaction ratings (97%). Of these libraries, the lowest overall satisfaction was Hulme High Street (92%), Avenue (93%) and Gorton (94%).
- Considering only the statistically viable results, the biggest decrease in satisfaction rates related to Avenue which dropped 4% to 92.6% from 96.5%.



Key Areas of Satisfaction

In addition to their overall satisfaction customers were also asked to rate how the felt regarding nine key indicators which are listed in the chart below.



- ✓ 94% of customers rated **customer care** as good or very good. The city-wide average was 3% higher than the result from 2020. 18 out of the 22 libraries either improved or maintained their satisfaction rating in this area since 2020.
- ✓ Satisfaction with **opening hours** improved since 2020 with 90% (+4%) of customers considering them to be good or very good. This increase can be heavily attributed to the 46% increase in satisfaction regarding Miles Platting which jumped from 24% to 70%.
- ✓ Despite Barlow Moor* having the lowest satisfaction rate for **opening hours** (49%), it improved by 4% when compared to the 2020 results.
- ✓ In an exact reflection of the previous survey (2020), 82% of customers reported their library's **external appearance** as very good or good. The highest satisfaction rate was for Gorton (94%) which improved 34% since 2020. This development reflects the introduction of the Gorton Hub building which opened in November 2022.
- ✓ 88% of customers reported the **internal appearance** as good or very good. This was a 4% increase since 2020. In comparison to the 2020 survey in which New Moston saw the biggest decline (-25% when compared to 2016), in 2023 it had the most improvement with satisfaction rising 19% to 76% overall. Miles Platting scored highest, with 100% of their respondents giving a positive rating.
- ✓ Satisfaction with **computers** declined from 78% to 77% city wide compared to 2020. Both Barlow Moor* and Miles Platting* scored highest of all branches, with 100% of respondents rating computers as good or very good. The 100% from Miles Platting was the biggest improvement, with satisfaction rising 18%. In contrast, Fallowfield* scored the lowest (70%) and declined 14%.
- ✓ All libraries now offer free **Wi-Fi** and customers are invited to use their own devices. Overall satisfaction with the Wi-Fi decreased 4%. Miles Platting* had the highest satisfaction rating (93%), and Burnage had the highest improvement (+17%). In a repeat of 2020 results, Central Library ranked lowest (59%), decreasing 6%.
- ✓ Across all indicators, **information provision** had the highest improvement rating since 2020. Satisfaction rose from 82% to 88%. Just 3 libraries, Didsbury (-8%), Barlow Moor* (-1%) and Fallowfield (-9%) decreased in their scores. Moss Side Powerhouse scored the highest, with 98% of respondents rating positively.
- ✓ Customer satisfaction with the **choice of books** increased from 80% to 81%. Additionally, the physical **condition of books** improved from 82% to 86% of customers feeling satisfied. A big contribution to this rise can be attributed to North City which satisfaction with physical condition of the book stock rose 10%.

Libraries: League Ranking

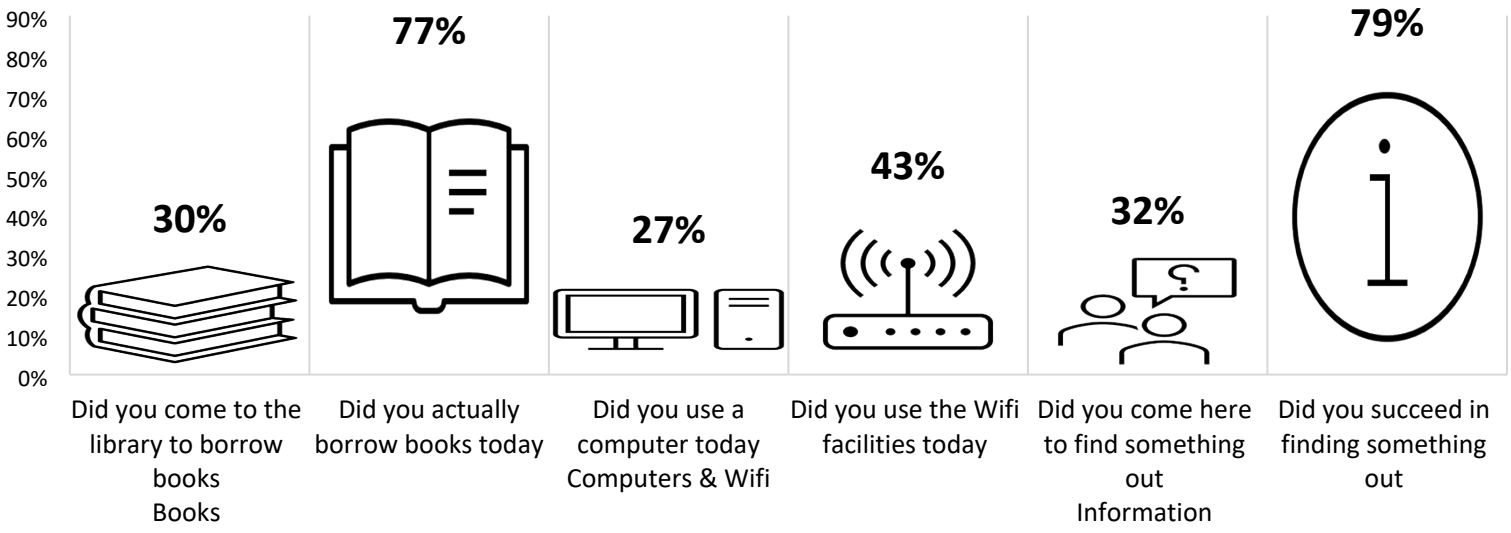
- Of all the key satisfaction questions, standard of customer care had the biggest proportion of respondents considering this to be good or very good (94%). Abraham Moss*, Moss Side Powerhouse, Barlow Moor*, Miles Platting* and Northenden scored 100%.
- Across the 9 indicators Miles Platting ranked in the top three for seven of the satisfaction measures, however, it must be acknowledged that only 20 forms were completed.
- Barlow Moor*, Moss Side Powerhouse, Gorton and Brooklands were ranked in the top three for three different satisfaction measures each.
- Both Fallowfield* and Arcadia* ranked in the bottom three for 6 out of 10 key measures, such as customer care, choice of books and overall satisfaction.
- Of the libraries with statistically viable results, New Moston was ranked in the bottom three libraries most often (5 measures), followed by Hulme High Street (3 measures).

Library	Count of Top 3	Top Three In:
Miles Platting*	7	Overall, Internal, Customer Care, Books; Condition, Computers, Wi-Fi & Information
Barlow Moor*	3	Overall, Customer Care & Computers
MS Powerhouse	3	Overall, Internal & Information
Gorton	3	External, Internal & Computers
Brooklands	3	External, Wi-Fi & Information
Beswick*	2	Opening Hours & Books: Condition
Northenden	2	Customer Care & Books: Condition
Longsight	2	Books: Choice & Wi-Fi
Avenue	2	Opening Hours & Books: Choice
Abraham Moss*	1	Books: Choice
Newton Heath*	1	Opening Hours
Didsbury	1	External

Library	Count of Bottom 3	Bottom Three In:
Fallowfield*	6	Overall, Customer Care, Books: Choice, Books: Condition, Computers & Information
Arcadia*	6	Overall, Internal, Customer Care, Books: Choice, Books: Condition & Wi-Fi
New Moston	5	Opening Hours, External, Internal, Books: Condition & Information
Hulme High St	3	Customer Care, Computers & Information
Northenden	2	Opening Hours & External
Abraham Moss*	2	Overall & External
Chorlton	2	Internal & Wi-Fi
Central Library	2	Computers & Wi-Fi
Miles Platting*	1	Opening Hours
Withington*	1	Books: Choice

Library Usage

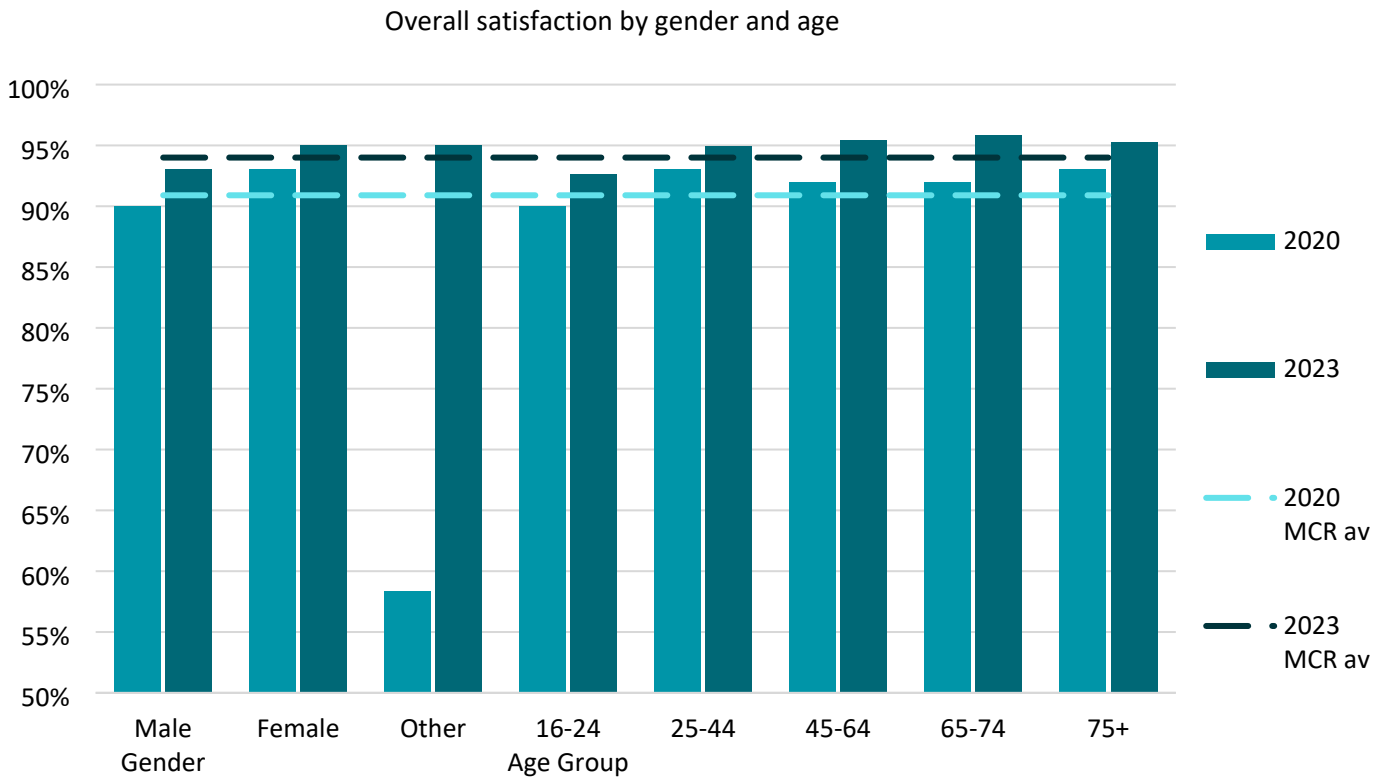
- 32% of customers wanted to find something out during their visit and of those respondents, 79% succeeded. Beswick* Library saw the biggest increase from 2020 (+17%), followed by Barlow Moor* (+10%) which scored 95% and 100% respectively.
- 30% of customers visited the library to borrow books comparable to 37% in 2020. Of the 30% of customers that intended to borrow a book, 77% did so. Respondents were most likely to intend to borrow a book from Burnage (65%) and least likely from Central Library (21%).
- 27% of visitors used a computer, a 10% decrease from 2020. Half of users from Miles Platting* and Barlow Moor* used a computer. Respondents were least likely to use a computer in Fallowfield* and Didsbury; both 19%.
- 43% of respondents used the Wi-Fi, a 36 % decrease from 2020. The library with the least Wi-Fi usage was Miles Platting* (16%). The highest rate of Wi-Fi use was from users of Arcadia* library with 57%.



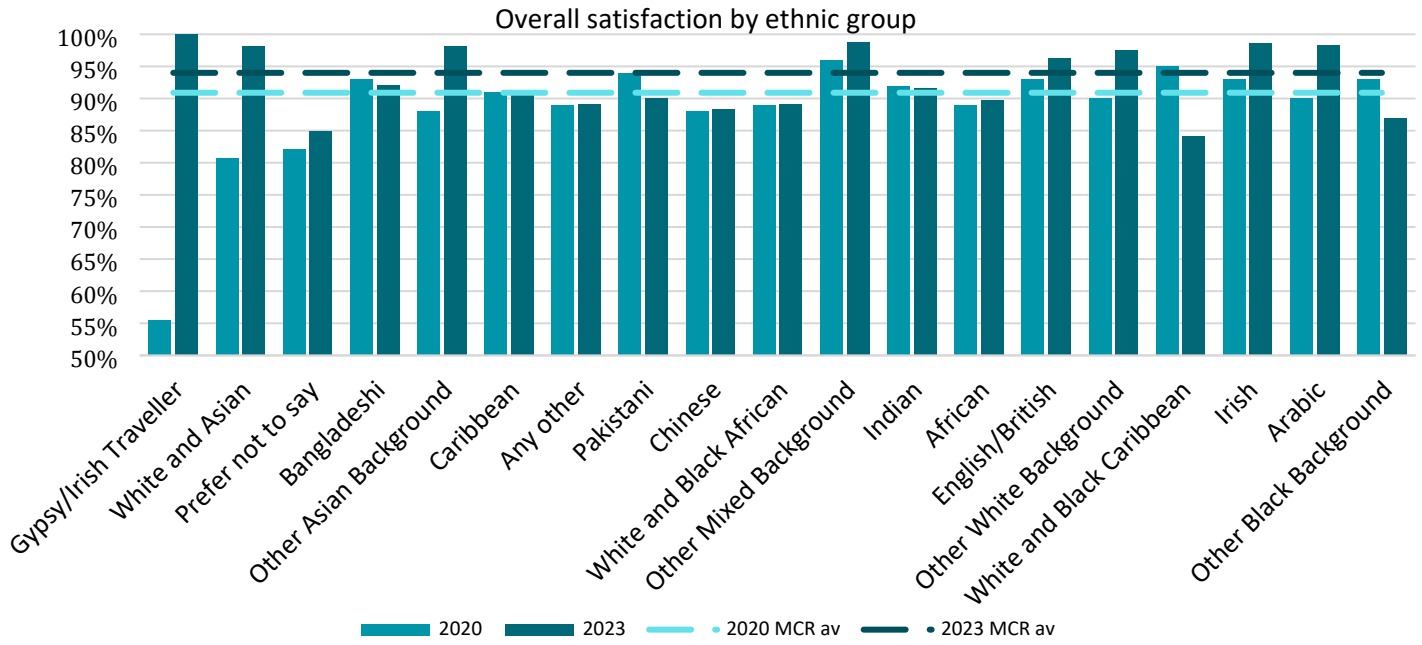
About our customers

- The most likely way for respondents to travel to the library was on public transport (45%) which is an exact reflection of the proportion of 2020 respondents. 16 % of customers travelled to the library using private transport such as cars or motorbikes – this is a 4% decline since 2020. 2023 saw an incline is respondents travelling to the libraries on foot, rising from 30% to 34%.
- A section focusing on loneliness and isolation was introduced in 2020. 38% percent of respondents said they felt lonely either some of the time or often, and 73% of those respondents said visiting the library helped to reduce these feelings of loneliness.
- The gender split for the weighted Manchester response was 59% female and 40% male; in 2020 this was 56% female and 43% male. The response rate for this question was 90%, which was 1% higher than the 2020 response rate. Overall satisfaction levels showed that female customers were 95% satisfied and male customers 93% satisfied.

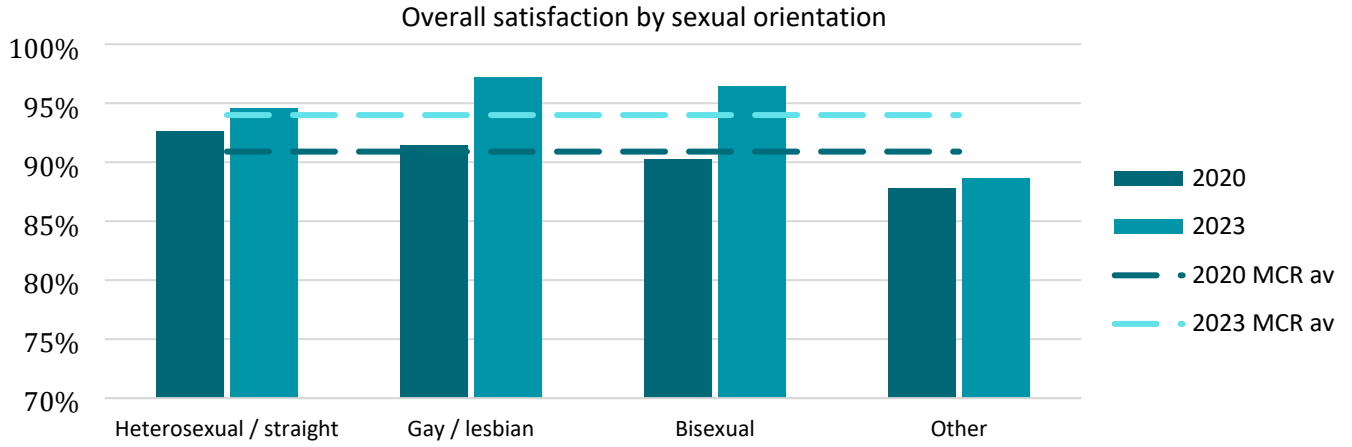
- Age: 18% of the customers who took part in the survey were under 25. The age group with the highest number of respondents was 35 to 44, making up 18% of respondents who provided their age. 7% were 75 and over: the oldest of whom were aged 97. The age group with lowest proportions of satisfied customers were the under 25s at 93%, whereas the 65-74 cohort had the highest numbers of satisfied respondents (96%).



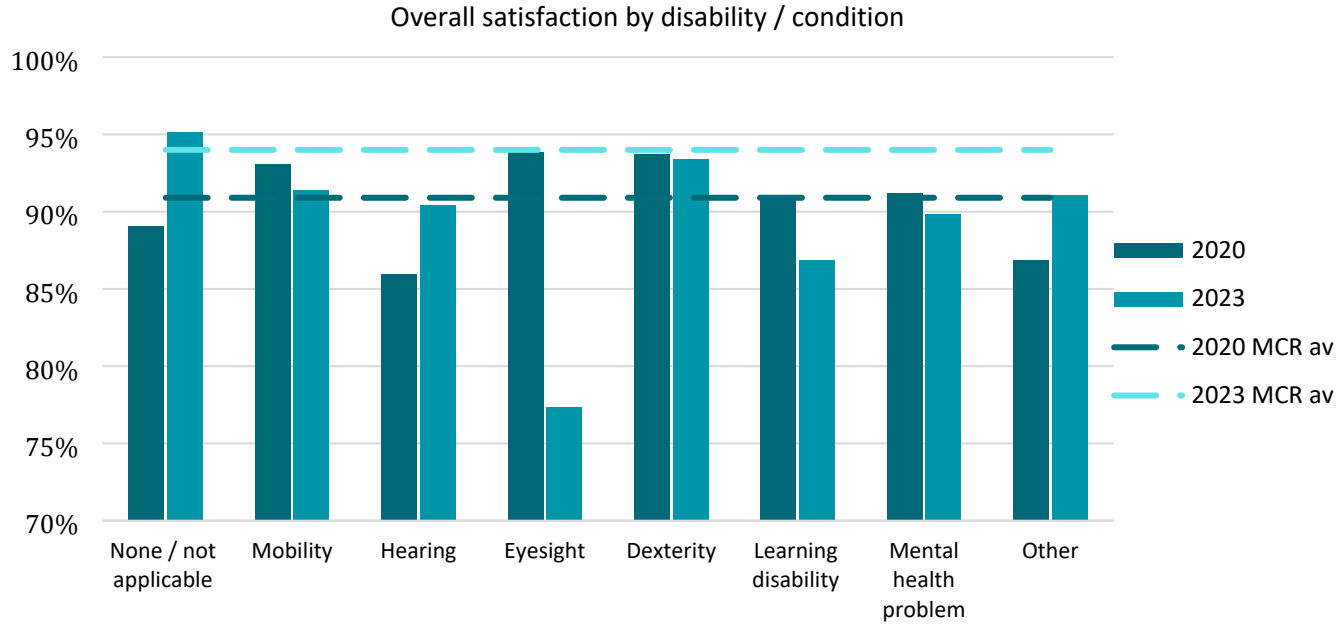
- With regards ethnic groups, 66% of those surveyed identified as being White (4% higher than the previous survey), 11% Asian, 12% Black, 4% Mixed and 3% Other. The response rate for this question was 91% which is a 6% increase since 2020. The group with the highest level of overall satisfaction was Gypsy or Irish Traveller (100%) which increased 44% since 2020, followed by Other Mixed Background (99%). Mixed ethnicities White and Black Caribbean were the ethnic group with the lowest levels of satisfaction (84%). The size of the response captured for these ethnic groups is very small so it should be noted that this may not be a true reflection of satisfaction levels amongst these groups.



- In terms of sexual orientation, 89% of respondents identified as being heterosexual, 5% as gay/lesbian, 4% bisexual and 2% other. The response rate to this question was 88% therefore the results may not be fully representative of our customer cohort, however this is a 10% increase in response rate since the previous survey. Customers who cited their sexuality as gay/lesbian had the highest level of satisfaction overall (97%) whilst customers who cited their sexuality as other had the lowest overall satisfaction (87%). This is closely aligned to 2020.



- Customers taking part in the PLUS survey were asked if they had a disability/condition. 28% of respondents considered themselves to have at least one. 8% of respondents had mobility difficulties, 5% had hearing difficulties, 3% had a dexterity disability, 5% learning disability, 2% had eyesight difficulties and 12% said they had mental health problems. Overall, customers who cited no disabilities were more likely to be satisfied than those who did. The lowest satisfaction rate was from those who noted having disabilities related to their eyesight (77% which is 17% lower than 2020). The response rate for this question was 81%.



- 38% of respondents cited their faith as Christian, 15% Muslim, and 40% declared they did not have a religion. The response rate to this question was 90% (a 16% increase to the response rate in 2020). Customers who cited their religion as Buddhist were the most satisfied at 100% (although there were just 35 respondents identifying with this demographic). Those who preferred not to provide a response about religion were least satisfied at 88%. It must be noted the cohort size for different religious groups captured in this survey were small so may not show a true reflection of satisfaction levels amongst this group.

- 47% of customers surveyed in Manchester were economically active (working part-time, full-time, self-employed), in comparison to 44% in 2020. Of the customers in Manchester who were economically inactive, 14% were students, which was 8% less than 2020, 10% unemployed, 2% long-term sick or disabled, 23% were retired and 2% were looking after the home or family. Of the customers who are economically active, 95% were satisfied with their local library; those who are retired 96% and those who are unemployed 93%. The response rate for this question was 89% (a 7% increase since 2020).
- 49% of respondents have been using the library for over three years and 38% have been using the library for over a year, while 13% were making their first visit, which shows new customers are being attracted as well as retaining a high number of our existing customer base. Of those making their first visit, 96% were satisfied with the library they visited compared to those who had been using the library for three years or more at 92%.
- Customers were also asked if using the library had helped them in aspects of their personal lives. 57% responded saying it had helped them in study/learning, 26% to get online, 44% meeting people, 46% in feeling better about themselves, 11% for job seeking, 38% said it helped them with their health and wellbeing, 11% for their job and 3% for managing finances. Out of all responses received, 89% indicated that using a library has helped them in one or more aspects of their lives.

- A new element of the survey in 2023 questioned digital inclusion. 14% of respondents indicated that they did not have access to the internet at home. Of the 14%, almost half (47%) suggested this was due to the expense of Wi-Fi and 25% said they had no need for it. 21% of respondents stated they didn't have the equipment necessary for Wi-Fi use and a further 13% said they didn't have the skills to use it. %5 of customers said they didn't feel safe to use the internet at home.

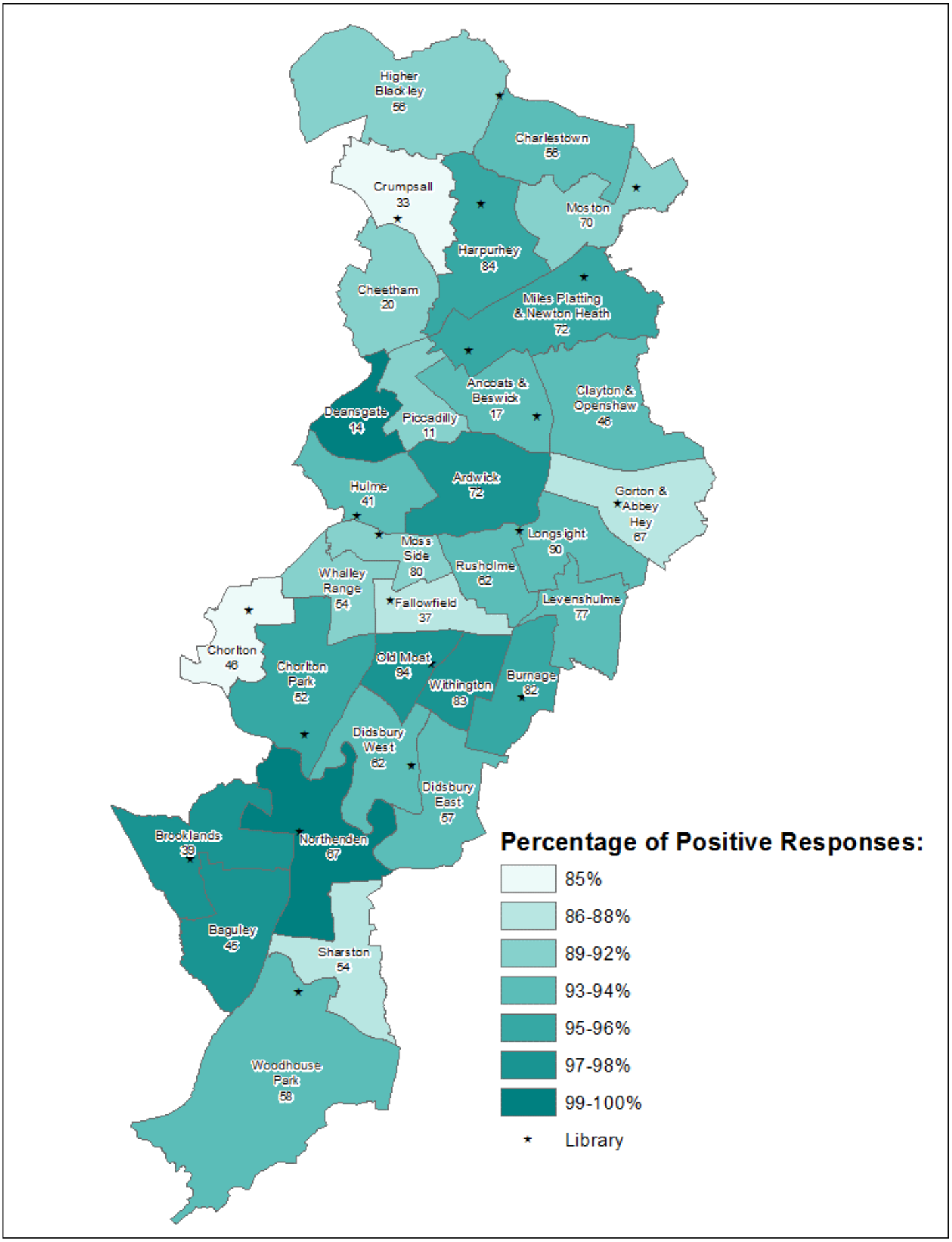
- Finally, customers were given the opportunity to offer a closing comment or library suggestion for improvement. 1,538 respondents chose to do so, and the comments are currently being analysed.

Manchester Adults PLUS 2023

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Overall, how good is this library?

Count of positive responses and percentage by respondents' home postcode.



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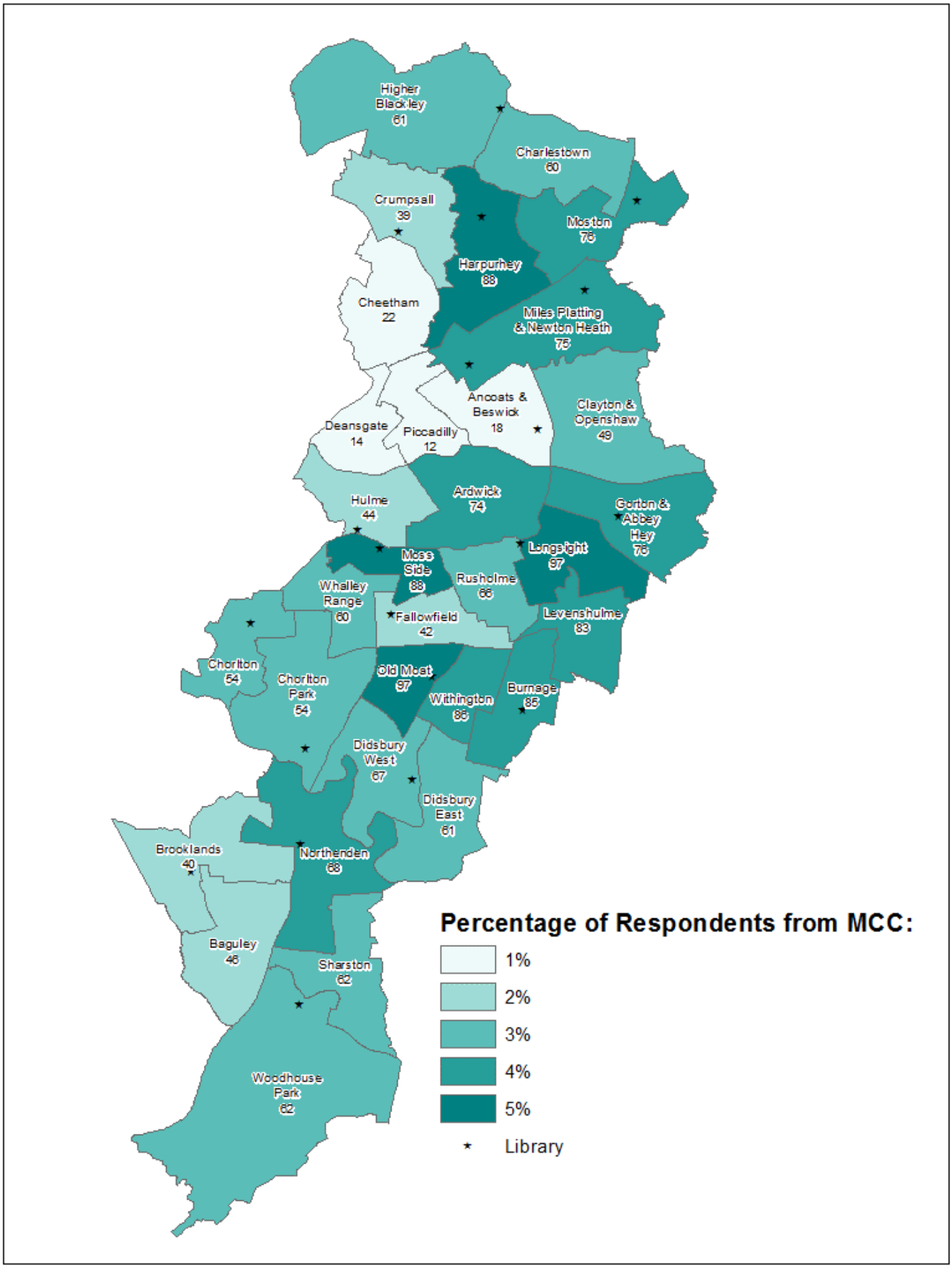
Note that the map is based on the respondent's postcode, so may not necessarily relate to the closest library a

Manchester Adults PLUS 2023

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Residence of Manchester Respondents by Ward (1,926)



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Appendix 13: Manchester Libraries response to the Sanderson review of public libraries

Manchester Libraries welcomes the Sanderson independent review of English public libraries and are pleased that our contribution to the review has been incorporated into the report, and that some our work is highlighted.

A summary of our response to the specific recommendations

Recommendation 1. A national data hub to better evidence the role libraries play in our society

We agree that national dataset would be useful. Linking into the major Library Management Systems to make the data collection as seamless as possible would be beneficial. We would be happy to be part of a pilot to explore this (we are part of a consortium of 11 authorities) and can include it in a library management system specification for a procurement beginning later this year. We agree the costs should be borne centrally for this data work.

We agree that it is absolutely crucial that we can show to stakeholders and funders how libraries improve people's lives and contribute to wider stakeholder priorities, for example health and wellbeing. Any help that can be provided nationally to support this would be welcomed. This maybe through the data work, or evaluation taskforce mentioned in the report, or by building on the Libraries Connected Universal Offers.

Recommendation 2. Undertake a scoping exercise for a consistent national branding campaign to raise awareness of our libraries

We agree fully that promotion of libraries is a key priority. We would welcome a national branding campaign to supplement our local marketing and would be happy to be involved one of those involved in developing the campaign.

Recommendation 3. The closer involvement of the British Library

The Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC) network has been invaluable to us and start-up businesses in Manchester and Greater Manchester. We would welcome continued investment in this, and the exploration of other initiatives using the model of the BIPC.

Recommendation 4. An expanded library membership

Manchester Libraries have piloted automatic library membership in a couple of ways in recent years.

From 2018-20, library cards were given to children by the registrars at the baby's registration. We haven't continued this initiative post-pandemic and we are aware that there was relatively few of the cards activated, meaning the gift of the library card did not translate into library membership. However, we will now review this and look at restarting this scheme and have the processes in place, with the aim to have

a follow up communication with parents and also link into the family hubs and other partner agencies.

We have been a member of the engagement pilot for summer reading challenge for the last 3 years that is mentioned in the report. We would support central funding and a national initiative to encourage universal membership either with the summer reading challenge or the transition into primary school. We have run a 'transition read' over the last 3 years for children entering a new key stage and believe this is an opportunity for universal library membership.

Recommendation 5. Strengthening the volunteer network

Volunteers add so much to the library service, and increasing the number of range of volunteers is a priority for Manchester Libraries. We believe this can be best achieved locally without the need for any national initiatives, however a national call to action as part of an advocacy programme would be helpful.

Recommendation 6. The creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government

We would welcome an increase in profile and understanding of libraries within national Government, and the creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government may help with that.

Recommendation 7. The establishment of a Libraries Laureate

We would fully support the creation of a Libraries Laureate and would welcome them to Manchester and be part of our cultural programme.

Recommendation 8. A change to the timing of Libraries Week to better involve politicians nationally and locally

Libraries Week is a great opportunity to show the impact of libraries and will participate in it whatever time of year it took place.

Finally, we agree that books are the bedrock of a library service and book fund budgets need to be maintained at a reasonable level to ensure good quality reading material is accessible and the love of reading and literacy skills are developed for people of all ages. We support the highlighting of 'fines free' having removed fines in 2020.

Manchester City Council
Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

Subject: Digital Inclusion Update – bridging the digital divide in Manchester

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Council's digital inclusion work, since the last report to scrutiny in March 2023. This includes the development and implementation of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	Increasing residents' ability to be regular, confident online users supports zero-carbon targets by reducing use of paper and reduced travelling. The digital inclusion team is part of Libraries. Libraries support the zero-carbon agenda. This includes high quality, low-carbon buildings that are community hubs to be used my multiple organisations, that libraries encourage books to be read by multiple people and the increase in ebooks – reducing the use of paper. We have signed up to the Green Libraries manifesto. https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=greenlibrariesmanifesto Specific initiatives in this report support the zero-carbon targets, for example commissioning and supporting the refurbished device scheme that reduces waste, repurposing devices to be used by Manchester residents
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	As this is an update report, an EQIA has not been carried out specifically on the report. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of the digital inclusion agenda, with people with the protected characteristics being most likely to be digitally excluded and being disproportionately affected by exclusion.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan supports Investing In success: Manchester's Economic Strategy. One of the five priorities of this strategy is to "Develop world-class infrastructure, places and talent." As part of that it references "Delivering Manchester's Digital Strategy" and "Digital connectivity is now as essential to businesses and residents as traditional utilities such as water and power."
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan supports Investing In success: Manchester's Economic Strategy. One element of the work is to improve digital skills and be an integral part in the city of lifelong learning.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Libraries offer free Internet access at the heart of our communities, reducing inequalities for digitally excluded residents.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Increasing residents' ability to be regular, confident online users supports zero-carbon targets by reducing use of paper and reduced travelling to face-to-face appointments.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Our digital inclusion programme is increasing connectivity in homes, and people's ability to be online.

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Contact Officers:

Name: Neil MacInnes OBE
Position: Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth
Telephone: 0161 234 1902

E-mail: neil.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Philip Cooke
Position: Libraries and Archives Lead
Telephone: 07773206277
E-mail: philip.cooke@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Stuart Pearson
Position: Senior Digital Strategy Officer
E-mail: stuart.pearson@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection): None

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Digital Exclusion affects tens of thousands of Manchester's residents. Digital exclusion is where a person doesn't have one or more of the following – access to the Internet, skills/confidence to use the Internet or motivation to use the Internet. People who are digitally excluded are also likely to suffer from other social exclusion and are disproportionately affected by not being online. There is a close link between digital exclusion and levels of deprivation. Digital exclusion often links to other forms of social exclusion: people who are not confident online users can have worse life chances than those that are. They are more likely to suffer social isolation and loneliness, have lower skills and job prospects, unable to access services online (for example applying for housing), reduced access to information, and in general have a lower quality of life. Reducing digital exclusion is intrinsically linked to reducing the widening of inequality.

1.2 Over the last 25 years Manchester City Council and our partners have done much to reduce this digital divide and support those that are digitally excluded, including offering high quality Internet in libraries access since 1998. The City Council offer includes providing free Internet access, free Wi-Fi, IT support and weekly sessions in all our libraries where more support is available, as well as working closely with Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) and many of our community organisations to support them to continue to reach more of our neighbourhoods to support them to access and utilise the internet.

1.3 Much of the Digital Inclusion's Teams activity in the last 12 months has been supporting those VCSE organisations and encouraging more organisations to embed digital inclusion support into their programme. The results of a national survey have found Manchester to be the most digitally inclusive city in the UK. Analysis carried out by Uswitch mobiles examined the number of databanks, digital inclusion hubs and digital skills workshops on offer nationally, finding that in Manchester there were 11 digital inclusion hubs per 100,000 population. This shows we have made progress with combatting digital exclusion in the city, but there is so much more to do, with the impact on those residents who are digitally excluded, being greater than ever.

1.4 This report shows the progress that has been made with supporting digital inclusion since the last report to Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on 7th March 2023. The Libraries Digital Inclusion Team have developed and implemented a collaborative programme to assess the scale of the digital divide, improve the existing support infrastructure, develop joint projects, and develop new initiatives to support digitally excluded residents. There has been a diverse range of key stakeholders involved so far including adult learning providers, third sector community organisations, registered providers, healthcare partners and private sector businesses. The digital inclusion work is a key element of the Digital Strategy that is detailed section 2.1 and included as Appendix 2.

1.5 Manchester City Council's digital inclusion work is considered best practice nationally. This is shown by Councillor Hacking's invitation to be part of the House of Lords inquiry into tackling digital exclusion. The report praised the work of local authorities such as Manchester and highlighted the lack of a Government strategy to support digital inclusion. The recommendations align with our Digital Inclusion Action Plan. The five priorities for a new strategy were: Cost of living support to stop more people becoming digitally excluded, to invest in basic digital skills, to boost digital inclusion hubs including prioritising libraries, to future proof public services including helping excluded people to not be marginalised by AI and to prioritise telecoms competition including review of the impacts of Public Service Telephone Network switch off. The recommendations summary report is included as Appendix 3.

2.0 Bridging the Digital Divide in Manchester

2.1 Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-2026: Doing Digital Together

2.1.1 The Manchester Digital Strategy, included as Appendix 2, sets out a vision and its Delivery Plan, a roadmap, across four key themes, for what Manchester needs to do to make sure we have digitally skilled residents, future-proofed infrastructure, a thriving digital economy and a digitally enabled transition to zero-carbon economy. This ambition paves the way for a Manchester empowered by technology, benefiting all residents and shaping a thriving, responsible future.

2.1.2 Digital inclusion forms the bedrock of the Manchester Digital Strategy. Everyone deserves equal access to the opportunities and empowerment the digital world offers. Excluding residents deepens inequalities and stifles our city's potential. By equipping all residents with the skills and confidence to navigate the digital landscape, we unlock untapped talent, spark innovation, support self-agency and build a more resilient Manchester. Through inclusive infrastructure, targeted skills development, and strong partnerships, the Manchester Digital Strategy paves the way for a truly connected city where everyone thrives.

2.2 Contributing towards the delivery of corporate priorities and strategies

2.2.1 The Digital Inclusion Action Plan, shown in Appendix 1, aims to improvs the lives of people and contributes hugely to corporate priorities and strategy. It is central to the people-focussed Digital Strategy that is described in 2.1 and shown in full in Appendix 2. The work also feeds into The GMCA Digital Blueprint.

The digital inclusion work, designed to improve the lives of Manchester's residents aligns with the priorities of the region, the city, and Manchester City Council.

2.2.2 **Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027**

Digital inclusion is a key component of the strategy and the Council's cost-of-living crisis response. For example, delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan prevents more people from becoming digitally excluded if they are unable to afford Internet data costs. Becoming digitally included enables residents to save money. For example, research in 2021 suggested digitally excluded customers pay an average of £348 more per year on their energy bills.

2.2.3 **Health and Making Manchester Fairer**

Digital inclusion is a key factor for people's health and wellbeing. It reduces social isolation amongst people, opening them to a whole new network. Also, many health services and information are now best accessed online. The work of the team helps to support this – for example through digital health hubs.

Digital inclusion has been recognised as being central to the Making Manchester Fairer work with digital inclusion being part of each pilot project. Digital inclusion is particularly embedded into the early years kickstarter, resulting in laptops being provided for free to 20 families in kickstarter priority schools. These devices have been donated for free by Community Computers as part of their refurbishment scheme.

Growth in telecare and digital technologies as powerful enablers to independent living make digital inclusion more essential. Remote monitoring systems, employing wearable devices and sensors, empower individuals with chronic conditions or mobility limitations to manage their health from home. This reduces reliance on physical visits and transportation while enabling early detection and intervention, ultimately promoting self-sufficiency and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations. Virtual consultations dissolve geographical barriers, connecting individuals with specialists regardless of location for convenient access to expert care and collaborative decision-making. By eliminating physical hurdles and fostering self-directed care, these advancements contribute significantly to independent living, empowering older adults and individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives on their own terms.

2.2.4 **Investing In success: Manchester's Economic Strategy**

One of the five priorities of this strategy is to "Develop world-class infrastructure, places and talent." As part of that it references "Delivering Manchester's Digital Strategy" and "Digital connectivity is now as essential to businesses and residents as traditional utilities such as water and power."The delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan will support the economic strategy.

2.2.5 Digital inclusion is key for the **housing sector**. While affordability, skills gaps, and confidence hurdles often confine social housing residents to the digital margins, the Manchester Digital Strategy embraces a different perspective. It recognizes these communities not as obstacles, but as strategic bridges to a more inclusive digital landscape. Through targeted initiatives like device donations and subsidized internet access, the Strategy looks to address these cost barriers. Working with Housing Associations to establish community hubs

– offering tech access, training, and peer support – it fosters confidence and eases anxieties. New innovative solutions like community mesh networks hold the potential to empower residents and revitalize inclusion efforts. By prioritizing social housing, the Manchester Digital Strategy and Digital Action Plan unlocks the immense potential within these communities.

2.2.6 **City of lifelong learning and digital skills**

Devolution agreement with central government, providing further autonomy over our local and regional skills system, the City of Lifelong Learning approach aims to mobilise and best utilise economic, government and community assets and resources. It was announced in February 2024 that Manchester is being designated a UNESCO: City of Lifelong Learning. Digital inclusion and digital skills are integral to this initiative. By 2030, over 85% of jobs will require advanced digital skills, whilst basic digital skills are unlikely to meet the needs of daily life. Residents are at enhanced risk of being digitally excluded, with a skills lens. The City of Lifelong Learning approach will promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education, putting learning at the heart of family and community life, whilst positioning learning for work, home and studying.

2.2.7 **Manchester's Age Friendly Strategy – Manchester a city for life: 2023-28**

Digital exclusion is highlighted in the strategy as something that affects older people. The strategy notes "Over half of Manchester residents aged over 60 are digitally excluded (not having the access, skills and confidence to use the internet and benefit fully from digital technology in everyday life)". It states that by 2025 "We will develop a better focus on digital inclusion for the over-50s.", this work is a high priority of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

2.2.8 Digital Inclusion is also central to the emerging **Family Hub** work.

There is a close correlation between low literacy levels and digital exclusion, so many of the Education priorities, including Read Manchester, rely on our programmes to reduce digital exclusion.

2.2.9 The Council is currently transforming the way it delivers services digitally to residents through the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP), and the Digital Inclusion Action Plan helps maximise the benefits to residents from this programme.

2.2.10 For the first time, voters were required to produce ID to vote in the Local Elections of May 2023. This will continue in future years. People can apply online for a Voter Authority Certificate, where they do not currently have any of the prescribed ID to enable them to vote. Libraries, including the Digital Inclusion Team, are essential to encourage and enable people to be able to gain the Voter Authority Certificate. We support residents to apply online – both via the Team's telephone service and through libraries. Each library has a session each week where residents will be supported to apply online, including taking and uploading a photograph. This is an example of how

libraries and the digital inclusion work is essential to the priorities of the Council and to residents.

2.3 **Delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan 2023-24**

This section shows the great progress that has been made with supporting digital inclusion over the last 12 months. A hugely wide-ranging programme has delivered many outcomes that benefit our residents, helping them overcome the disadvantages of being socially excluded, helping recovery from the pandemic and to cope with the current cost of living situation.

2.3.1 The work is guided by the Digital Inclusion Steering Group chaired by Councillor Adele Douglas, Deputy Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure. The group which meets quarterly consists of strategic representatives from organisations across sectors. The Digital Inclusion Action Plan outlined in Appendix 1 summarises our priorities agreed by the Steering Group.

2.3.2 The Digital Inclusion Team are based within the libraries team. Libraries have continued to be the primary community venue which supports digital inclusion. Users of the libraries Internet access tend to be from areas of the city where digital exclusion is highest. This is shown in Appendix 8. In total there were 23,600 hours of public Internet access in 2023 and 38,000 uses of free libraries Wi-fi. The level of digital inclusion support offered in libraries has increased over the last 12 months, with the voter ID support and the donations of Sims.

2.3.3 All 22 libraries are registered databank centres and give out Sims that provide six months of free Internet access. In total, over 4000 Sims have been given out in libraries and by the team over the last 12 months. These Sims are provided free by Internet Service Providers. This prevents many residents becoming digitally excluded as they can't afford data charges during the cost-of-living crisis. This initiative supported libraries role as warm spaces during winter months.

2.3.4 Our Digital Inclusion programme of work has increasingly been driven by data, considering the different levels of risk of digital exclusion that residents face in various parts of the city. We will continue to develop the Digital Exclusion Index with the Council's Performance, Research and Intelligence team to target our initiatives in the areas of the city deemed most at risk of digital exclusion. Appendix 5 shows the areas of the city with the highest risk of digital exclusion. Much of our digital inclusion programme has been focused on these areas.

To complement this quantitative data, we commissioned a 3-part piece of work with Open Data Manchester to examine the lived experiences of those people defined as digitally excluded. The final report is shown in Appendix 6.

2.3.5 The digital inclusion programme is a combination of delivery of services directly to residents inside and outside of libraries and building the capacity of VCSE organisations to support residents with digital exclusion.

2.3.6 The direct delivery schemes are described below.

2.3.6.1 Device schemes

Lack of a devices that connect to the Internet is a common barrier to being digitally included. Over the past year, we have run several device schemes to increase the number of Manchester residents with Internet access. To make device schemes more sustainable we partner with Community Computers to refurbish old devices and sell them at low cost to Manchester residents. In 2023 they sold 145 devices at low cost to Manchester residents and donated 28 devices to Manchester residents for free. Each library acts as a donation point, thus enabling residents to recycle their old devices safely for the benefit of other residents, instead of throwing them away. Community Computers can offer some devices back to us to donate to Manchester residents for free. As a result, we've been able to support with the Making Manchester Fairer Early Years Kickstarter to provide 18 digitally excluded families with free laptops. We have also secured some devices through social value contracts to donate to residents. Working with Be Well coaches, we have been able to provide 8 laptops to clients that they've identified as needing a device and skills support. The focus will be on improving health and wellbeing using technology and will be based in Wythenshawe. We have also gifted 15 Chromebooks to Rainbow Surprise in Cheetham Hill to run a device lending library. They have started to lend some of these devices out already and have recently joined up with North Manchester Community Partnership, who will be supporting them with their next steps. Care leavers were identified as a priority group, as part of a GM wide project. Care leavers have been given a combination of devices, data and skills support. During this period devices have been donated to approximately 170 care leavers.

2.3.6.2 Data

Lack of connectivity is another barrier to residents, particularly during this cost-of-living crisis as many people cancel their broadband and mobile data packages. Over 4000 free SIMs have been distributed in the last 12 months as outlined in section.

2.3.6.3 Skills

The lack of skills and confidence to use technology safely and effectively is another reason for being digitally excluded. There are thousands of residents who have Internet access but don't have the skills or confidence to use it. During the pandemic we established a digital champions scheme where volunteers, libraries staff and staff from partner organisations offered remote support over the phone to digitally excluded residents. Residents contacted us by texting, or by being referred by email. Our text line and email service are still operational and are being offered as a support service, including for the Voter Authority Certificate scheme. The digital inclusion work outlined in this

report is a key part of the City of Lifelong Learning initiative and supporting and promoting organisations with their skills work. We have been active in promoting digital courses from outside providers, facilitating Ability Net to run successful digital learning sessions for an age friendly audience in libraries as well as other community settings (e.g. Northmoor Community Centre, Longsight and Age UK Crossacres in Wythenshawe). Xyrius Training have also been facilitated to run two fully subscribed courses at Chorlton Library with more courses planned at Woodward Court in Ancoats. Equans, an MCC contractor, run a digital course as part of their social value offering. The Digital Inclusion team are partnering with them to run a 'Digital Deep Dive' course at the Booth Centre.

2.3.7 An increasing emphasis in the Digital Inclusion Action Plan has been given to VCSE Sector support this year. By building capacity within community organisations around digital inclusion, the work becomes sustainable and reaches most people. It is imperative that the Council is not seen as the main delivery solution to combat digital exclusion, but that we support existing provision in communities. Examples are listed below:

2.3.7.1 We have established the Digital Inclusion Working group which meets six times a year and progresses work in between meetings. All members have one common goal – to reduce the amount of digitally excluded people in Manchester. Membership includes the digital inclusion team, other Council staff, digital skills providers, community groups, MACC, housing providers and colleagues from the health sector. Group members value the support provided and the forum to share best practice on issues such as supporting older people, supporting visually impaired people and funding opportunities.

2.3.7.2 An increasing emphasis in the Digital Inclusion Action Plan has been given to VCSE Sector support this year. Using funding from the Work and Skills Team we have been able to incentivize community organisations to embed digital inclusion in their work. Residents are most likely to become digitally confident through community organisations they trust, rather than through traditional IT training organisations. In the past 6 months we have visited 50 organisations, most of whom have begun offering digital inclusion support as a result. This includes registering as a National Databank Centre to be able to donate free SIMs, offering digital training sessions, hiring a digital champion volunteer etc. Through this work we are making a real difference to the digital support infrastructure in the city in a sustainable way.

2.3.7.3 Supporting health is a key element of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan. Digitally excluded people may be unable to access information and services relating to health. Our Digital Health Hubs initiative was first introduced in Wythenshawe and has recently been introduced in North Manchester - Crumpsall, Cheetham Hill and Harpurhey. Through our partnerships with local organisations and libraries, residents are provided with relevant NHS app training. We created promotional materials that outline exactly what offers are available from those centres, and colleagues in the NHS Digital team work with local Primary Care Networks to embed that information into the heart of their service. This allows GP receptionists and practitioners to refer their

patients to local community centres, if they identify a need for digital support, for example to book GP appointments online.

2.3.7.4 Housing The digital inclusion team has been working with housing providers in the city to enhance their digital offering. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WHCG) have a comprehensive network of digital learning centres across the area in community centres and age friendly settings. In partnership with the Digital Inclusion team a 'Digishawe' leaflet has been produced which lists support available across Wythenshawe and the wider area. WCHG, supported by us are sharing best practice with other housing providers around digital inclusion so some of the model can be replicated in other neighbourhoods. Northwards Housing (now part of Manchester City Council) have their own Digital Inclusion officer who works with the MCC digital Inclusion team and North Manchester Community Partnership to enhance the digital skills and help in the North Manchester area.

2.3.7.5 To increase awareness of digital support across the city, we have created a directory of digital drop-ins across the city, including library and VCSE sector drop-in sessions - https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/results.page?directorychannel=9-1. We are sharing this directory widely with organisations across the city, so they know where in their local community to signpost residents for digital support. We also work closely with Manchester Adult Education to ensure that residents are aware of the free digital skills courses on offer.

2.3.8 Let's Get Digital campaign and communications

In 2021, following consultation with residents, the Let's Get Digital Manchester campaign was produced. This branding can be used by all organisations in Manchester, not just the Council, to raise awareness of digital inclusion support.

We began sending a Let's Get Digital monthly newsletter in October 2022, which is used to promote digital inclusion and digital support initiatives. There is a Twitter account @LetsGetDigiMcr which shares support offers with partners across the city and wider afield. There are also Let's Get Digital Pages on the Manchester Digital website https://manchesterdigitalstrategy.com/.

2.4 Funding of the digital inclusion programme

The digital inclusion programme is crucial to supporting residents across the city, particularly in those areas with the highest levels of deprivation. The work is key to multiple high-profile corporate priorities. The work to date has been funded from a variety of areas. This includes Covid recovery funding and the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. The Council's Cost of Living budgets provided £45k funding in 2023-24. £50k per year from GMCA, Digital Strategy funding, external funding (e.g. from successful Good Things Foundation bids), from libraries funding and social value contracts. All options

are being explored to ensure sustainability of the programme. This includes the £50k per annum that each authority in GM has received in recent years specifically to support digital inclusion and using Council's Cost of Living funding again in 2024-25. The need to combat digital exclusion will remain for the foreseeable future, so funding needs to be mainstreamed if possible.

2.5 **Future priorities and projects**

The Digital Inclusion programme has done a huge amount to tackle digital exclusion in Manchester, but there continues to be much more to do. Digital exclusion is still affecting the lives of thousands of Manchester's residents, especially with the current cost of living situation. Our most vulnerable residents continue to be disproportionately affected by being digitally excluded. The Digital Inclusion Action Plan, included as Appendix 1, details the priorities for the next twelve months. Highlights of these priorities are:

2.5.1 We will continue to deliver device, data and skills initiatives. We will donate devices to priority residents (care leavers, cost of living helpline callers, food bank users). We will continue to support people through the cost-of-living crisis by provide data via the National databank sims schemes. We will continue to offer telephone support to residents who have Internet access but don't have the skills or confidence to use it effectively – supporting specific initiatives such as Voter Authority Certificate applications, Council consultations etc.

2.5.2 We will increase links with health organisations to increase digital inclusion. We will develop further digital health hubs around GP practices to promote the use of digital health tools, improve residents access to health services and reduce pressure on NHS services.

2.5.3 We will continue to support VCSE organisations, encouraging more organisations to embed digital inclusion in their work, and supporting the work of those organisations that already deliver digital inclusion initiatives. Supporting the VCSE sector's understanding of digital inclusion and ability to support digitally excluded people will make this work sustainable in the long-term, and is a key priority for the team/

2.5.4 We will continue to explore expanding affordable connectivity Options. Recognizing the crucial role of internet access in tackling digital exclusion, we remain committed to providing free/low-cost connectivity solutions for low-income households. Currently, we are engaged in promising discussions with two Housing Associations exploring the possibility of offering free civic Wi-Fi to their residents. The housing provider acts as a digital landlord, extending their internet connection using relays (access points) mounted on their properties to create a mesh network offering free Wi-Fi to the surrounding area. These projects, inspired by the successful Rochdale Mesh pilot, hold significant potential to expand internet access for underserved communities. This initiative aligns with our broader efforts to bridge the digital divide and empower residents through device donations and data support.

2.5.5 The Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) is being switched off in the UK. The switch-off process began in September 2023, with the full PSTN switch-off scheduled for 2025. After the switch-off, all devices that rely on PSTN to function, most notably older landline phones, will no longer work. We are working with colleagues across Greater Manchester to identify those types of residents most at risk from this switch off, for examples where care equipment will stop working, and put together an action plan to mitigate the impact.

2.5.6 Digital champions are key to supporting digital skills initiatives across the city. We will continue to increase the number of volunteers recruited. The champions will support digital drop-ins in libraries, provide telephone support to those people that text the helpline, and be allocated to organisations across the city.

2.5.7 We will continue to build strategic partnerships. For example, we will work with the University of Manchester on Eduroam – to increase access to Wi-Fi in community settings. We will work with the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University on digital skills initiatives.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

4.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Digital Inclusion Action Plan 2023
Appendix 2 - Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-24 & Delivery Plan 2024
Appendix 3 - Infographic: Digital Inclusion Team 2023
Appendix 4 - House of Lords Digital Inclusion and Cost of Living Inquiry - summary of recommendations
Appendix 5 - Wards in Manchester where digital exclusion is highest
Appendix 6 - SIMs received by Manchester residents by Ward
Appendix 7 - "What does digital exclusion look like in Manchester?" 2023 Report by Open Data Manchester
Appendix 8 - Library computer users compared to Index of Multiple Deprivation

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Manchester's Digital Inclusion Action Plan

Refresh (Feb 2024)

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MANCHESTER'S DIGITAL STRATEGY

Sections

- What is Digital Inclusion?
  - Definition
  - Digital Exclusion Research
- Mission Statement
- Digital Inclusion Team
- Digital Inclusion in Manchester
- Strategic Landscape
- Consultancy approach
- Purpose of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan
- Digital Inclusion Workstreams
- Workstream Objectives & Metrics

Remember to
touch-in
touch-out
using the same card or device
OK

What is Digital Inclusion?

Digital Exclusion occurs where someone doesn't have one or more of the following:

- **Access to the Internet**
- **Skills/Confidence to use the Internet**
- **Motivation to use the Internet – "it's not for me"**

According to the UN, digital inclusion refers to the "equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere. Digital inclusion is enabled by human rights-based, intersectional, and whole-of-society policies and multi-stakeholder approaches and actions, that take into account the various barriers individuals face when accessing and experiencing digital technologies."

There are different ways of describing and measuring digital inclusion. Recently, the Minimum Digital Living Standards Project has set out to identify the minimum digital needs of families in the UK. The current working definition is "A minimum digital standard of living includes, but is more than, having accessible internet, adequate equipment, and the skills, knowledge and support people need. It is about being able to communicate, connect and engage with opportunities safely and with confidence."

Importantly, as the UK Digital Poverty Evidence Review highlights, digital exclusion and poverty can affect anyone, and most of us will experience some form of digital exclusion in our lifetimes. People fall in and out of being digitally included. There is no switch we can flip to ensure that someone changes status permanently from "excluded" to "included."

> Digital poverty is both the result of and a cause of financial hardship. A person might not need to live in financial poverty to experience digital poverty.
>
> **UK Digital Poverty Evidence Review 2022**

Digital Exclusion Research

UK

- 1.7 million households do not have a broadband connection (2021).
- 2.4 million adults do not have even basic digital skills for life.
- Lack of digital skills costs the economy £63 billion a year.
- 20% of non-users say the internet is too expensive.
- 20% of non-users say the internet is too complicated.

Manchester

- 1 in 3 (37%) residents report that their household experiences some form of digital exclusion.
- 63% of those aged 75+ and 52% of disabled people are likely to experience at least one aspect of digital exclusion.
- Residents are most likely to be excluded due to a lack of skills or support to allow them to access digital online services.
- Only around 40% of residents are able to use digital GP services.
- 12% of residents don't have decent broadband connections.

Social Exclusion

- Almost 20% of residents don't have any formal education qualifications. (Those who left education at or under 18 years are almost 8x more likely to be limited or non-users.)
- Around 17% of residents have a disability. (32% of people with an impairment do not have even the most basic digital skills.)
- 20% of residents have a main language other than English. (Lack of English language literacy can be a barrier to learning digital skills.)
- 42% of children are growing up in poverty and 21% Mcr households have < £30/month discretionary income (not incl. broadband costs). (Limited users are 4x more likely to come from low-income households.)

Sources:
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5803/ldselect/ldcomm/219/21904.htm#_idTextAnchor004
https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/insights/building-a-digital-nation/
https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/understanding_motivations_of_non-users_of_the_internet.pdf
https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/resident-surveys/

Digital Exclusion Research

"Digital exclusion affects millions of UK citizens. Every day, people are unable to access the internet because they do not have the connection, device or skills to get online. This digital divide is undermining efforts to improve UK productivity, economic growth and socio-economic inclusion. Cost of living challenges are exacerbating the problem for the most financially vulnerable."

The House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee inquiry into "Digital Exclusion and the Cost of Living" (June 2023)

Mission Statement

We **advise** organisations across Manchester on how to embed digital inclusion into their existing offer.

We **support** residents and organisations serving residents to access digital skills training, devices, connectivity, and data.

We **connect** people working on digital inclusion across the city by convening meetings for networking and knowledge exchange.

We **amplify** the best practice across the city and country on digital inclusion to raise awareness.

And perhaps most importantly, we **listen** to the voices of lived experience. We strive to co-create solutions to digital exclusion with the people who have first-hand knowledge.

We don't chase the numbers because we know that being included is not a tick-box exercise. People will fall in and out of being digitally included at different points in their lives, and inclusion is often a qualitative experience.

We're interested in culture change! Everyone needs to take responsibility for empowering people to be digitally included.

Digital Inclusion Team

- **Libraries Citywide Services Manager (Reform)** - advising on strategic approaches to DI, amplifying and coordinating DI work within MCC and externally, reporting on the DI work across the city

- **Digital Inclusion Coordinator** – advising on strategic approaches to DI, coordinating DI work within MCC and externally, leading on community engagement, leading on device and data distribution projects, contributing to reports

- **Digital Inclusion Officer** – community engagement, supporting community orgs to embed DI into existing services, leading on Digital Champions volunteer project

- **Digital Inclusion Business Support** – data collection, responding to customer queries (via text line and inbox), comms support, distributing devices and data, admin for National Databank project

Digital Inclusion in Manchester

6745+
people provided with data and/or a device

500+
residents that we've engaged with at our in-person events

4200+
free SIMs donated so far.
17 libraries are registered as Databanks.

200+
care leavers supported with digital access, data and skills support

1560+
people supported via our inbox and text line

280+
Digital Inclusion Working Group members

50+
partner organisations currently being supported to embed DI

140+
UK Online Centres in Manchester

1910+
subscribers to our comms, including a monthly newsletter & Twitter.

Strategic Landscape

Almost every aspect of everyday life is impacted by **digital** today: work, school, health, community, social and more.

Digital is fundamental to residents' lives, so **inclusion** is necessary for everyone to benefit.

This is why **digital inclusion** must be integral to all our key strategic plans citywide.

Digital inclusion is a priority embedded in several key Manchester City Council strategies.

The Manchester Digital Strategy, 2021-2026

This strategy sets out the city's ambition to be a world-leading digital city by 2026, and digital inclusion is fundamental to this ambition.

Digital inclusion, equality, and diversity are at the heart of the strategy, and it is a priority to **"deepen our understanding of digital inclusion by continuing to deliver the Digital Inclusion Action Plan, developing the Digital Exclusion Index and actively engaging with residents and VCSE organisations."**

Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027

Digital inclusion is also about ensuring that the digital technologies we adopt and use treat everyone fairly. The Anti-Poverty Strategy commits to implementing the Algorithmic Transparency Standard so we can make sure that algorithmic decision-making (like AI) does not unfairly penalise people on low incomes, and encourage our partners to do the same.

Algorithms are sets of rules applied to data in order to find patterns, solve problems, or make predictions. Local authorities and other organisations collect, store, and analyse large amounts of data, and they increasingly use algorithms to support decision making. The use of algorithms gives opportunities to make services more efficient, tailor services to individual users, and reveal new insights about social problems based on robust evidence. However, algorithmic decision-making also brings risks, such as violations of privacy, discrimination, and bias against certain people or groups.

The UK Algorithmic Transparency Standard is a national framework to enable the public sector to share information on the use of algorithmic tools with the public and other stakeholders, such as regulators and researchers. Publishing this information out in the open means that these systems and tools can be subjected to public debate and scrutiny.

CERTIFICATE
of Digital Skills
david fregene

Making Manchester Fairer: Tackling Health Inequalities in Manchester 2022–2027

Health inequalities are the avoidable gaps between the healthiest and least healthy people and communities in our city. So many Mancunians fared worse during the pandemic because of existing inequalities.

The pandemic also exposed the added barriers to good health that some communities face as a result of prejudice and discrimination. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, as well as Disabled People, were disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

The Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan seeks to address the persistent health inequalities in Manchester and digital inclusion is explicitly highlighted as a key driver of this:
"Digital inclusion is about making the benefits and opportunities of the internet and digital technology available to everyone. Addressing the digital divide is one of the many great social – and health equity – challenges."

The Digital Inclusion team is actively engaged with the plan's various kickstarter projects and is advising on where digital inclusion initiatives can support the projects' aims.

Investing in Success: Manchester's Economic Strategy

This strategy sets out a vision for the next 25 years

One of the five priorities is: "Develop world-class infrastructure, places and talent."

As part of that it references "Delivering Manchester's Digital Strategy" and "Digital connectivity is now as essential to businesses and residents as traditional utilities such as water and power."

The delivery of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan will support residents' digital skills, the economic strategy and the ambition for inclusive growth.

Age Friendly Strategy

The 4 main themes of the Age Friendly Strategy are:

- Being Heard and Age Equality
- Age Friendly Neighborhoods where we can Age in Place
- Age Friendly Services that support us to Age Well
- Work, Skills and Money

Given that digital exclusion disproportionately affects older people, we are working closely with the Age Friendly team to embed digital inclusion into the strategy's delivery plan, under each of the four themes. Our particular focus is supporting age friendly organisations to promote digital inclusion as part of existing services.

Digital Inclusion in Manchester: A consultancy approach

During the COVID19 pandemic, the Digital Inclusion team were responsible for preparing and sending out numerous devices to residents and providing them with mentor volunteers to guide and train in the use of these devices.

Since the end of the pandemic, the Digital Inclusion team has adopted a different consultancy based approach that will bring inclusivity to more citizens of Manchester.

This approach involves contacting community organisations and offering to help them embed digital initiatives in their offer by using a bespoke ‘Digital Inclusion Toolkit’.

To date, we have contacted over 30 community organisations and helped them improve their digital offer to their service users.

Here are some of the organisations we are working with:-

Mustard Tree

Believe in children
Barnardo's

New Longsight
Housing Co-op

boaztrust
serving destitute asylum seekers

CAHN
Caribbean & African Health Network

MASH
manchester action on street health
est. 1991

GEORGE HOUSE TRUST
HIV POSITIVE LIVING

Cornerstone
Caritas Diocese of Salford

SharpFutures

(allfm)96.9
..the real voice of Manchester

422
COMMUNITY HUB

Golden
Centre of Opportunities
We are a City & Guilds Approved Centre
and a Matrix Accredited Centre

BETTER WE
SMILE BETTER TOGETHER

back on track >

MDC
Est 1846
manchester deaf centre

North Manchester
Community Partnership

Booth Centre

healthy me
healthy communities
www.hmhc.co.uk

BARNABUS
Bringing hope to the homeless and vulnerable

Home
Work & Skills
Health & Well-being

Tree of Life Centre
Wythenshawe

COFFEE
4 Craig

CREATING STRONGER
MANCHESTER SETTLEMENT
COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the issues of loneliness and social isolation in our society. One of the few positive impacts from this time was the rise of people using digital to communicate; and the benefits of these online communities mean that people from diverse backgrounds, who otherwise might not have come together, can find a common space.

But not everyone has access.

As more and more of our life takes place online, from chatting with friends and neighbours on social media, consuming culture, checking local events, to reading regional & national news, for those offline the social isolation is exacerbated. We recognise that digital exclusion is social exclusion.
However, the increase in digital communication can increase the risk of polarisation, as hate speech and fake news lead to online conflicts which spill over into the real world. Therefore, it is vital that digital inclusion work also promotes online safety and media literacy.

The Digital Inclusion team will support the Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy team to ensure that the delivery plan considers digital excluded members of our communities and co-designs strategies to support them.

northernrailway.co.uk
NORTHERN

Purpose of this Action Plan

- This document is a plan for meeting the strategic priorities of the city, particularly those articulated in the Digital Strategy.
- Our actions are organised into workstreams >> workstreams have specific objectives >> and objectives are delivered by our vast array of partners across the city.
- We are always looking for partners who are willing to commit to delivering on this action plan with our advice and support, so please get in touch!

Digital Inclusion Action Plan

1 Advising & Building Capacity	2 Expanding Access	3 Digital Capability	4 Sustainability & Affordability	5 Listening & Research
1.1 Embed DI in existing services 1.2 Encourage knowledge exchange, develop digital champions across all sectors 1.3 Increase number of digital champions providing support in libraries and providing telephone support 1.4 Build local DI networks 1.5 Support frontline workers to provide ad hoc skills support	2.1 Donate devices + data to residents & comm orgs (lending & device refurb schemes) 2.2 Make grants and funding available to Manchester organisations (incl non-MCC funding) 2.3 Develop infrastructure e.g. public wifi hotspots, mesh (free/affordable connectivity), embed connectivity in social value 2.4 Increase device and connectivity donations through social value contracts	3.1 Improve visibility of digital skills support in communities, including in libraries 3.2 Help ensure all Manchester residents and MCC staff have digital skills for life and work 3.3 Promote online safety and wellbeing for children and schools 3.4 Promote digital skills for employability 3.5 Data and algorithmic literacy in public and MCC staff and public sector staff more widely	4.1 Promote and support circular economy initiatives (e.g. refurb device schemes) 4.2 Encourage software development that is backward compatible (overcome planned obsolescence) 4.3 Keep costs down by recycling	5.1 Involve people with lived experience in co-designing digital inclusion projects and interventions 5.2 Support research into digital exclusion and strategies for increasing inclusion and diversity 5.3 Use the Digital Exclusion Risk Index to target work and encouraging use across all sectors

Advising & Building Capacity

Objectives:

- 1.1 Embed DI in existing services
- 1.2 Encourage knowledge exchange, develop digital champions across all sectors
- 1.3 Increase number of digital champions providing support in libraries and providing telephone support
- 1.4 Build local DI networks
- 1.5 Support frontline workers to provide ad hoc skills support

Advising & Building Capacity: We will...

Intervention	Why?	Lead	Target Date/ Report Back	Measure/deliverables	Updates
Digital Champions scheme	To boost capacity at digital skills sessions, to develop skills of volunteers	MCC DI team	Feb 2024	Numbers of DCs trained and matched to volunteering opportunities	Refresh Feb 2024
DI toolkit	Support frontline staff to recognise digital exclusion, know where to signpost, know how to embed DI into existing services	MCC DI and W&S teams	April 2024	A toolkit ppt for community orgs	40+ organisations contacted
Consultancy offer to community organisations	To support community orgs to embed DI in existing services, so residents can access support in trusted spaces	MCC DI team	ongoing	Number of Let's Get Digital partners, case studies on partner organisations	1 case study live on 'Lets Get Digital' website, several more in preparation.
Social housing model of good practice and reporting pro-forma	To support SH providers to offer DI support to tenants, to agree on annual reporting	WCHG	April 2024	Annual reporting pro-forma; SH DI blueprint	Meeting to be planned ASAP early 2024
PSTN switch off advisory role	To minimise risks to vulnerable residents in the forthcoming PSTN switch off	MCC DI team	April 2024	Awareness raising materials for staff and residents	GMCA working group set up

Expanding Access

Objectives:

- 2.1 Donate devices + data to residents & comm orgs (lending & device refurb schemes)
- 2.2 Make grants and funding available to Manchester organisations (incl non-MCC funding)
- 2.3 Develop infrastructure e.g. public wifi, mesh (free/affordable connectivity), embed connectivity in social value
- 2.4 Increase device and connectivity donations through social value contracts

Expanding Access: We will...

Intervention	Why?	Lead	Target Date/ Report Back	Measure/deliverables	Updates
Databank promotion	To ensure more services include this in their existing support offers	MCC DI team	Ongoing	Number of databanks across city increased	20 new databanks set up as part of DI toolkit initiative in 2023 Over 4000 Sims donated in 2023
MESH pilot in MCC social housing	To explore alternative, cheaper connectivity for social housing tenants	Digital Strategy Team	Feb 2024	Pilot site for MESH network agreed and networked	
Device lending library pilots	To trial more sustainable approach to device poverty	MCC DI team	Evaluate projects in March 2024	Number of clients supported with device loan and impact of this on their lives	
Be Well device scheme	To support Be Well clients' health and wellbeing via online tools	Big Life Group	Feb 2024	25 Geobooks donated to 25 clients who are partnered with a coach for digital skills support	5 devices donated so far
Komp device project	To reduce social isolation in older people to video chat with family	Age Friendly NCDO (MCC)	Completed Aug 23	Number of older people who receive a device and can use it to stay in contact with family	Delivery made to Didsbury and Chorlton Good Neighbours
Funding opportunities	To boost capacity in VCSE to offer DI support	MCC DI team	Ongoing	Amount of funding brought into the city	
Social Value	To increase the number of refurbished low cost hardware being reused by Manchester residents	**MCC DI team**	**April 2024**	**Amount of devices donated to residents**	

Digital Capability

Objectives:

- 3.1 Improve visibility of digital skills support in communities, including in libraries
- 3.2 Help ensure all Manchester residents and MCC staff have digital skills for life and work
- 3.3 Promote online safety and wellbeing for children and schools
- 3.4 Promote digital skills for employability
- 3.5 Data and algorithmic literacy in public and MCC staff and public sector staff more widely

Digital Capability: We will...

Intervention	Why?	Lead	Target Date/ Report Back	Measure/deliverables	Updates
Digital health hubs in multiple areas of the city	To empower people to manage health via online tools, to ease capacity at GPs in order to keep analogue routes open for those who need them	MCC DI team and NHS	Feb 2024	Number of Digital Health Hubs across the city	Wythenshawe pilot successful. Cheetham, Harpurhey rolled out Feb 2024. Gorton, Longsight and Levenshulme planned for Summer 24
Support the development and implementation of a digital skills framework	To align business and resident digital skills needs.	W&S team	Ongoing		Digital skills framework launched in January 24
Learn My Way in libraries project	To improve digital skills of library customers, to develop confidence of library staff in using LMW platform	MCC DI team	Complete June 23	Training materials and workshops delivered to library staff	Pilot at Central Library is complete
Workforce Digital Skills Development	Staff to be digital advocates and have the skills they need for work now and in future	MCC Workforce Development	Feb 2024	A Workforce Digital Skills plan	

Sustainability & Affordability

Objectives:

- 4.1 Promote and support circular economy initiatives (e.g. refurb device schemes)
- 4.2 Encourage software development that is backward compatible (overcome planned obsolescence)
- 4.3 Keep costs down by recycling

Sustainability & Affordability: We will...

Intervention	Why?	Lead	Target Date/ Report Back	Measure/deliverables	Updates
Community Computers refurb device scheme	To increase numbers of devices available to residents, to support MCC's Zero Carbon pledge	Community Computers	On-going	Monthly donation and sales data for Manchester	
Old MCC devices refurbished and donated to Manchester residents	To increase numbers of devices available to residents, to support MCC's Zero Carbon pledge	MCC IT	Mar 2024 2025	More refurbished devices received by Manchester residents Existing contractor (Tier1) makes some devices available to Manchester residents Influence new and MCC IT contracts to include that residents receive our old devices	Contact made with Tier1 refurb partner on MCC contract.
Comms work on e-waste recycling	Drive up donations to refurb scheme; meeting MCC's Zero Carbon pledge	MCC's Zero Carbon Comms team	April 2024	Comms campaign produced by MCC	

Listening & Research

Objectives:

5.1 3-part research project on "Reframing digital exclusion“

5.2 Digital Exclusion Risk Index

5.3 Annual Digital Inclusion Report

Listening & Research: We will...

Intervention	Why?	Lead	Target Date/ Report Back	Measure/deliverables	Updates
3-part research project on "Reframing digital exclusion"	Hear from people with lived experience in order to better understand and co-design initiatives	Open Data Manchester (ODM)	Report delivered January 2024	Report on Digital volunteers, report on focus groups, user research materials for community orgs	
Digital Exclusion Risk Index	Use data to target work in the areas of the city most at risk of digital exclusion,	MCC PRI team	Ongoing	Number of uses of the DERI	
Annual Digital Inclusion report, from 2024	To report on metrics which indicate residents are more digitally included	MCC PRI team	Ongoing	Annual report produced from 2024	

14:54
trainline
Deansgate → Buckshaw Parkway
£10.60
36m
£6.60
50m
Earlier
23 Feb
Single from
15:08
On time
Plat. 2
15:44
On time
£10.60
Limited tickets left at this price
36m, 0 changes
Fastest
15:39
On time
Plat. 2
16:12
On time
£10.60
33m, 0 changes
16:08
On time
Plat. 2
16:44
On time
£10.80
AA
thetrainline.com

let's get digital

Whatever you want to do online, we're here to help

Text: 07860 064128
Email: digitalinclusion@manchester.gov.uk

The Let's Get Digital Manchester programme is run by a dedicated digital inclusion team in the Library Service at Manchester City Council.

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MANCHESTER'S DIGITAL STRATEGY

Manchester
Digital Strategy
2021-2026

Manchester is home to a vibrant and thriving digital sector that plays an increasingly important role in the success of our city by providing opportunities for our residents and attracting investment that drives sustainable growth.

This Digital Strategy will ensure that the city continues to support, sustain and grow our digital ecosystem, while strengthening its connection with the people, organisations and services that call Manchester home. It provides the foundation for us to achieve our aim of being a world-class digital city by 2026, supporting and contributing to the objectives set out in the Our Manchester Strategy.

The strategy is built on the wider ambition of the city to create a more sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy that benefits all our residents. The action plan to deliver on this is structured under four themes: Smart People, Digital Places, Future Prosperity and Sustainable Resilience. These actions will make sure people have the right digital skills and training opportunities, that we have the right network access and infrastructure, that we can attract investment and create the conditions for growth, and that we are able to use digital to support our journey towards being a zero-carbon city by 2038.

Together, we can achieve our vision for Manchester's digital future.

- Cllr Bev Craig
Leader of Manchester City Council

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MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

A new digital vision for Manchester

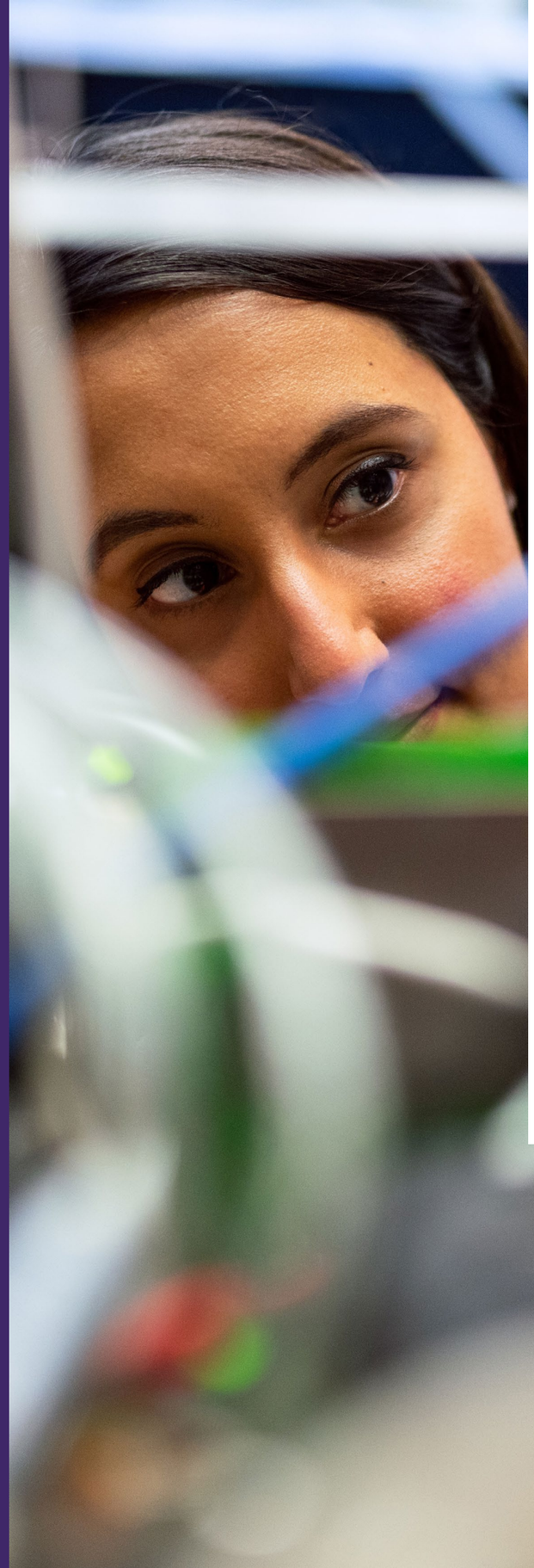
This digital strategy for Manchester is the vision for Manchester's digital future. It sets the priorities that our whole city – our public, private, voluntary and community organisations and our residents – will be able to work on together to make Manchester one of the world's leading smart cities and digital economies in the next five years.

This means that it's a strategy for the city, not just the Council, and that we will need to work together with people and organisations from all over Manchester to make it a reality.

We have developed this strategy because we see an opportunity to use technology to meet the priorities of the Our Manchester Strategy, which sets out the long-term vision for Manchester's future, and to make sure that we can achieve our ambition of being in the top-flight of world-class cities by 2025. In doing this we have tried to answer the following questions about how digital can play its part in Manchester's future success:

- How can we make sure that people in Manchester have the right skills and technology to play an active role in the life of the city and its economy?
- How can we make sure that businesses and organisations in Manchester have access to the right skills, technology and infrastructure to be successful, sustainable and to grow?
- How can we make sure that Manchester City Council makes the best use of digital and technology to promote a healthy and vibrant democracy with strong civic engagement?
- How can we use digital and technology to support those who are excluded, who are isolated or whose circumstances mean they face barriers to fully using technology?
- How can we make sure that Manchester continues to be attractive to digital companies and businesses looking to start up, invest or relocate in the city?

These questions and issues are at the core of both the Digital Strategy and the Delivery Plan which outlines the practical steps that we will be taking, together with our partners and stakeholders, to implement our priorities and support digital programmes and projects over the next five years.



What is a smart city?

Manchester has worked with many other European cities over the last 10 years on digital projects with a focus on becoming a "smart city." Rather than have a separate smart city strategy, we have integrated this within our digital strategy underpinned by the following 5 point definition:

- Smart cities enable citizens to have the capacity and confidence to use state-of-the-art future internet technologies to transform the way they live and work and their quality of life.
- Smart citizens will collaborate in new and dynamic ways, co-owning new ways of planning and delivering services and co-producing services both for themselves and for those that they live with, care for and work with.
- Smart cities will adopt new economic and social opportunities for new ways of working and living
- Smart cities will adopt new digital solutions for making environments greener, cleaner and healthier, as well as more open and inclusive.
- Smart citizens will ensure that smart cities are more democratic, resilient and attractive, using future internet-enabled services to generate and celebrate creativity, innovation and diversity, especially accessing, shaping and participating in arts and cultural experiences.

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Appendix 2, Item 7

City Context

All aspects of the digital world now impact on everything we do, living, working, playing and our quality of life. At the same time the ways we want to work, learn, travel and experience life impact on the digital world.

This means that it is of fundamental importance to our future success that everyone in Manchester is equipped with the skills and technology to make the most of our rapidly digitising world.

Fortunately, Manchester is already one of Europe's fastest growing technology cities. We already have a strong and resilient digital sector, acknowledged as "the UK's second technology city", consistently outperforming "all cities outside of London" (The Data City, 2019). This is significant not only in terms of the scale of the sector but also in terms of its scope in covering both established and emerging technologies and providing a talent pool of digital and creative skills supporting consistent growth across all parts of the sector. The recent Tech Nation report 2021 "UK Tech for a Changing Nation" demonstrates the strengths of certain parts of the sector in Manchester, including Service Design, eCommerce, Cyber Security, AI and Data Science, as well as in advanced materials. In 2021 Manchester was named as a prime location to start and scale financial technology (Fintech) firm, raking 34th globally in the Global Fintech Index by Findexable. The Government commissioned "Kalifa Review of UK Fintech" published its findings in 2021 and identified Manchester and Leeds as a 'Pennines' Fintech cluster with the highest cluster count outside of London.

In addition to our thriving businesses, Manchester has a very strong community of people and organisations working in digital environments who interact closely with each other, often referred to as Manchester's digital ecosystem. This includes support networks for start-ups and scale-ups, its own trade association with Manchester Digital (https://www.manchesterdigital.com), skills providers, user groups and tech meet-ups and events. This is central to the city's continuing economic success and inclusive recovery after the pandemic.

This ecosystem is complemented by the strength of Manchester's innovation and creative networks and activities focusing on ethics, diversity and equalities. Manchester's digital strengths impact on many other sectors as well, being at the forefront of innovation for advanced manufacturing, construction, retail and product & service design sectors. Manchester is also a centre for research and innovation around the idea of "Industry 4.0" especially in advanced manufacturing, robotics and automation and this is already stimulating thinking around the idea of "Industry 5.0", moving forward to a more people-centric development of industrial digitalisation. Furthermore, Manchester has a resilient investment pipeline managed through the investment agency MIDAS.

The new Digital Strategy aims to capitalise on our strengths, while acknowledging current challenges and looking to ways of ensuring inclusive recovery that are both sustainable and resilient, with digital inclusion, equalities and diversity at its heart. We want to put our people at the centre of this, not only making the best of digital to improve our lives but also ensuring that we can play an active role in co-designing and co-producing digital applications and services. Manchester City Council is committed to making this happen and the Digital Strategy is there to provide focus and guidance to do this.

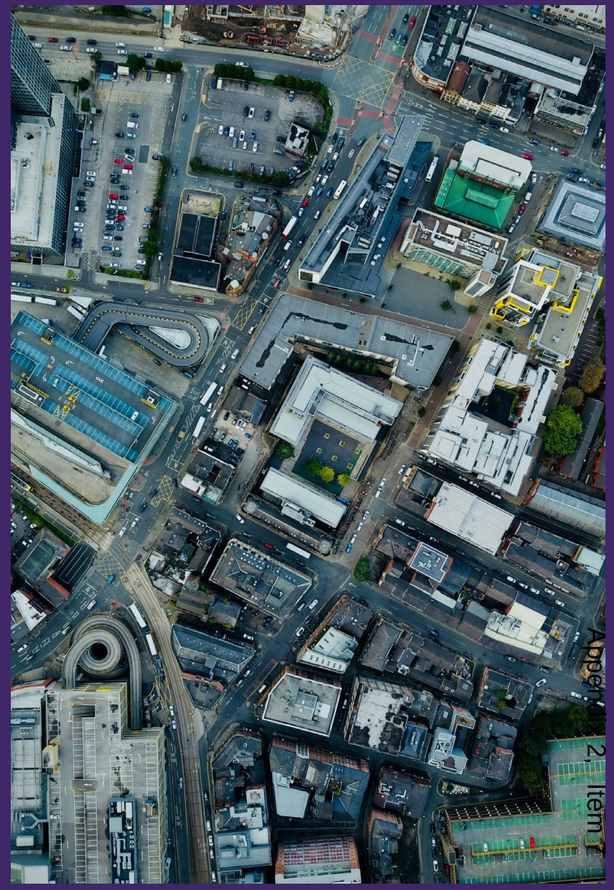
Policy context

The Digital Strategy aims to provide the vision and framework to realise Manchester's ambition to be a world leading Digital City by 2025, aligning with the recent resetting of our priorities in the Our Manchester Strategy, especially in terms of helping us to achieve key aspects of the connected city and liveable city themes. At a wider level it takes forward the "grand challenges" originally set out in the previous UK Industrial Strategy especially in terms of mobility, sustainable growth and ageing population. It also aligns with the City Council's Culture Recovery Plan, the Our Manchester Industrial Strategy, as well as the GM Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the GM Digital Blueprint.

The priorities of the Manchester Digital Strategy will contribute directly to the delivery of five of the ten Our Manchester Strategy priorities:

- We will become a digitally inclusive city, with better digital infrastructure, access to digital technology and strong and lifelong digital skills.
- We will achieve are zero-carbon ambition by 2038 at the latest, via green growth, sustainable design, low-carbon energy, retrofitting buildings, green infrastructure, and increasing climate resilience.
- We will maintain Manchester's vibrancy and ensure that all our communities are included in.
- We will work to ensure Manchester has a strong, inclusive and innovative economy with diverse growth sectors, where our residents are recognised for their contribution via fair contracts and are paid at least the Real Living Wage.
- We will continue to support our residents to learn, progress, upskill and retrain so they can access the city's current and future employment opportunities.

Another important link for our work on digital will be with the city's Work and Skills Strategy. This is being refreshed alongside the development of the digital strategy, and the two will need to work together, particularly around skills and training for our residents and businesses.



How we developed this strategy

In addition to listening to people and organisations in the city, there is also a significant body of evidence that tells us about the present state of the digital sector in Manchester and how well our residents can benefit from it.

Manchester's Digital Exclusion Index provides valuable insight and data to show how digital exclusion affects different people and communities in the city. A range of reports and research from industry bodies and organisations demonstrates our strengths in certain sub-sectors and promote the city to investors worldwide.

The recent GM Industry Labour Market and Skills Intelligence Report (https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3918/industry-labour-market-skills-report-digital-tech.pdf) makes recommendations to ensure that there are more flexible routes into digital/tech industries and that "inclusivity should be embedded in all skills initiatives" which are particularly relevant to this strategy.

Resources that we have used to inform this strategy include:

- Manchester Digital Skills Audit (2021 and previous)
- Manchester High School Digital Audit (2019).
- GM Industry Labour Market and Skills Intelligence Report.
- Manchester City Council's Digital Exclusion Index.
- Greater Manchester Emerging Technologies Sectors. Sensemaking & Narrative Report.
- Smart and green: joining up digital and environmental priorities" (Green Alliance, October 2020).

This information tells us that our strengths are:

- Our digital economy is worth over £5bn, employs over 88,000 people and is home to over 10,000 businesses.
- Manchester now has five "unicorns" (companies valued at over £1bn), all of which are in e-commerce sector.
- Our digital "ecosystem" continues to grow and develop around the city centre, with Circle Square, the new innovation district, "ID Manchester", together with Enterprise City (St John's) and developments in NOMA and the Northern Quarter.
- Manchester is one of the best places to operate a digital business, with a strong digital ecosystem, improving talent pipeline, and increasingly attractive destination for investment.
- Our Digital Skills Network already brings together over 200 creative and digital, and education and skills professionals, with a broad purpose of sharing good practice and collaborating on activity that tackles Manchester's digital skills challenge.
- Our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector has highlighted throughout the importance of grass roots, community-based initiatives, often run by small charities and self-help networks, in promoting digital inclusion.
- It is widely recognised that Manchester has a strong talent pool based on a growing workforce which is young, diverse and increasingly well-educated with the skills and capacities to support further growth in the digital/tech sector, attracting new investment and relocations.
- Manchester's digital skills ecosystem is well placed to continue to support this with universities, colleges, business and the VCSE sector working closely together to ensure that additional capacity can be created and delivered to support the continued growth of the sector and inclusion of more of the City's residents in the opportunities it creates.
- Manchester's strengths in research and innovation have long made the city a place of choice for investment and talent, particularly focusing on the universities and related research agencies and networks.
- Many parts of the innovation ecosystem are already actively engaged in the wider communities in which they are based, including providing access for local people and business to the experience and expertise that they have available.
- Manchester is home to an emerging new wave of ethical tech businesses and digital not-for-profits which builds upon existing strengths of other pioneering initiatives including Future Everything, Open Data Manchester and the Manchester Digital Laboratory (MadLab).
- Manchester's universities provide a foundation for digital innovation and research and the talent pool to attract investment for future prosperity.

It also tells us that we face the following challenges:

- 25% of Manchester LSOAs are within the highest scoring groups on our Digital Exclusion Index with a very high risk of being digitally excluded.
- Data shows that there is a strong link between digital exclusion and social exclusion.
- There is a lack of diversity in the sector which contributes to making it unattractive or inaccessible for some of our residents.
- There is a need to create a strong offer for digital skills learning to meet the needs of new entrants to the labour market, as well as others who have become recently unemployed or underemployed.
- There is a need to focus on meeting the needs for advanced digital skills, as specialist sectors of the ecosystem continue to grow rapidly and require higher level technical skills. Inability to meet these skill needs will constrain growth.
- Manchester Digital's annual Skills Audit highlights skills shortages, including specific shortages in areas such as DevOps and software engineering. These have been consistently the areas with the highest levels of skill shortages for a decade. While there are many good programmes & initiatives, these need to be scaled up.
- There is a lack leadership and management capacity in Manchester, though there is also demand from employees to develop these skills.

- More support is needed to help people retrain, reskill and to develop the entrepreneurial skills they need so that they can form their own businesses and networks.

- There is a need to make sure that we continue to provide high capacity, accessible and future-proofed infrastructure to support future growth.

Listening and engagement

The new Digital Strategy is based on the engagement and discussion with 63 partners and networks across the city during the past year. It also considers the recommendations from a report by ARUP commissioned by the City Council following their evaluation of the CityVerve project, which provided an external overview of Manchester's current digital policies and strategies. This included lessons learnt from case studies of Digital Strategies from across the UK and globally.

A formal consultation process took place from September 2020 to March 2021 with business, public and VCSE sectors and community organisations and networks. This resulted in many suggestions for new and innovative digital ideas for services and projects which have been incorporated into this strategy.

The consultation feedback showed that we need to:

Support the continued growth of the sector in Manchester to enable a much wider growth of jobs, skills and innovation;

- Build on our success and incorporate the lessons learned from recent major projects including Triangulum, CityVerve, Synchronicity and SmartImpact;

- Build on our strengths in the grass roots networks of digital innovators, entrepreneurs and activists to challenge ethical, diversity and equalities issues;

- Build on our local sector strengths which include Fintech, e-commerce, cybersecurity and digital creative.

- Continue to support the growth of the innovation ecosystem, especially in local universities and their partnerships with businesses and the wider community;

- Continue to support and grow Manchester's networks with other cities across the world, to enable the exchange of knowledge and ideas and the sharing of best practice.

In addition to the direct consultation on this strategy, in 2020 Manchester completed the reset of the Our Manchester strategy having undertaken significant engagement with people and organisations in the city. The findings of the consultation for this process showed us that:

Our residents have a strong preference for prioritising equality and inclusion, making sure all people have the same life chances.

- Our residents want to make sure that everyone, especially young people, have the skills and experience they need to be successful.

- Our businesses want to make sure that we have the right infrastructure to grow and to compete globally.

- Our businesses want to ensure access to a highly skilled workforce with strong pipeline of talent.

All groups consulted recognise the importance of digital, with a particular focus on inclusion, and that access to technology, infrastructure and skills as being essential to our future success.

Themes

From the work we have undertaken to understand the needs of the sector, the people and organisations who live in the city and the substantial range of data and information available, we can start to categorise our information under four headings aligned to Manchester's Local Industrial Strategy and Powering Recovery:

People:
Including skills, access to technology, inclusion, and participation.

Place:
Including technology and digital infrastructure, connectivity, and liveability.

Prosperity:
Including the digital economy, Manchester's digital ecosystem, economic resilience and technology across all sectors.

Sustainability:
Including climate change, net-zero and the use of infrastructure, technology and services as a utility not just a commodity.

We have used these to create four overarching themes for the Digital Strategy:

1. **Smart people:**
   We will ensure that everyone can gain and sustain the skills, aspirations, and confidence to fully participate in the digital world; providing the basis for Manchester to become an inclusive, diverse, successful and ethical smart city.

2. **Digital places:**
   We will create digital neighbourhoods providing access, connectivity and support for all residents and businesses and digitally enabling enhanced health and wellbeing.

3. **Future prosperity:**
   We will enable the digital economy and ecosystem to grow, continue to attract new digital businesses & sectors and support a resilient and inclusive economy.

4. **Sustainable resilience:**
   We will use digital imaginatively for innovation to meet zero carbon and climate resilience goals and to create open inclusive connectivity with enhanced digital infrastructure as a utility not just a commodity.

These objectives are intended to work together. While Smart People is about our residents and workers and Digital Places is about Manchester itself, Future Prosperity is about connecting and harnessing our people and place themes to make sure they are truly beneficial to people, businesses and organisations in Manchester. Finally, Sustainable Resilience links the digital strategy to Manchester's zero-carbon commitments, as well as considering how we plan for and respond to the changing nature of technology and digital services in the future. It is intended to keep Manchester at the forefront of technological change in a way that is sustainable and accessible to everyone.

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Smart People

Theme 1:
Smart People

Smart People is about making sure that all our residents have access to the skills, training and employment opportunities that they need to participate fully in the life of the city and benefit from its many opportunities.

Fundamentally, this means tackling the high levels of digital exclusion in the City, removing barriers to accessing digital services and ensuring that all our residents have the access, skills and confidence to go online to maximise the opportunities provided by the internet and digital services.

Smart People is also about creating the opportunities for people to learn and develop new skills at all levels. Some of this means working with schools, colleges and universities to improve careers education as well as formal training in digital subjects. However, it is also critical for the success of the digital sector that we address current skill shortages in the short to medium term, to enable them recruit the talent they need to thrive.

Finally, Smart People, is about encouraging greater entrepreneurship and creating new routes into more highly skilled and more highly paid jobs. This requires a more flexible response from the skills system and for digital businesses to provide input to curriculum design, delivery and work experience. One of the recognised challenges for the sector is its lack of diversity in terms of talent attraction of gender, ethnicity and age. Digital bootcamps bridge some of this skills gap and the recent Digital Fast Track Programme (GMCA & DCMS) enabled residents who were unemployed or low paid to participate and supported diversity. However it is also clear that there is a need for the sector to look at how it can ensure opportunities are attractive and accessible to everyone, regardless of their identity or background.

Smart People case study – Fast Track Fund / TechEquity Manchester

The Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund, has been effective in addressing immediate digital skills shortages by providing participants with the technical and digital skills needed in industry now. The £3 million fund is a joint venture between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) - set up to support both Greater Manchester and Lancashire residents with accessible routes into digital employment.

It has enabled residents who could not normally afford to pay to participate in flexible digital bootcamps, to take part and at the same time is supporting the industry to diversify by including more underrepresented communities.

TechEquity Mcr is one of the skills bootcamp that were offered to residents and embodied a diverse consortium of community and education partners including; T.A.P, the Heroworx Institute and Malleable Mind. Over the course of two years, the career-readiness project addressed specific skills gaps in Linux, computer networking and cybersecurity to participants that self-identified as women or trans gender.

The aim of TechEquity was to connect the opportunity of high-value technical careers to the residents who may normally be excluded from these types of opportunities. The project offered a pathway into tech for Hulme and Moss Side residents in particular – Wards that have neighbourhoods experiencing deprivation and high representation of residents experiencing racial inequality.

A grass-roots, traditional approach was taken to recruitment. The consortia built strong relationships with local organisations to create trust pathways into communities e.g. working with Caribbean and African news and radio outlets in South Manchester to reach the community. This holistic approach resulted in more than 300 local enquiries for 36 placements. The tailored cultural and gender sensitive marketing, resulted in more applications from ethnic minorities (66% of the applicants) and 75% recruited onto the programme, which is four times higher than the current 14-15% (across genders) in the UK tech workforce (Inclusive Tech Alliance Report 2019).

Learners undertook international professional recognised technical qualifications in Red Hat Enterprise Linux, LPIC Linux Professional Institute and CompTIA. Within the six months after the 16 week course, 55% of learners went onto secure employment in STEM-related businesses and organisations or went onto higher learning. The demand for programmes like TechEquity to upskill and create opportunity for residents was demonstrated as enquiries outstripped supply 10:1.

Why Smart People?

As well as supporting the skills requirements of the digital sector, digitalisation is a trend that impacts on the wider Manchester economy, which has been accelerated as part of the pandemic. Through the Smart People theme, we will improve the productivity and growth of the foundational economy, as well as widening the economic opportunities for more of our residents.

Firstly, we know that digital inclusion and digital skills are the foundation for growing and sustaining our digital economy and ecosystem – Smart People are what really makes a smart city. However, we can do better in making sure that all our people have access to the essential services, devices, skills, training and employment opportunities that they need to participate fully in the digital world.

Digital exclusion remains a significant barrier for too many of our residents and has a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty, particularly those with English as a second language and disabled people, as well as on older workers, women/girls and those aged 65+. As well as being unacceptable for reasons of social equity, this means that there are many residents who are digitally excluded from jobs, skills and online services. Whilst the evidence is there to inform us who is most likely to be excluded, we were until now able to establish a mechanism with to identify the scale of the challenge.

Connected to this issue, there is a lack of diversity in the digital sector and a need to ensure that more women, older residents, and people experiencing racial inequalities are encouraged and connected to opportunities. The digital sector and those enrolled in digital learning opportunities, particularly at technical & higher levels do not tend to reflect the diversity found in Manchester's communities.

Secondly, we understand the challenge faced by the education & skills system to meet the needs of the digital sector and equip learners with the most up to date qualifications & skills needed to enter & sustain good quality careers in the sector. This is because the pace of technological change makes it difficult for traditional learning, often designed and delivered over years, to keep up. It is also because there is a need for more capacity in the system to enable enough learners to progress through to meet the increasing demand for digital and technical skills from employers.

At present, this lack of capacity has created skill shortages within the digital sector. The most recent Manchester Digital Audit highlights development, digital marketing, DevOps, testing & quality assurance, and user experience as areas with particularly high demand. Leadership and management skills have also emerged as being in demand from employers and employees. Meeting these demands requires a more flexible response from the skills system and for digital businesses to provide input to curriculum design, delivery and work experience. Manchester will benefit from additional investment in skills and training provision, for example at The Manchester College's new City Centre Campus and Manchester Metropolitan University's new School of Digital Arts (SODA). There are also some good examples of co-created curriculums that combine learning with relevant work experience. However there is need to develop and strengthen the volume of pathways into industry, which we are currently seeing through an increase in self-learning and bootcamps.

What will Smart People achieve?

Over the life of the Digital Strategy, Smart People aims to:

- Ensure that Manchester residents of all ages can gain and sustain the skills, aspirations, and confidence to fully participate in the digital world.
- Aid mainstream education in building it's capacity to ensure all young people are equipped with the skills to take advantage of the opportunities that digital presents.
- Create new routes into higher level, high value jobs and entrepreneurship.
- Ensure that digital businesses have access to the talent and skills needed; providing the basis for Manchester to become an inclusive, diverse, successful and ethical smart city.

By enabling more people to get online and stay online, encouraging and inspiring people to learn and develop new skills, creating new routes into entry level, more highly skilled and more highly paid jobs and growing digital leadership across education, the skills system and industry we achieve the following outcomes:

- People accessing digital and technology related learning and employment opportunities will more closely reflect the diversity of our city.
- More people will be accessing opportunities in digital and technology related subjects.
- More people will be employed in roles in the sector that are more highly skilled, better paid and more secure.
- Fewer business will report problems attracting and retaining talented people.

To make these aims happen, we will work towards the following priorities:

	Priority	Timescale
1.1	Deepen our understanding of digital inclusion by continuing to deliver the Digital Inclusion Action Plan, developing the Digital Exclusion Index and actively engaging with residents and VCSE organisations.	Year 1
1.2	Develop specific interventions and programmes of activity to promote the opportunities of the sector to under-represented groups and create a more inclusive employer culture, particularly for people experiencing racial inequalities, women, disabled people and older people.	Year 2 - 5
1.3	Support schools to further develop digital leadership capability that enables strong digital strategic direction, supporting all young people across curriculum, to become digital citizens.	Year 2 - 5
1.4	Include digital skills as a priority in Manchester's refreshed Work and Skills Strategy.	Year 1
1.5	Scale up and sustain existing entry-level pathways into digital jobs and maximise new pathways within the skills and careers system for post 16 (such as T-Levels), by strengthening connections between colleges and industry.	Year 2 - 5
1.6	Create new and accessible pathways into higher level, high value jobs and encourage entrepreneurship, especially in growing sectors such as Digital Marketing Cyber, AI and Fintech.	Year 2 - 5
1.7	Work with the digital ecosystem to ensure that Manchester residents are given opportunities and support to be able to compete for and progress into high value employment.	Year 2 - 5
1.8	Run a pilot project to implement the findings and recommendations from the GM Cooperative Commission in Manchester, a digital brokerage for jobs and skills.	Year 3 - 5
1.9	Enhancing Manchester's strengths as a centre of excellence for ethical and socially responsible tech with new skills and training provision.	Year 3 - 5
1.10	Develop a long-term plan for enhanced collaboration between industry and the skills system, particularly to ensure developments attracting growth, such as SODA and CRCGM, attract and nurture the talent pipeline.	Year 2 - 5
1.11	Supporting digital leadership within businesses, particularly for digital start-ups and SME's, for them to continue to flourish within the digital ecosystem.	Year 3 - 5

Digital Places

Theme 2:
Digital Places

Digital Places is about making sure the city itself, alongside its people, drives us towards a more digitally enabled future.

In a digital place, high quality and open digital infrastructure is ubiquitous at every level. Its leaders think towards the future and make sure that the changes we make to our physical environment today support the technological demands of tomorrow, and therefore much of Digital Places is about how we plan for and consider these future requirements in everything that we do to create a built environment that is fully digitally enabled.

Digital Places are also about how public services are delivered. In Digital Places, all services should be accessible digitally regardless of the device used or the bandwidth available. Public services should be operated in such a way that they make use of rich data both to improve how services are delivered and to allow other people to use this data in innovative and creative ways. They should also make sure information is protected and treated with care, especially in terms of data quality, ethics and security. The Eindhoven Principals are a set of principles and guidelines developed by the city of Eindhoven to ensure that its work on smart cities, data, and the emerging Internet of Things (IoT) would have a clear framework of ethics and social responsibility underpinning it.

The principals are:

1. Privacy First

2. Open data and interfaces

3. Embrace open standards

4. Share where possible

5. Support modularity

6. Accept social responsibility

Digital places should ensure that a similar set of principles are adopted to ensure that digital and technology are deployed and used in and ethical and responsible way.

Finally, Digital Places have strong and exciting digital ecosystems that create the space and opportunities for innovation and creativity between people and organisations. The networks of people and organisations within the city are accessible and inclusive, supporting the digital sector itself but also the wider creative and cultural sectors with which it is linked.

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Digital Places case study – Open Data Manchester

Since 2014 Open Data Manchester has been interested in the potential of co-operative structures that can help communities and organisations to manage and utilise data. Mutually controlled organisations, such as data co-operatives and data collectives offer the opportunity for individuals and communities to have more control over how their data is collected, pooled, processed and shared. Data is playing an increasingly powerful role in people's lives – through the services they use, the information they access and the decisions made using it that affect them, but often the value isn't returned and sometimes is used against them.

In 2020-21, Open Data Manchester worked with the Carbon Co-op - an energy advocacy and services co-operative based in Greater Manchester, its members and the wider community to understand whether data co-operatives can:

- Empower people to take greater control over their data.
- Offer choice about how data is used.
- Build trust and confidence in the process of sharing data.
- Return social value.

The Carbon Co-op project looked at mechanisms that could give members more control over their energy data, so that it could be used for more ethical and energy efficient purposes and bring value through the creation of reduced bills, help Carbon Co-op develop better services, and benefit wider society through the development of more environmentally responsible energy practices.

This work is ongoing and has led to the development of a Data Co-operative Working Group co-led by Open Data Manchester and Aapti Institute in Bangalore which comprises practitioners and academics from around the world, to develop data co-operative models that can benefit any community that want to have more control over how its data is used.

www.opendatamanchester.org.uk/services/

Why Digital Places?

Technology is constantly changing, and alongside making sure people have the right digital skills and access to opportunities, connectivity in places is a second fundamental component of making a successful digital city. It will enable our residents to access services, to learn, and to work from any location and at any time, while supporting businesses and organisations to take advantage of the opportunities for innovation created by high speed and secure networks. Digital Places will also enable our public services and institutions to operate more effectively, and our businesses to be more productive, especially by making better use of data.

Firstly, we know that we can improve how we plan for the future by ensuring that digital innovation is included in all aspects of placemaking, including the development of digital and technological assets to support and maximise the benefit of new civic and public spaces. By ensuring that digital facilities and capacities are embedded across all regeneration programmes we can create a smarter public realm using the best wireless networks backed up by the best fibre, enabling wider roll out of internet of things (IoT) devices, sensors and displays, as well as improved connectivity for residents and businesses.

There is an opportunity to build on our existing successes, such as the concentration of assets and talent along the Oxford Road Corridor, and the developing ecosystems around Circle Square, Enterprise City and ID Manchester. The challenge is to build this capacity out further into neighbourhoods across the city, developing a network of smart places and digital neighbourhoods that will allow people to connect wherever they are and however they want to. Our consultation revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that not all our neighbourhoods have the capabilities and capacity to ensure that everyone has accessible, affordable and equitable access to the digital world.

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Smart Places

Smart places are places where connectivity is ubiquitous and universal, where people, organisations and smart devices are all connected. They are places where information is collected and shared in a way that allows anyone to understand and interrogate it, coming up with their own solutions to our greatest challenges. Smart places are also climate-resilient and adaptive, supporting our transition to a zero-carbon economy as well as being sustainable, adaptable and future-proofed.

Connectivity is also of critical importance to Manchester's creative and cultural industries, which overlap with the digital and tech sectors. Our cultural sector has been reliant on digital to keep operating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is a role for Digital Places in supporting the city's Cultural Recovery Plan. The digital transformation of the sector is likely to continue, and we must support it by making is easier for creators to digitising, distributing and monetising artistic products online.

Secondly, we know that improved access and technology can enhance access to existing public services. Using the example of health services, digital delivery means that services become more accessible and have wider benefits, for example enabling older people to continue to live in their own homes. Digitisation of health and care records also provides the opportunity to better integrate services as well as offering an opportunity for innovation providing new approaches to tackling embedded health challenges in the City including Health Ageing.

Thirdly, we understand that data can be a powerful tool in helping us to better understand how our city works and where we can intervene to make improvements or efficiencies to deliver better services. Enhancing the city's capacity for the collection, analysis and visualisation of data alongside implementing open access principals will allow people and organisations in the city to bring creativity and innovation to the use of data. Enabling access to a broader range of better quality, higher frequency data will allow start-ups, SMEs and social enterprises to help build new applications and provide new insights into city, developing solutions to problems that may not have been previously considered and providing opportunities for commercialisation.

We also understand the importance of ethics, sustainability and security when handling data, and that we need to be pro-active in ensuring systems and process are in place to effectively manage information. Manchester City Council has already committed to "become a data-led organisation and ensure data is central to what we do" with a new Data Management Strategy.

"The digital transformation of the sector is likely to continue, and we must support it by making it easier for creators to digitising, distributing and monetising artistic products online."

What will Digital Places achieve?

Over the life of the Digital Strategy Digital Places aims to:

- Ensure that Manchester has excellent and accessible digital infrastructure everywhere.
- Ensure that all public services are delivered digitally and are made more successful through the better use of data.
- Ensure sure that we grow Manchester's wider digital ecosystem and connect it to the city's wider economic and cultural networks.
- Ensure that we use data to drive innovation and create new opportunities for growth that are linked to tackling the city's challenges and building on its strengths.

By increasing levels of connectivity and access across the city, supporting the digital delivery of public services and making better use of data we will achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased availability of high-quality, high-speed and affordable connectivity across Manchester, especially in priority areas.
- Fewer businesses and organisations will identify lack of network access and capacity as a barrier to growth.
- Increased quality and quantity of data available to people and organisations in Manchester.
- Increased capability of the Council's digital planning, mapping, data management and other services, to support more effective and efficient city planning, management and public engagement.
- Growth in Manchester's digital ecosystem and increased clustering of people and organisations in our innovation areas.

To make these aims happen, we will work towards the following priorities:

	Priority	Timescale
2.1	Develop a Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide and consider ways to integrate this into MCC development plans and partnerships, including professional development support for MCC staff and partners. See annex 3 (Design Guide).	**Year 1 - 2**
2.2	As part of the Local Plan refresh and consultation, integrate digital planning policy and guidance including consideration and linking to the Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide.	**Year 1 - 2**
2.3	Map existing digital assets to enable virtual city modelling and support ongoing development of digital planning capability and deployment of digital connectivity.	**Year 1 - 3**
2.4	Use evidence from the Digital Exclusion Index and asset mapping to identify and audit priority neighbourhood areas.	**Year 1**
2.5	Produce local Digital Action Plans for priority areas that identify steps and opportunities to improve connectivity.	**Year 2**
2.6	Work closely alongside major capital and regeneration projects to promote smart urban design integrating digital capacity and smart assets.	**Year 2 - 5**
2.7	Enhance the City Council's own public wireless connectivity with additional forms of community based fibre and wireless provision supporting digital places and smart neighbourhoods.	**Year 3 - 5**
2.8	Contribute to development of Manchester's Data Management Strategy, and adoption of a Smart City Charter and Eindhoven Principles to allow enhanced data sharing, partnership working and innovation.	**Year 1 - 2**
2.9	Extend the asset mapping model into a fully digital GIS system integrated into MCCs GIS and Data Management systems.	**Year 2**
2.10	Build on open data work with a new programme of tech challenges, data coops and data trusts as part of the development of the Smart City Data Charter.	**Year 2 - 5**

Future Prosperity

Theme 3:
Future Prosperity

Where Smart People is about our residents and workers and Digital Places is about the city itself, Future Prosperity wraps around these two themes to ensure that the digital strategy truly makes a positive impact on the lives of our residents and the success of our businesses, in a way that is both ethical and sustainable.

Future Prosperity as about making a strong connection between residents and businesses and the positive opportunities and outcomes that digitally enabled people and places will create. It sits at the heart of our inclusive growth ambitions.

Firstly, Future Prosperity is about building on our strengths to grow the digital sector and digital ecosystem in Manchester and creating more good quality and sustainable opportunities for learning, employment, business and investment. It is about making sure that through Smart People and Digital Places that we can connect these opportunities to our residents, neighbourhoods and businesses.

Secondly, Future Prosperity is about ethical and sustainable technology. It considers the positive and negative impacts of digitisation and how we might mitigate against some of the potential issues, alongside issues around good quality employment in parts of the foundational and cultural economy affected by the digitisation of work in ways that have tended to reduce jobs security and pay. It helps secure positive and incremental improvements and guard against the potential issues of low paid and insecure work.

Future Prosperity case study – Manchester Digital & Skills Festival

Manchester Digital is the voice of Greater Manchester's tech and digital sector. Their community is made up of a wide range of businesses and they work closely with them to create the optimum environment for sector-wide success. They are independently funded through membership and represent the entire ecosystem with a wide range of business types, models, sizes and capabilities making up our community.

Manchester Digital take direct action to solve specific issues and barriers that impact the sector's growth and we provide a cohesive voice for the sector, ensuring that its views are represented at a local and national government level. They develop talent, drive innovation, share knowledge and help businesses to thrive.

The Digital Skills Festival is one of the most important events in Manchester Digital's calendar. Held here in Manchester each February, the Digital Skills Festival attracts industry professionals, educators, students, graduates and tech jobseekers as well as respected industry thought-leaders and innovators. One of the highlights of the event is the Talent Day which is the largest specialist careers fair in the North. Each year over 1800 graduates and jobseekers attend to find out more about the latest careers on offer at some of Greater Manchester's most exciting and innovative tech companies. 40+ businesses attend and there are upwards of 250 jobs on offer. It's the perfect day to find new talent, or if you're a jobseeker, to take the next step in your career.

https://www.manchesterdigital.com/talent-and-skills/skills-festival

Why Future Prosperity?

There is an increasingly strong evidence base for Manchester's digital strengths, highlighting how important Manchester now is in terms of combining its historic strengths in specific parts of the digital sector, including its digital talent pool, with new investment to support wider business growth, especially with start-ups and scale-ups. Manchester is recognised as the fastest growing "tech city" within Europe, having overtaken Cambridge for the first time, as second only to London for venture capital investment in tech businesses. Alongside this Manchester has also been ranked as the top UK city for IT professionals to live and work (CompTIA UK Tech Town Index, 2019).

We know that a strong and diverse digital ecosystem is important for several reasons. Firstly in making connections between people and organisations that boost productivity, knowledge transfer and growth. Secondly, in supporting the emergence and growth of centres of excellence in specific areas such as cyber security or e-commerce. Thirdly, in attracting talent and investment into the city to support future growth. Therefore, making sure that the digital strategy supports and grows our existing ecosystem will be an important factor in our success. This will require consideration of both established networks and organisations as well as the needs of smaller start-ups or entrepreneurial organisations.

In addition to growing the digital ecosystem, we also know that to be successful we will have to ensure that digital and technology is both ethical and sustainable. A number of partners who provided feedback in the consultation emphasised the importance of "ethical tech" and ethics in the digital world, an area in which Manchester already has significant experience through organisations such as the Responsible Tech Collective and Open Data Manchester as well as the emerging work of the AI Foundry initiative being led by Manchester Metropolitan University.

Digitisation and digital innovation impacts on all areas of our lives, especially the future of employment and productivity. While in the digital sector itself productivity remains high, other sectors face an entrenched challenge of low productivity that may be disrupted by new technology and particularly automation. This may lead to the significant restructuring of employment in some areas, including job losses, leading to an opportunity to retrain and reskill workers so they are able to access new roles. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a long-term impact on businesses and the wider labour market. Many companies are rethinking their need for office space and moving to higher levels of remote and flexible working, potentially leading to the employment of fewer permanent staff and more temporary and freelance staff. Anecdotal evidence suggests that travel-to-work areas, already weaker in the sector, have disappeared for some companies who may be Manchester based but now recruit nationally or even globally. This creates both opportunities and challenges for our residents and businesses.

"Manchester is recognised as the fastest growing "tech city" within Europe, having overtaken Cambridge for the first time, as second only to London for venture capital investment in tech businesses."

What will Future Prosperity achieve?

Over the life of the Digital Strategy Future Prosperity aims to:

- Make it easier and more attractive to start, relocate or grow a digital business in Manchester.
- Strengthen the wider network of organisations and groups that support the sector in Manchester.
- Increase the number of high quality and sustainable job opportunities created.
- Identify new and future areas of growth and technological change that Manchester can benefit from.
- Make sure that growth in the sector in Manchester is inclusive and benefits everyone.

By strengthening Manchester's digital ecosystem, focusing on ethics and sustainability and supporting businesses and organisations to make a positive contribution to the life of the city we will achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased number of digital business births and relocations.
- Increased inward investment into the sector in Manchester.
- Increased number and size of networking groups and organisations.
- Increased number of job postings.
- Higher share of job postings filled by Manchester residents.

To make these aims happen, we will work towards the following priorities:

	Priority	Timescale
3.1	Support digital sector events and networking opportunities through exhibitions, conferences and business visits.	**Year 1 - 5**
3.2	Support the development of Innovation Districts, Corridors and Hubs to promote digital start-ups and scale-ups and the expansion of the digital ecosystem.	**Year 1 - 5**
3.3	Develop more accessible routes into Innovation capacity through local initiatives promoting social innovation, e.g. Living Labs, Makerspaces & Coop Innovation Zones.	**Year 2 - 5**
3.4	Establish a Cooperative Innovation Zone for digital businesses to develop new ways of working and implement the recommendations of the GM Cooperative Commission.	**Year 3 - 5**
3.5	Work with GMCA and MIDAS to develop a Digital Investment Strategy focused on making investment more accessible particularly to diverse businesses.	**Year 2 - 5**
3.6	Develop more intelligence, data analysis and horizon scanning on the potential impact of automation/AI and promote new thinking and practice on proactive socially inclusive responses.	**Year 1 - 5**
3.7	Enhance support for ethical and socially responsible tech development and Manchester's growing ecosystem and reputation in these areas, including driving support in the sector for the Good Employment Charter.	**Year 1 - 5**
3.8	Implement proposals for a Smart Urban Data Discovery Platform in partnership with Manchester Urban Observatory (MUO), providing data and intelligence on digitisation and future trends.	**Year 1 - 5**

Sustainable Resilience

Theme 4:

Sustainable Resilience

Sustainable Resilience is the point at which the Digital Strategy connects to and helps achieve Manchester's commitment to become a zero-carbon city by 2038, and meet the many challenges presented by climate change.

It is about how we can use technology to directly reduce our carbon emissions, but also about how technology will help us mitigate against the impact of a changing climate.

It is also where we ensure that we keep looking forwards and can rapidly adopt and adapt to new technology as it emerges, keeping Manchester at the leading edge of digital transformation in all its forms. This is in part about how we plan and manage infrastructure and services to ensure they are open and accessible.

Finally, Sustainable resilience is also about connectivity, and how in a world that is increasingly digitised, we need to make sure that everyone can access digital services and resources. It is about making sure these networks are in place and that they are accessible to all.

Sustainable Resilience case study – Cooperative Network Infrastructure

Cooperative Network Infrastructure (CNI) – the GM Digital Coop Using an innovation called the 'Thin Layer Model', Cooperative Network Infrastructure (CNI) - https://cni.coop/ - promotes collaboration between owners and users of digital infrastructure. Members include local authorities and other public-sector bodies alongside private-sector telecoms operators and Internet providers.

CNI started in 2018 as an initiative of Tameside Council in Greater Manchester. Since then other local authorities have joined including Manchester City Council, Blackpool, Mid Sussex, Lancaster and West Sussex county. Other public sector partners include NHS trusts, education institutions and social housing providers. Commercial members include Virgin Media, CityFibre, Zayo, euNetworks, ITS and Telcom, alongside smaller ISPs.

CNI is a cooperative neutral host: user members (generally the telecoms operators and ISPs) get access to raw infrastructure (dark fibre and colocation space) on equal terms and non-exclusively. Most of the dark fibre available from CNI is 'spine' fibre, deployed by the contributor members (mostly public sector bodies) to meet their needs. CNI pays the contributor members a fee and makes spare capacity in the spine available to user members, who then build out to connect customers. Because it makes sharing possible, CNI delivers mutual benefits for users, contributors and the wider community:

- Local authorities and public sector bodies can invest in infrastructure for their own use and share it for the benefit of the local economy and wealth creation.
- By sharing the spine infrastructure, commercial operators can invest in new access networks without needing to overbuild competitors, so they can deploy faster and there is less disruption for the community.
- Smaller and local ISPs and operators can access dark fibre and colocation. This means they can capture more of the value chain, innovate and differentiate their products from larger competitors.

Why Sustainable Resilience?

Digital technologies have a specific role in supporting action on climate change and zero carbon targets. Digital can be transformational for the environmental agenda and offer very practical solutions for current and future action. New, low carbon opportunities can be realised through enhanced digital connectivity and data analytics, especially in areas such as mobility, logistics, food and buildings, supporting sourcing of energy from green sources to improving air quality and encouraging more walking and cycling. Digital can also help create a new smart circular economy where local sourcing is the norm and product information can be made more accessible and easier to analyse with repair and recycling facilities more widely known and understood, with makerspaces and other digital production facilities able give products longer lifecycles.

Manchester and the wider city-region has the opportunity to capitalise on the infrastructure and connectivity that has been created to date but also to look to the future and find ways of staying ahead of the curve for future digital infrastructure. This means new models of delivery and finding ways that digital infrastructure can be delivered as an essential utility, ideally unlimited, not just as a commodity. The City Council has been highlighting the importance of investment in digital infrastructure for "developing a more resilient city" in all parts of its current work on inclusive economic recovery and this is also a key element of the Our Manchester "Inclusive Economy" Local Industrial Strategy. This can be achieved by developing our existing partnership with Tameside MBC to extend the original Cooperative Network Infrastructure (CNI – also known as Digital Coop) duct and fibre installations to more public, research and innovation locations across the city to provide faster and more resilient connectivity.

During the pandemic there have been failures of digital infrastructure and Manchester's innovation ecosystem needs more resilient future-proofed Internet in two particular areas:

1. Topological resilience – new spine fibre connections connecting key nodes by diverse routes;

2. Commercial resilience – which must be made available on neutral non-exclusive basis so that multiple ISPs and operators can use it. This increases diversity of supply, competition and the scope for innovation, hence the use of the cooperative neutral host model.

Commercial resilience means that there is enhanced future-proofing because of the diversity of supply which is less prone to stress or failure. This in turn provides new opportunities for local and smaller digital/tech businesses to add value with access to infrastructure (rather than services) that otherwise would not be available to them. In addition the public sector has more choice in its procurements and greater access to innovation and new services and applications.

Digital resilience is created by building the "scaffolding" from which Internet Service Providers – ISPs, operators and other SMEs providing specialist services can then build out to reach more customers more easily and effectively – both public sector and others in the innovation ecosystem. That in turn means: more scope and scale for fibre spines and shared neutral digital exchanges which thus encourages more investment. Operators can choose their areas, for example, they don't need to 'roll out' across the conurbation to achieve scale but can instead share and co-produce connectivity which also means smaller and local ISPs and operators, including new start-ups, can take part, increasing productivity and growing new markets.

What will Sustainable Resilience achieve?

Over the life of the Digital Strategy Sustainable Resilience aims to:

- Use digital and technology to drive a green and inclusive economy, supporting our transition to a zero-carbon city.
- Use digital infrastructure and innovation to create a smarter, more resilient and future-proofed city
- Make digital connectivity a universal utility that is accessible to everyone, wherever they are.

By harnessing digital and technology to reduce carbon emissions, future proof the city and ensure connectivity is a universal utility we will achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase the number of community and cooperatively owned infrastructure and networks.
- Improved environmental credentials of digital initiatives and programmes.

To make these aims happen, we will work towards the following priorities:

	Priority	Timescale
4.1	Collect, use and share data to improve our understanding of where our carbon emissions come from and how we can reduce them.	**Year 2 - 5**
4.2	Promote the use of technology and data to better manage demand on energy networks and account for new ways in which energy will be used (e.g. electric vehicle charging).	**Year 2 - 5**
4.3	Incorporate good practice and “green” design within the Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide (Theme 2).	**Year 1 - 3**
4.4	Take the opportunity to participate in and lead national and international initiatives and projects, e.g. UK Smart Cities, Eurocities and Global Smart Cities, to promote Manchester, learn from other smart cities globally and attract further funding and investment.	**Year 1 - 5**
4.5	Implement the business case for the further development of Cooperative Network Infrastructure (CNI) and establish a Manchester Development Group with CNI members to move forward with the “Fibre Manchester” initiative.	**Year 3 - 5**

Delivering the objectives: Implementation and next steps

The Manchester Digital Strategy to provides a new strategic framework for the city to meet its aspirations about how we use digital and technology to improve the lives of our residents and create new commercial opportunities for our businesses.

To achieve our aims and delivery our priorities, our next steps will be to:

- Establish a small Digital team within the City Council, working with key stakeholders to deliver the Digital strategy.
- Develop a full action plan for the delivery of the priorities outlines in this strategy.
- Establish partnerships and working relationships with relevant stakeholders.
- Identify potential funding opportunities and build capacity to bring in funding to finance delivery.

The delivery of the Strategy will be overseen by a Digital Strategy Governance Board, comprising of relevant Council Officers alongside representatives from partner organisations and networks.

The delivery plan will be subject to an annual review through the proposed five years of its implementation from 2021 to 2026. This will be undertaken through a partnership-based approach drawing upon not only the existing digital ecosystem but also on new collaborations that are emerging, for example around socially responsible and ethical tech, creative economy renewal, youth initiatives, the age-friendly agenda, health and wellbeing and climate change. These new collaborations are renewing innovation in the digital sector and supporting new thinking and working in imaginative ways to co-create new solutions to the challenges of the pandemic and to ensuring an inclusive economic recovery.

Creating a digitally enabled inclusive economy and society will need commitment and support from all partners across the city working collaboratively and investing their time, energy and resources to achieve this. To achieve this Manchester Smart City partnership boards and working groups will be established to oversee the development of programmes of work and support effective governance of their implementation.

As well as developing a shared commitment to ensuring that social value is at the heart of all aspects of the Manchester Digital Strategy it is also important to include increasing economic, social and economic justice across the city, especially with digital inclusion being the single most important aspect of this work.

Manchester City Council will continue to work closely with everyone who has collaborated to produce the ideas and proposals brought together so far. This will include outlining options for coordinating and implementing new work programmes and practical projects, as well as more resilient funding models for supporting this work in the context of inclusive economic recovery.

“These new collaborations are renewing innovation in the digital sector and supporting new thinking and working in imaginative ways to co-create new solutions to the challenges of the pandemic and to ensuring an inclusive economic recovery.”

Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-2026

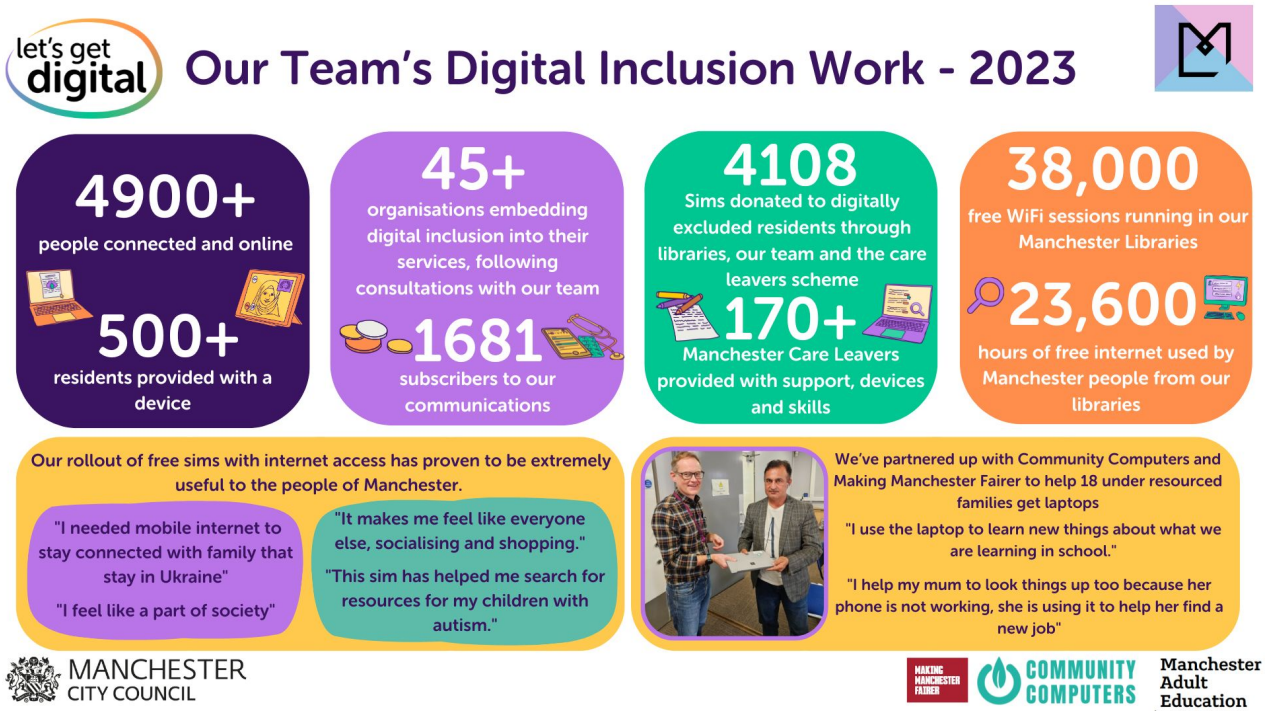
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

#	Theme	Priority	Priority Objectives	Projects/ Activities (18)	Project short description
1	Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities	1.1.	Deepen our understanding of digital inclusion by continuing to deliver the Digital Inclusion Action Plan, developing the Digital Exclusion Index and actively engaging with residents and VCSE organisations.	1.Wireless connectivity to social housing 2. Digital Inclusion Action Plan	1.Testing different ways of providing free and/ or affordable digital connectivity to people who live within social housing. 2. Develop a more strategic approach with measurable deliverables and an accountable team and governance structure.
2	Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities	1.2.	Develop specific interventions and programmes of activity to promote the opportunities of the sector to under-represented groups and create a more inclusive employer culture, particularly for people experiencing racial inequalities, women, disabled people and older people.	3.Digital careers reducing the impact of structured inequalities research	3.Finalise, socialise and delivery the recommendations of the research, on the potential of the positive impacts of digital careers on structural inequalities.
3	Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities	1.4.	Work with the Work and Skills team to develop the Digital Skills Framework and embed digital skills priorities from within the digital strategy into the framework.	4.GM Digital Skills Framework	4.Co-design the framework and ensure the framework homes the skills priorities set across the 5 years of the strategy, in the 'Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities'.
4	Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives	2.1.	Develop a Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide and consider ways to integrate this into MCC development plans and partnerships, including professional development support for MCC staff and partners. See annex 3 (Design Guide).	5. Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide	5.Finalise and socialise the Digital Infrastructure Planning Design Guide via a series of events and co-design some ways of working for the wider ecosystem to adopt and steer strategic deployment moving forward.
5	Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives	2.3.	Map existing digital assets to enable virtual city modelling and support ongoing development of digital planning capability and deployment of digital connectivity.	6.Digital Asset Mapping	6.Procure and complete a cost analysis exercise, with a focus on underserved communities and council owned assets for most value deployment of cells, both now and in the future.

#	Theme	Priority	Priority Objectives	Projects/ Activities (18)	Project short description
6	Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives	2.6.	Work closely alongside major capital and regeneration projects to promote smart urban design integrating digital capacity and smart assets.	7.Advanced Wireless - DSIT project	7.Coordinate the delivery from a Manchester perspective on the GM led DSIT funded Advanced Wireless project.
7	Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives	2.6.	Work closely alongside major capital and regeneration projects to promote smart urban design integrating digital capacity and smart assets.	8.Digital Research Network	8.Further develop the Digital Research Network, guiding it into action and accessing funding opportunities.
8	Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives	2.7.	Enhance the City Council's own public wireless connectivity with additional forms of community based fibre and wireless provision supporting digital places and smart neighbourhoods.	9.Leveraging Street furniture and digital infrastructure	9.Leverage street furniture and digital infrastructure for access to wifi and explore other possible connectivity assets, based on existing contracts with supplies.
9	Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All	3.1.	Support digital sector events and networking opportunities through exhibitions, conferences and business visits.	10.Tech hubs ecosystem and digital events mapping 11.National and International events and key stakeholders forecast	10.Map Tech Hubs and ecosystem events to look for gaps and trends. 11.Create a year plan for key National and International digital and tech events and key stakeholder visits.

#	Theme	Priority	Priority Objectives	Projects/ Activities (18)	Project short description
10	Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All	3.2.	Support the development of Innovation Districts, Corridors and Hubs to promote digital start-ups and scale-ups and the expansion of the digital ecosystem.	12.Techhubs meet up 13.Startup ecosystem and investment	12.Work with the Manchester City Council funded Tech Hubs to support them to deliver activities across talent, skills and business development. 13.Host a series of conversations with key leaders, on the diversity of and investment into the startup ecosystem and create an Action Plan to delivery activity.
11	Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All	3.6.	Develop more intelligence, data analysis and horizon scanning on the potential impact of automation/AI and promote new thinking and practice on proactive socially inclusive responses.	14.AI Peoples Panel 15.AI driving an inclusive and accessible city	14. Bring together members of the public to support them to, learn, discuss and then inform decision makers around the use of AI. 15.Develop a regional forum/ network for discussion around the impact of AI on being a ethical city
12	Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All	3.7.	Enhance support for ethical and socially responsible tech development and Manchester's growing ecosystem and reputation in these areas., including driving support in the sector for the Good Employment Charter.	16.Tech for Good in Manchester	16.Review the local tech for good landscape, with an offer of recommendations on how to nurture it.
13	Rising to Challenges, Future-Proofing Our City	4.1.		17.The role of data centres in our digital city 18.Digital sustainability commission	17.Co-host a data centre roundtable and continue to progress conversation to reduce the environmental impact of technology infrastructure. 18.Collaobratively prioritise and shaping most impactful projects that have been identified via the explorative commission in 2023.

Appendix 3 – Infographic relating to the work of the Digital Inclusion Team



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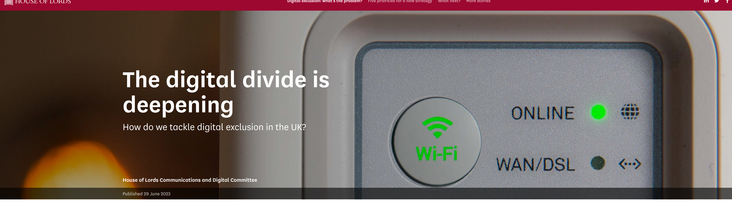


The digital divide is deepening

How do we tackle digital exclusion in the UK?

House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee

Published 19 June 2023

Digital exclusion: what's the problem?

Digital exclusion is about groups of people not being able to use the internet in the ways needed to participate in today's society. Everything from housing and healthcare resources to banking and benefit systems are moving online at unprecedented speed. Many have no offline alternatives. People who can't get online are falling ever further behind.

Key figures on digital exclusion in the UK

2014
The year the UK Government last published a digital inclusion strategy.

1.7 million
The number of households with no broadband or mobile internet access in 2021.

1 million
The estimated number of people who have cut back or cancelled internet packages in the past year due to affordability issues.

2.4 million
The number of adults unable to complete a single basic task to get online, such as opening an internet browser or using a mouse.

5 million
The number of workers who will be acutely under-skilled in basic digital skills by 2030.

Who is affected and why?

The root causes of exclusion are complex and difficult to solve: age, socio-economic background, disability and region are all key predictors. But people from all walks of life and age groups can be affected. Common barriers to getting online include financial hardship, a lack of basic skills or confidence, and no suitable internet connection being available.

By failing to take decisive action the Government is allowing millions of citizens to fall behind.

Five priorities for a new strategy

Digital exclusion is a moving target. It's holding back Government ambitions to boost economic growth, levelling up, public health, and net zero. Cost of living challenges make the problem worse. We're calling for a new strategy to solve this.

1. Cost of living support

The Government should take decisive action to stop more people becoming excluded as cost of living challenges bite. Priorities include:

- Cutting VAT on social tariffs to make internet cheaper for the poorest households
- Asking internet providers to advertise social tariffs better
- Making public sector organisations donate old devices to charities
- Working with businesses to scale up internet voucher schemes

2. Invest in basic digital skills

Basic digital skills are now as important as maths and literacy. The Government should:

- Make basic digital skills feature more prominently in schools, apprenticeships and adult learning courses
- Ensure community organisations can teach basic skills in local settings, without needing to focus on qualifications

3. Boost digital inclusion hubs

We need more places for people to get basic digital support. The Government should:

- Prioritise libraries and other local amenities to provide a place to help people get online

4. Future-proof public services

The use of predictive machine-learning tools in public services is growing. The Government should:

- Ensure digitally excluded groups (who are poorly represented in the algorithms' training datasets) are not further marginalised in future

5. Prioritise telecoms competition

Many smaller local internet providers (altnets) support poorly served local communities, for example by connecting community hubs and offering doorstep customer support. But the Government-backed rollout of major telecoms upgrade programmes is putting altnets under increasing financial pressure:

- The Government should prioritise market competition and review the impacts on digital exclusion that arise from broadband rollout plans

What happens next?

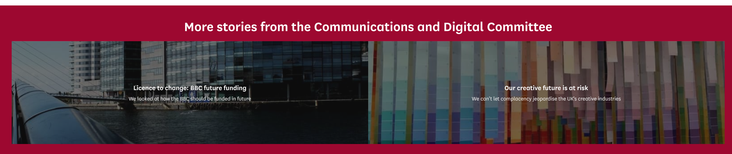
We have made our recommendations to the Government and it has two months to respond to our report.

Read the full report on our website.

Find out more about our inquiry and our committee.

Follow us on Twitter @LordsCommsCom

More stories from the Communications and Digital Committee



Licence to change: BBC future funding
We looked at how the BBC should be funded in future

Our creative future is at risk
We can't let complacency jeopardise the UK's creative industries

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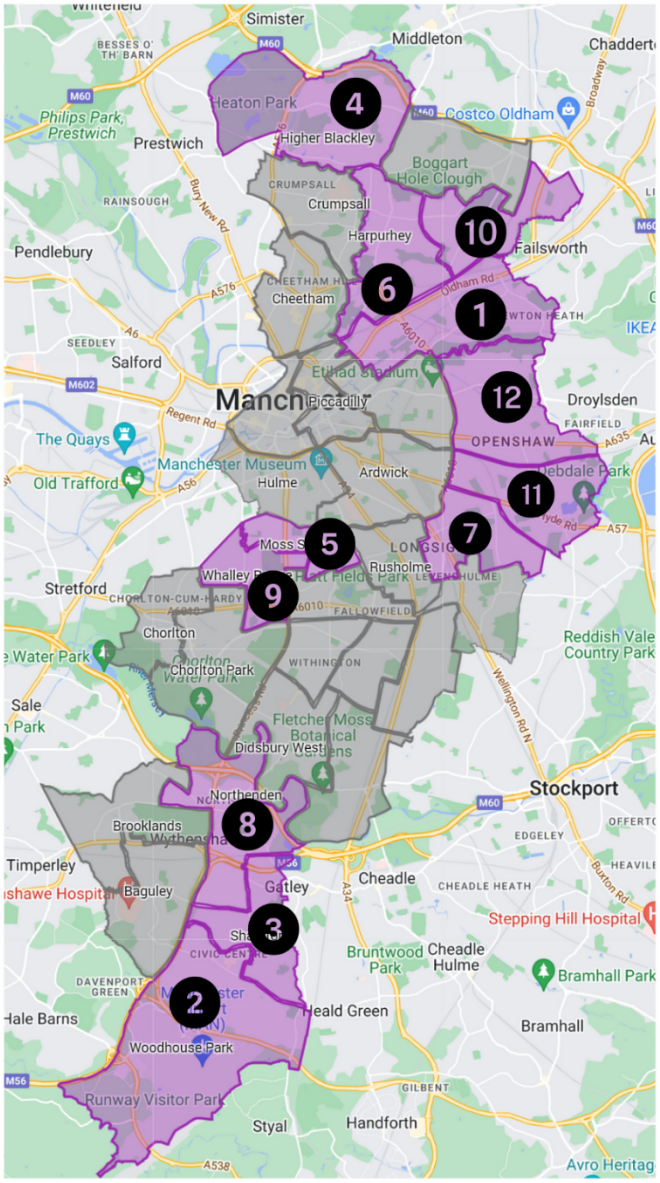
Appendix 5 – Most digitally excluded wards



1) Miles Platting and Newton Health
2) Woodhouse Park
3) Sharston
4) Higher Blackley
5) Moss Side
6) Harpurhey
7) Longsight
8) Northenden
9) Whalley Range
10) Moston
11) Gorton and Abbey Hey
12) Clayton and Openshaw

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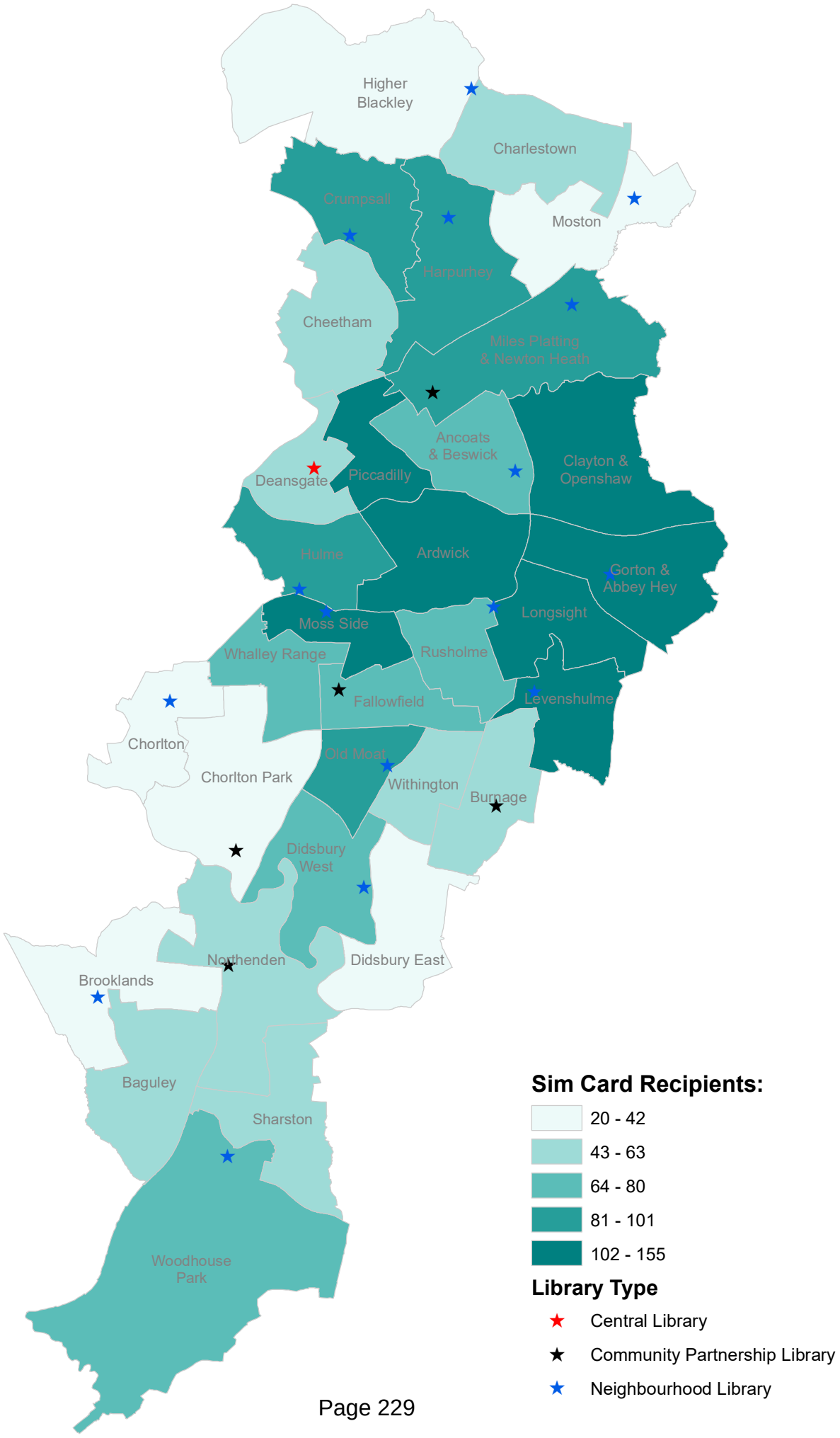
SIM Card Recipients by Ward
December 2023

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL



Map Produced by PRI: Place. © Crown Copyright and Database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 10001956

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What does digital exclusion look like in Manchester?

December 2023

MANCHESTER'S DIGITAL STRATEGY

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Executive Summary

This report explores digital exclusion in Manchester, based on interviews and observations with support providers and residents. Alongside the Digital Exclusion Risk Index, it can provide a snapshot of what digital exclusion currently looks like in Manchester.

From our research, we were able to categorise barriers to digital inclusion as follows:

- Practical - Lack of devices, internet access, costs.
- Individual - Low incomes, education/skills, isolation, age gap with technology.
- Attitudinal - Low confidence, fear of technology, distrust in institutions.

Support is focused on digital literacy for life admin needs like forms, though social uses are increasing. Age shapes access; older adults face unfamiliarity barriers and prefer tablets while younger ones have smartphones but require PCs for complex tasks.

Language is important; providers promote "digital inclusion" and highlight gains over losses. Case studies showcase exclusion impacts including healthcare access, youth education, and entrepreneurship.

While findings provide early insight, digital divides will affect Manchester's communities differently. The snapshot presented could be expanded through deeper research into demographic differences. Still, it reveals an urgent need to prioritise equitable tech capacity and training.

This report details the context and methodology used for our research, before exploring each of the three categories in the more detail. It ends with six case studies of real-life stories detailing the barriers faced, support received and key takeaways.

Background

Bridging the online divide is vital for providing equitable opportunities in our increasingly online world. The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted internet access as a necessity – not just for accessing vital services but also for making online purchases and maintaining social relationships. However, people living in 25% of neighbourhoods in Manchester are considered to be at high risk of being digitally excluded[1].

Manchester City Council continues to provide a range of support for helping residents and businesses to get online and participate in the digital world. Programmes such as Eastserve, Manchester HOST, Women's Electronic Village Hall, are examples of this effort. There is also a diverse ecosystem of libraries, community centres and other organisations that offer digital inclusion programmes, many of which the Council support through donations of devices, or training and funding opportunities.

This report is part of a larger programme of work on digital inclusion in Manchester which is split into three strands:

1. Examining what digital exclusion in Manchester looks like.
2. Understanding the motivations, and support needed, for the volunteers who are helping people get online.
3. Supporting community organisations to develop a user-centred approach their work.

This report describes findings from the second strand. It provides a snapshot of what digital exclusion currently looks like in Manchester, and suggests ways in which it might be measured more effectively.

Manchester City Council created their Digital Exclusion Risk Index[2] (DERI) as an important part of how digital exclusion is measured within the city. This report makes use of workshops, interviews and observations with both those who run digital support services and those who attend them to provide a wider perspective.

Methodology

In early 2023, we conducted in-depth interviews with five people who provide digital inclusion support as part of their job. We also drew insights from two workshops with 20 volunteers who provide this support, which were held in June 2022. These workshops also informed strand

[1] https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500002/council_policies_and_strategies/8356/manchester_digital_strategy_2021_%E2%80%93_2026/3

[2] https://mcr-council.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/3468b8d7f09b43bfbb018899a9aed393 (Accessed July 2023.) It should be noted that this differs from the DERI used by Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

one of this programme. In Autumn 2023, we attended and observed a number of digital support sessions, carrying out conversations with local residents using the service.

As part of the in-depth interviews, we discussed the existing DERI indicators, as well as inviting participants to share their views on barriers to digital inclusion in a more open-ended way. We focussed on answering three main questions:

1. What are the reasons people attend digital support services?
2. What are the barriers to this access?
3. What is the best way to talk about 'digital exclusion'?

For each of these questions we identified these common themes, which will expanded upon in the following sections:

1. Practical barriers, such as lack of devices, internet access, costs.
2. Individual circumstances, such as low income, education level, language skills, social isolation.
3. Attitudinal barriers, including low confidence, fear or mistrust.

We have also created a number of short case studies based on conversations with those who were attending digital support sessions. Whilst the stories are presented as told to us, we have changed the names for protection of personal privacy.

We hope that this report will provide useful insight into the lived experience of those who are actively using digital support sessions within Manchester.

When used alongside the DERI, understanding the barriers to using digital technology may in turn may help predict who may be digitally excluded. While there were clear patterns in the barriers faced, some people providing support with digital inclusion were keen to stress the variety amongst those needing their help:

> *"It's quite a wide spectrum of different needs and different communities and different people".*

We believe the findings in this report offer valuable insight into digital exclusion in Manchester but recommend allocating further resources to investigate this issue further. While these findings provide an informative snapshot, we recognise that digital divide impacts communities differently. Further research could explore exclusion differences across different demographics, allow deeper community outreach and capture more stories to support the use of the DERI.

The Language of Digital Exclusion

Originally we aimed to start to build a common understanding around the language and experience of digital exclusion. However, it became evident that the 'language' element is complex, needing more analysis that this report allows.

Due to this complexity, we shifted to spotlight lived experiences and human stories, which are included throughout this report and in the six case studies. However, some common themes emerged on how people discuss exclusion.

Firstly, in discussing 'digital exclusion,' support providers have expressed reservations about using this as a term. They underscore the need to avoid jargon when communicating with individuals seeking assistance in the digital realm, viewing 'digital exclusion' as an example of such terminology.

Instead, these providers advocate for a positive approach, using terms like 'digital inclusion,' 'digital education,' or 'digital support.' The intention is to foster an environment that encourages participation without labelling individuals as digitally excluded, a term that may evoke a sense of victimhood and hinder some from seeking help.

Secondly, support providers focus on highlighting the positive aspects of learning and participating in classes. They actively promote the benefits and joy of acquiring new skills, showcasing common interests like learning WhatsApp and Facebook, or simply meeting to have a coffee and a chat, in order to attract residents. When advertising their services, real-life examples, coupled with images of individuals who have benefited, are used to help residents envision themselves engaging in these activities. As one community organiser told us:

> *"...we address social isolation and loneliness...rather than saying, 'Are you sad or lonely, come and join our group,' we present it as 'we've organised these fantastic events, which we're sure you'd enjoy'..."*

Throughout this report we may refer to digital exclusion as a negative, but our focus is on the use of positive and inclusion language. When referring to support given to residents, we may use a number of terms interchangabley such as “digital inclusion” or “digital support”.

Practical Barriers

Practical barriers to digital inclusion can include things like lack of devices, internet access or cost. Many residents who attend digital support sessions don't have suitable devices or rely on public computer access. Affordability of devices and data is a key issue. Internet connectivity itself poses challenges around awareness of options, including social tariffs, as well as varying speeds and ongoing costs.

Access to devices

We found that not having a device was a barrier for many residents in being digitally supported, and support providers are giving these out as part of their work. The cost of devices was seen as an important issue for getting access, particularly for households needing multiple devices for each person. However, it was stressed that those needing support often had devices but didn't know how to use them:

> *"A lot of the time people have something. But a lot of the time they don't know how to use it."*

Having the right device was also important. Sometimes older people were being given devices by their children that were different to those they had learned on, so they couldn't use them. To avoid this, those providing digital support were keen to give residents the devices they'd learned on to take away.

There was evidence of older people generally preferring to use tablets, which they found more comfortable than laptops or smartphones. Unfortunately these are more restrictive than laptops, and often the forms they needed help with were hard to complete on these devices. Younger people in contrast appeared to value laptops as you can do more with them:

> *"Older people like to almost, if you imagine how you would use a newspaper, they like the tablet as the newspaper. So it's on their lap... But filling in a form, it's a lot easier on the laptop."*

It was not only older people that lacked access to suitable devices. At one digital support session, we observed younger residents comfortably using smartphones for basic communication, but needing computer access for more complex tasks.

In these cases, to complete their tasks they needed larger screens, specialised software, or deeper processing power. For example, some home-schooled students lacked home computers to work on assignments. In another case, a woman in her 30s used the public computers and printer to design and produce marketing materials for her small business.

The need for access to devices spans age groups, with many of school or working age are also dependent on public computer facilities. This highlights that practical barriers exist across generations when it comes to ownership of devices meeting more advanced digital activity needs. Younger residents may have basic smartphones but still rely on shared community access points for key elements of education, livelihoods, and opportunity.

Internet access

As with devices, support services were making data packages available to those without them. Though there was a suggestion that this is more complicated than the one-off process of offering a device. As with devices, the affordability of data was as an important issue, particularly as it is an ongoing cost.

Getting access to the internet is partly about practical know-how, such as teaching people that if you don't have minutes or texts left on your phone contract, you can still use WhatsApp through Wi-Fi, or that mobile phones can used as an internet hotspot to allow other devices to access the internet.

Speed of connection is important to some, not simply whether there is internet access or not, such as, young people valuing higher speeds for gaming, whereas this was less important for older residents.

"Knock-on" effects of digital exclusion

Being digitally excluded can have further consequences, often imposing additional time and money costs. These range from fees for paper billing to needing to pay for public transport to visit a centre in person. Such "knock-on effects" can go unaccounted for in measuring digital divides.

For example, one resident spoken to, who lacked home internet access, visited a support centre to set up a new broadband package provided to him on a social tarrif. Switching between providers required installing a new router, but delivery issues left him offline just as his old service ended. Regaining connectivity demanded intensive troubleshooting help for a number of issues including confirming his account, resetting passwords, and navigating the delivery company's website.

Thankfully in-person assistance facilitated solving each hurdle. But without internet or phone access at home and without readily available support, the cascade of obstacles resulting from the initial delivery problem could have left this resident disconnected for an extended duration. Such complex "knock-on effects" exacerbate exclusion for those already struggling to participate online. Accounting for these added burdens is essential for accurately capturing the real-life impacts of digital marginalisation.

Individual Barriers

In this section, we will focus on the barriers relating to the individual, and the needs specific to their situation beyond the practical side of simply having access to a device or the internet.

Those accessing support needed help with relatively straightforward parts of using digital technology like email, social media, joining a video call, or the basics of using a laptop or smartphone:

> *"...for digital inclusion, you don't really need to be an absolute tech wizard, because most of the problems that were coming through the door were things that a lot of us take for granted…"*

In sessions that we observed, we saw volunteer supporters help people with things like changing the font in a Word document, using the Search Bar on a web browser or using basic photo editing software. But there are further factors which relate to the individual beyond simple access to the right device or digital literacy. However, many are interrelated.

Support with 'the admin of life'

Most residents coming to drop-ins want help with specific tasks. Mostly, they want help with what one person called 'the admin of life', the forms and applications that often now have to be filled in online:

> *"It does tend to be the very basics really, the admin of life, the doctors forms, the bank forms, the council tax type forms, the housing forms, the benefit forms. All of those seem to be things that people find really difficult and challenging online."*

In one case during the COVID-19 pandemic, an 80-year-old man who was recently bereaved and was very isolated, found his biggest challenge was his gas and electric company insisting on dealing with him online. This resulted in him receiving increasingly "...red coloured and litigious looking letters..." as his bills not being paid. These processes can be intimidating, even without digital barriers.

A wariness about institutions, like the Council or doctor, was sometimes part of people's hesitancy. There was a suggestion that some of these processes may be harder than they need to be. For example, we heard about people having to help someone convert a form from a PDF before filling it in, or spending a lot of time on a complicated form only to find they lacked some of the information needed and would have to come back to complete it.

Connecting with others

Social isolation appeared to be an important part of why some people are less likely to be online, though experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic may somewhat have shaped this picture. Isolation also seemed to be part of the reason that some people take up digital support, particularly where this is delivered in a group setting. There were examples of residents regularly coming to sessions primarily for the social side, or using one-to-one sessions mainly to talk about what was going on in their lives:

> *"...most people that I deal with, are so lonely at home, and they've got no interaction. So when they come in to see me, I'll just say to them, is there anything specific you want to talk about? No, I'm just here just to offload. Okay, then offload. So I listen to them for about 25 minutes."*

Lots of residents are seeking support with digital tools to help them connect with other people. This was particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for older people. Examples included learning how to talk to family members on Facebook, how to send emails to relatives abroad, and how to use WhatsApp on a mobile phone. Many of those wanting help with social connection had relatives who lived abroad. Some also wanted to learn how to take part in social activities online, such as joining a bridge club. Another older person wanted to find out about activities near them, but didn't know how before getting support.

Age

There were also a lot of stories of people helping out older relatives. Those who have lived much of their lives in a pre-digital world are likely to be less familiar with digital technologies. Often this unfamiliarity was linked with some amount of apprehension or fear:

> *"...in effect, we've lived through a new industrial revolution, the internet has been the seismic change in people's behaviours...older people...the vast majority of their life, and possibly working life, the internet didn't exist. So this is a new thing to them."*

> *"...perhaps they didn't grow up in a world as digital as this and therefore it's unfamiliar. And therefore it just feels a bit unsafe."*

Some participants emphasised that age should be combined with other factors to better predict digital exclusion. It was felt that older people who have largely worked in manual roles (who may not have formal qualifications) were more likely to lack familiarity with digital technology:

> *"…somebody who did have qualifications would possibly be office based. So even at the basics, they would have used the keyboard, be familiar with that premise...they've got a level of familiarity already, that somebody who had a manual or processing job didn't..."*

In one case we heard of an 80-year-old man, described earlier, who was hounded by energy companies for unpaid bills but only given the option of interacting with them online. Someone who had supported him at the time remembered his words vividly and they'd encouraged her to help others:

> *"It honestly feels like the world is moving on without me love."*

Education and improving employability

It was observed that digital support services are often used by school-age children, with some making use of computers to help with school assignments and others more regularly as part of their home-schooling.

Those delivering digital training did talk about the positive effect that digital skills have on residents' employment prospects. For example, volunteers sharing success stories of digital support talked about residents who came for training, then in turn became volunteers and then moved into paid work. One support provider was also offering work experience to young people, which included improving their digital skills.

Language barriers and cultural factors

Many recognised that language barriers could be problematic for accessing digital support, describing experiences of trying to work out what someone needs using Google Translate in libraries or relying on someone's child to act as a translator while delivering training in digital skills.

There was also a recognition that residents who face these barriers often have much to gain from digital access. For example, connecting with family abroad, or accessing online translation services:

> *"… as long as they understand how to switch the phone and how to add the picture on, they'll probably use it more…WhatsApp can enable them to phone family at home..."*

It was recognised that cultural differences could sometimes present barriers to accessing support. One person delivering support was conscious that having female trainers was important for opening up their services to women from some communities. It was also suggested that different cultural attitudes around accessing support, including health and wellbeing services, may affect uptake.

Cost of living

Deprivation was seen as a barrier for affording devices and data, both of which can be expensive. Whilst social tariffs are seen as a useful provision, many feel that the cost is still

too high, and in at least one case we saw instances of upselling and issues with getting services activated. Having enough devices within larger households was seen as an important part of this issue, with schooling often requiring students to use devices at home. People who are homeless or unemployed were also among those accessing digital support:

> *"I think it becomes around priorities. If you're worried that you've not got enough food in the house, you're not worried about Wi-Fi."*

Lending or providing devices and providing SIM cards with free data via “Data Banks” was seen as a vital provision alongside public access points.

Attitudinal Barriers

In some cases, perceived barriers to digital inclusion go beyond having the right support on hand. We spoke to some people and observed in a few sessions instances where residents, despite having access to devices and support, were still held back by having a cautious or apprehensive attitude towards technology. There may be a number of reasons for this, but below are some that surfaced in our research:

Fear and apprehension

Often there were stories of people – usually older residents - being too scared to touch anything related to computers for fear of breaking something:

> *“...fear is a huge, huge factor. I helped one person who wanted to join her bridge group online. She just needed to press reset on her router but she didn’t want to press anything in case she broke it.”*

Alongside this were fears about the very real risks that lurk online. Fears around scammers or getting hacked often came up, and training is being provided to help people navigate these dangers. One research participant who was supporting older people to get online described these fears, and the trade-off residents make between convenience and risk:

> *"... the barrier to getting on the internet is that, you know, they're going to take all their money, they're going to do this, they're going to download all this porn or whatever. So they're wary of the internet...sometimes justifiably worried, because the scammers are out there..."*

> *"It will stop some. But at the end of the day, people like convenience, so if something's convenient, and easy, then they'll do it... If something is a phaff, and they've got to worry, then that's the barrier that will stop them."*

Social media, and protecting personal data, were another source of fear, particularly for older people. Not knowing how these services work was an important part of this. One person delivering digital training described this fear and the work they were doing to build confidence:

> *"...a lot of the fear is that once you sign up, and put a profile on [social media], it's there in the internet forever. So you don't know where that information goes.”*

> *"... how do we build confidence…to ensure the security and data protection...getting them to understand that you can decline cookies, for example, you don't have to share your data."*

Mistrust of institutions

A mistrust of institutions was part of this picture of fear for some people, making them wary about sharing data with official bodies:

> *"...a lot of it now is about accessing a lot of government services online. So again, people may not want to disclose all their personal information, not knowing where that data is going… how it may be used against you kind of thing."*

These attitudes were seen as potential barriers to accessing support and barriers to trusting in online services run by these bodies:

> *"...in certain demographics within society there is resistance to anything that looks like it's been designed or is being delivered by anything too clinical, or like the council..."*

Not recognising the necessity

It was recognised that some residents simply don't want to be online. Yet, because so many services are online, digital access may be considered a part of life. There was a concern that people facing digital exclusion don't always recognise the importance of using digital tools:

> *"...there are just some people that, all the help in the world could be offered, but they just don't like it. They don't like online. They don't like being on a screen… I think a lot of people do it because they have to do it. But they can't wait to get off there, access something more tangible and more real."*

> *"...I think people's attitude will be changing as they recognise that it's going to be a requisite for more and more areas of their lives. So whereas maybe a few years ago, the attitude is: 'Why do I need to learn this?' I think as time goes on the altitude may be changing where it's going to become more of an essential. So yeah, that might be one way of ascertaining their attitude, based on how much now this has impacted on their lives."*

Case Studies

Overcoming Communication Barriers and Finding Support

Introduction:

This case study explores the challenges faced by Vincent, a customer who encountered multiple barriers while setting up NowTV, receiving a Post Office delivery, and arranging home hub installation. The lack of communication and support from the companies involved added to Vincent's frustration. However, with the assistance of a volunteer, Vincent was able to navigate through the obstacles and find a resolution.

Background:

Vincent experienced a series of events that led to a chain of complications. His phone had been disconnected for a few days, followed by a delay in his home hub delivery. To arrange a pick-up at the post office, Vincent needed to access his emails but faced difficulty due to a password reset. Throughout this time, Vincent was unable to be contacted, causing concern among his family members.

Barriers Faced:

1. Disconnected Phone: Vincent's inability to use his phone hindered his communication and access to important information.

2. Delayed Home Hub Delivery: The delay in receiving the home hub disrupted Vincent's plans for setting up his NowTV service.

3. Email Access Issues: Vincent's inability to access his emails due to a password reset created further complications in managing his appointments and deliveries.

4. Lack of Support: Vincent found that the companies he interacted with only offered cheap tariffs without providing adequate support for resolving issues like his.

Support Received:

Fortunately, Vincent received assistance from a volunteer who guided him through each step of the process. The volunteer helped Vincent overcome the barriers he faced by providing the following support:

1. Communication Alternatives: The volunteer suggested alternative methods of communication, such as using a different device or reaching out to the companies via social media.

2. Problem-Solving Guidance: The volunteer assisted Vincent in troubleshooting the delayed home hub delivery and provided suggestions for expediting the process.

3. Email Password Reset Assistance: The volunteer walked Vincent through the steps of resetting his email password, enabling him to regain access to his account.

4. Emotional Support: Throughout the ordeal, the volunteer provided emotional support to Vincent, reassuring him and alleviating his concerns.

Key Takeaways:

Vincent's experience highlights the importance of effective communication and support when facing challenges with service providers. Despite encountering various barriers, Vincent was able to overcome them with the help of a dedicated volunteer. This case study emphasizes the significance of offering comprehensive support alongside affordable services to ensure a positive customer experience.

Empowering Older Adults to Acquire Digital Skills

Introduction:

This case study explores the journey of an older woman who embarked on a mission to learn new digital skills, specifically word processing. By undertaking a digital skills course and the support of a volunteer, she overcame challenges and gained confidence in using technology.

Background:

Ellen, a woman in her late 60s, recognised the importance of acquiring digital skills in today's technology-driven world. She identified word processing as a valuable skill and set out to learn it. Her motivation stemmed from the desire to enhance her communication abilities, access online resources, and stay connected with her family and friends.

Barriers Faced:

1. Limited familiarity with technology: Ellen had minimal experience with computers and lacked knowledge about basic functions such as right-clicking, opening/saving files, and spell-checking documents.

2. Overcoming fear and uncertainty: The unfamiliarity with technology created a sense of apprehension and self-doubt, leading to the need for reassurance and encouragement.

3. Complexity : Ellen struggled to understand advanced features like headers, footers, and ribbons within word processing software.

Support received:

1. Finding a digital literacy course: Ellen visited her local community centre, which runs regular drop-in sessions offering digital literacy courses and support.

2. Utilizing written instructions: To supplement her learning process, Ellen used printed instructions that provided step-by-step guidance on various word processing tasks.

3. Volunteer support: When needing additional help, Ellen reached out to a volunteer who was able to answer her questions and provide further assistance.

Key Takeaways:

This case study highlights the transformative power of learning new digital skills for older adults. By utilising locally available digital literacy courses, and the assistance of a volunteer, Ellen successfully acquired word processing skills. This journey not only improved her ability to navigate the digital landscape but also enhanced her overall confidence and independence. It serves as an example for other older adults seeking to embrace technology and unlock its potential.

Overcoming Barriers to Online Travel Booking

Introduction

This case study looks at the obstacles faced by older adults when attempting to book travel online, using the example of one man's frustrating experience trying to purchase airline tickets. It highlights the need for guidance and safer environments tailored to seniors.

Background

John, a 72-year old retiree, wanted to book economy seats for an upcoming trip to visit his grandchildren using a low cost airline website. While John did own a smartphone, he avoided entering sensitive financial information due to distrust in mobile security and privacy protections. He also felt overwhelmed by confusing website design elements aimed at up-selling.

Barriers Face

1. Complex seat selection process
2. Persistent pop-ups and ads encouraging additional purchases
3. Lack of senior-friendly guidance on site.
4. Reluctance to input payment data without reassurance

Support Received

Fortunately, a volunteer from John's local community centre was available to provide personalised assistance. The volunteer helped John understand the seat selection process, navigate through up-sell pop-ups, and complete his ticket purchase using the community centre's computer for added payment security. Moving forward, John felt more confident to book travel online with future guidance.

Key Takeaways

John's experience underscores the need for user-friendly booking platforms tailored to older generations. While John had a smartphone, its security features still left him uneasy. This highlights an opportunity for senior-specific assistance and protected payment portals. With compassionate guidance from both community members and better designed websites, older adults can confidently access online services.

Bridging the Digital Literacy Gap Across All Ages

Introduction

This case study examines an interaction between youth and senior community members at a digital support session for locals seeking technology guidance. It reveals differences in digital proficiency across generations and the value of peer learning.

Background

Alex, a 12-year old boy attended the session after finishing an exam. As a digital native, he wanted to watch soccer highlights of Manchester City's latest match online. However, Alex's use of insider terminology like "stream" left some older attendees confused. One elderly gentleman sought Alex's help to "watch the highlights" online too, but struggled to understand which website or browser to use.

Bridging the Gap

Recognising the knowledge gap, a volunteer stepped in to assist. They showed both Alex and the older attendee how to navigate to the football highlights simply and clearly. Rather than make assumptions about skill levels, the volunteer met each person at their level of understanding. They used plain language like "type here" instead of technical jargon, enabling both generations to achieve their goal of accessing the content they wanted.

Key Takeaways

This real-world case study demonstrates the need for digital literacy mentoring that serves community members across age groups and skill levels. Tech industry terms that seem intuitive to younger digital natives may feel unfamiliar and intimidating to others. Programs aiming to promote true digital inclusion can tailor their support for varying needs, from exam-taking pre-teens to mature adults seeking to get online.

Empowering Entrepreneurs Through Digital Access

Introduction

This case study looks at how digital barriers can impede entrepreneurship and economic mobility for disadvantaged groups. It tells the story of a young woman seeking to grow her business without home technology access.

Background

Jada, a smart and creative 30-year old, runs a house cleaning start-up. As the sole proprietor, she manages everything from services to marketing herself. Jada hoped to create professional flyers to promote her expanding clientele. However, lacking a personal computer and printer, executing her vision seemed out of reach.

Barriers Faced

1. No computer ownership due to expense
2. Lacked software and a printer to produce materials
3. Missing out on opportunities due to digital divide.

Finding Support

Fortunately, Jada learned of a free digital support session at her local community centre. Volunteers helped Jada use photo editing software to design flyers. Access to computers

and printers enabled Jada to output her materials with ease. The guidance she received proved invaluable in progressing her entrepreneurial journey.

Key Takeaways

Jada's story demonstrates how access to technology can exacerbate inequality. But it also shows that programs providing critical resources and digital support give businesses like Jada's the chance to succeed. For entrepreneurs from low-income backgrounds, digital limitations pose undue setbacks. Investing in equitable tech access and inclusive skills training grants them the tools to achieve their economic goals and make their visions reality on their own terms.

Bridging Learning Gaps Through Patient Digital Mentorship

Introduction

This case study examines how digital literacy barriers can impede home-schooling success and how community support centres can make a difference through compassionate guidance.

Background

Sarah, a 15-year-old home-schooled student, visited a local digital support centre to access a computer in order to work on an assignment.Though an eager learner, she struggled with Microsoft Word tools like headers, footers, and page numbering when attempting the task on her own.

Support received

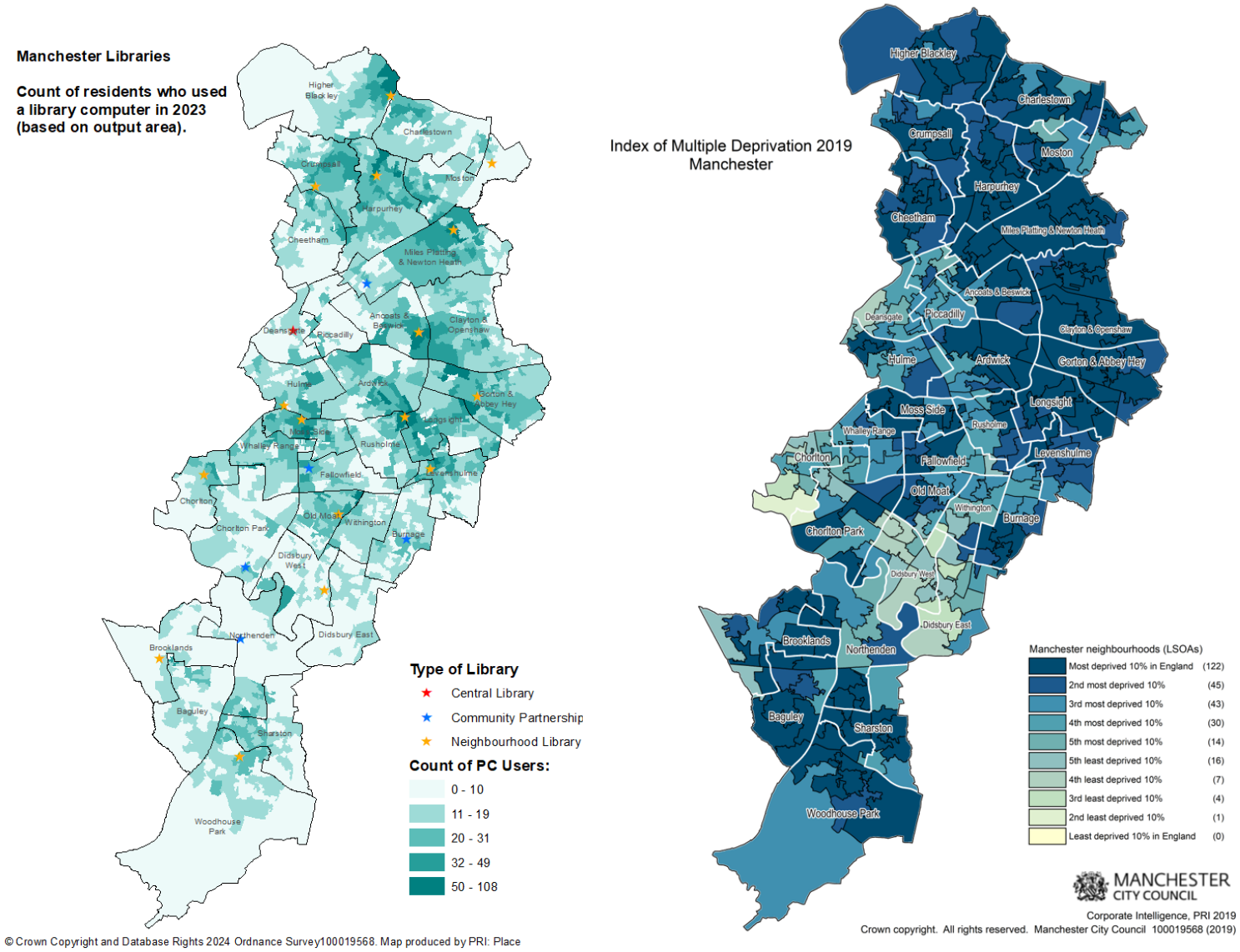
Sarah was able to make use of an available computer and word processing software. A volunteer at the centre showed Sarah how to properly structure her document. They walked her through applying custom headers and footers, fixing the page orientation, and checking for spelling errors. Sarah felt supported rather than ashamed of any knowledge gaps.

Key Takeaways

Like Sarah, home-schooled students often confront digital literacy barriers without access to traditional IT support. As this case study demonstrates, community assistance centres can make all the difference by filling gaps and empowering independent learners. With more

patient digital mentorship, students like Sarah can gain confidence in vital skills needed for academic and lifelong success.

Appendix 8 Library computer users in 2023 compared to Index of Multiple Deprivation



The darker areas are generally the same on both maps, showing that the libraries computer users tend to live in the more deprived areas of the city.

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Manchester City Council
Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Work Programme

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

Name: Charlotte Lynch
Position: Governance and Scrutiny Team Leader
Telephone: 0161 219 2119
Email: charlotte.lynch@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report lists recommendations made by the Committee and responses to them indicating whether the recommendation will be implemented and, if it will be, how this will be done.

Items highlighted in grey have been actioned and will be removed from future reports.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
10 January 2023	CESC/23/05 Overview Report	To request that Committee Members be provided with a briefing note on the analysis of the information on Bonfire Night 2022, when this is available.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Fiona Sharkey
20 June 2023	CESC/23/23 An update report on the Homelessness Service	That information on where leasing scheme properties will be located in the city be provided once available.	This information will be provided once available.	Nicola Rea
5 September 2023	CESC/23/36 Domestic Abuse and Safety of Women and Girls	That enquiries are made with GMCA regarding data on the time taken for domestic violence incidents to be dealt with by GMP.	Officers have emailed the member who proposed this recommendation to get clarity on the nature of the specific case described so that a response can then be obtained from the Detective Chief Inspector who leads on the vulnerability agenda for the City of Manchester Division.	Sam Stabler
10 October 2023	Review of the Homelessness Strategy, Information on Winter Provision and Equalities Data for the	Welcomes the Assistant Director of Homelessness' offer to provide data on call handler capacity and call waiting times within the Homelessness Service.	This information was emailed to members on 1 February 2024.	Rob McCartney

	Homelessness Service			
10 October 2023	Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy 2023-26	That further information of the wards where the pilot activities will be tested and delivered be provided.	The detail on this is still being worked on and a workshop will be held to develop further as referenced in the report. Once confirmed, this information will be shared.	Shefali Kapoor Samiya Butt
5 February 2024	Draft Equality Objectives 2024-2028	That a progress update be provided to the committee in June 2024, including the delivery plan; information on how success would be monitored; and information on the socioeconomic disadvantage duty	This will be added to the committee's work programme.	Sharmila Kar
5 February 2024	Draft Equality Objectives 2024-2028	That further updates be provided on a 6-month basis after June 2024.	This will be incorporated into the committee's work programme for 2024/25.	Sharmila Kar
5 February 2024	Draft Equality Objectives 2024-2028	That further information be provided on the percentage of school leavers in Manchester who were in care and were not in further or higher education, employment, or training 9 months after leaving school.	A response to this has been requested.	Sharmila Kar
5 February 2024	Draft Equality Objectives 2024-2028	That further consideration be given to including poverty as a protected characteristic within the equality objectives.	People living in poverty is already included as one of the priority groups and officers are looking to broaden that out to include socioeconomic disadvantage, which is in the Equality Act but has never been enacted.	Sharmila Kar
5 February 2024	Manchester's Sport and Physical	The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure writes to	This is currently being written in collaboration with the Executive	Councillor Hacking

	Activity Strategy Annual Update	the government to emphasise the importance of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in supporting the Council's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and to request that HSF be continued after 2024/25	Member for Early Years, Children and Young People.	
5 February 2024	Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Annual Update	An update be provided on the timescale for rolling out bike libraries across the city.	Bike libraries are a TfGM funded initiative/ pilot across Greater Manchester, a number of organisations/ groups in Manchester were successful in applying for bike library funding which MCRactive supported a number of organisations with. There are currently 13 Bike Libraries in Manchester, all operated slightly differently depending on the organisation and their operational model. The full list is here: https://beeactive.tfgm.com/cycling/bike-libraries/ The ones based in Council buildings are: 2 in leisure centres (Moss Side and Arcardia), one at Station South and one based at Miles Platting Library (operated by the Canal and Rivers Trust). Currently the nearest bike library to Newton Heath would be either Miles Platting Library or No. 93 in Harpurhey.	Yvonne O'Malley

			TFGM have yet to confirm the future roll out of Bike Libraries, the pilot libraries are still quite early in their operation and learnings are being gathered from them which will likely influence future investment and then inform the timelines. MCRactive staff met with TfGM colleagues in early February and although it sounds like there will be future funding streams they did not clarify if this would include bike library funding, we have asked them to keep us updated in the timescales and plans for any future bike library funding.	
5 February 2024	Community Events Fund 2023/24	Further information on whether apprenticeships were offered within the Events service be provided.	This information was provided to members by email on 16 February 2024.	Yvonne O'Malley

2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or

- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions published on **26 February 2024** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
Development and Growth					
Infrastructure service for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector (2023/09/05A) The provision of a Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Infrastructure service for Manchester City Council (MCC) and Manchester Integrated Care System (ICS). It aims to support the continued effective functioning and	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 5th Oct 2023		Report and recommendations	Mike Worsley, Procurement Manager mike.worsley@manchester.gov.uk

growth of a safe, sustainable, high quality, diverse, local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Manchester.					
To enter into a 20 year lease to support the delivery of homeless accommodation (2023/11/08A) To approve the Council entering into a twenty year lease to support the delivery of homeless accommodation.	Strategic Director (Growth and Development)	Not before 7th Dec 2023		Report of the Strategic Director (Growth & Development)	Richard Cohen, Strategic Lead - Development (South and East) richard.cohen@manchester.gov.uk
To enter into a 10 year lease to support the delivery of homeless accommodation. (2023/11/08B) To approve the Council entering into a 10 year lease to support the delivery of homeless accommodation.	Strategic Director (Growth and Development)	Not before 7th Dec 2023		Report of the Strategic Director (Growth & Development)	Richard Cohen, Strategic Lead - Development (South and East) richard.cohen@manchester.gov.uk

Long-term leasing of temporary accommodation for homeless households (2024/01/02B) To approve the Council entering into leases of 10 year plus 1 day with TA providers.	Strategic Director (Growth and Development)	Not before 30th Jan 2024		Report of Strategic Director (Growth and Development)	Rob McCartney, Assistant Director of Homelessness rob.mccartney@manchester.gov.uk
Neighbourhoods					
TC671 - Bikeability Cycling Training (2024/02/20A) The appointment of Provider for Manchester City Council, subject to grant funding being made available from Active Travel England (ATE), The purpose of the Grant is to deliver a program to provide Bikeability cycle training for children and young people attending education and training in England exclusively based on the National Standard for cycle training	Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)	Not before 20th Mar 2024		Report & Recommendation	

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme – March 2024

Tuesday 5 March 2024, 2.00 pm (Report deadline Thursday 22 February 2024)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Digital Exclusion	To receive a further report on digital exclusion, including financial exclusion.	Councillor Hacking	Neil Fairlamb Neil MacInnes	See March 2023 minutes
Libraries and Archives Report	To receive an update report on Libraries and Archives.	Councillor Hacking	Neil Fairlamb Neil MacInnes	
Manchester Indoor Built Facility Strategy Update	To receive an update on the work of the Manchester Indoor Built Facility Strategy.	Councillor Hacking	Yvonne O'Malley	
Overview Report		-	Scrutiny Support	

Tuesday 21 May 2024, 2.00pm (Report deadline Thursday 9 May 2024)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Support for People Leaving Prison	To include information on changes to probation services, provision and geographical spread of accommodation for prison-leavers, how ex-prisoners are re-integrated into society and links with homelessness.	Councillor Akbar Councillor Rahman	Neil Fairlamb Sam Stabler Dave Ashmore	To be scheduled for May 2024.
Update on recommendations made by the Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group	To receive a response on recommendations made by the Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group, including whether these recommendations are accepted or rejected, and progress made to implement accepted recommendations.	Councillor Rahman	Sam Stabler Sara Duckett	To be considered in May 2024. See December 2023 minutes.
Work programming	A work programming session will be held on the rise of the committee meeting, to draft the committee's work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.	N/A	Neil Fairlamb Charlotte Lynch	
Overview Report		-	Scrutiny Support	

Items To Be Scheduled

Item	**Purpose**	**Executive Member**	**Strategic Director/ Lead Officer**	**Comments**
Prevent/Radequal	This report sets out our response to the National Prevent Review. To include information on the radicalisation of teenage boys by the far right, and	Councillor Rahman	Neil Fairlamb Fiona Sharkey Sam Stabler	

	the influence of figures such as Andrew Tate.			
Advice Services Update	To receive an update report.	Councillor Midgley	Dave Ashmore Nicola Rea	See minutes of the meeting on 10 January 2023.
Migration	To receive a further report at an appropriate time.	Councillor Midgley	Dave Ashmore Nicola Rea	See May 2023 minutes.
Safety of Women and Girls	To receive a report on the safety of women and girls, including the work and projects being undertaken to promote this across the city and how these are funded.	Councillor Midgley	Sam Stabler	See September 2023 minutes.
Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy 2023-26 Action Plans	To receive a report on the development of action plans arising from the Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy 2023-26, 6 months on from the October 2023 meeting.	Councillor Midgley	Shefali Kapoor Fiona Sharkey Samiya Butt	See October 2023 minutes. To be considered around May/June 2024.
Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy 2023-26 Update	To receive a report that provides a 12-month update on progress of the Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy 2023-26.	Councillor Midgley	Shefali Kapoor Fiona Sharkey Samiya Butt	See October 2023 minutes. To be considered around October 2024.
Sanctuary Scheme	To receive a report on the Sanctuary Scheme and the work undertaken to address the increase in the number of BAME people presenting as homeless due to domestic violence.	Councillor Midgley	Rob McCartney Nicola Rea	See October 2023 minutes.
Age Friendly Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan Progress Update	To receive a progress update on the work of the Age Friendly Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan, 6 months on from the last update.	Councillor Midgley	David Regan Barry Gillespie Naomi Davies	To be considered in June 2024. See December 2023 minutes.
Equality Objectives Delivery Plan	To receive the delivery plan for the 2024-28 Equality Objectives and to outline how success will	Councillor Midgley	Fiona Ledden Sharmila Kar	To be considered in June 2024.

	be measured and to provide further information on socioeconomic disadvantage and how this will be addressed through the Equality Objectives.			See February 2024 minutes.
Making Manchester Fairer	To receive a report on the themes of communities and power and systemic and structural racism and discrimination.	Councillor Midgley	Fiona Ledden Sharmila Kar	**Deferred from March 2024 at Chair's request.**