

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2021  
Executive – 17 November 2021

**Subject:** Manchester International Festival 2021

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### **Summary**

This report provides the Executive with an overview of the outcomes of the 2021 Manchester International Festival (MIF21). The report provides a summary of performance against the agreed objectives and details the impact of the festival, based on the results of the independent evaluation. The report demonstrates how the festival delivered an inspiring programme which enabled Manchester residents and wider audiences to return to the city to enjoy arts and culture, despite the challenges and uncertainty of COVID-19.

### **Recommendations**

The Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the report and endorse the recommendations to the Executive as detailed below.

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note the substantial achievements of the 2021 Festival in achieving its objectives and in supporting the economic and cultural recovery of the city following the COVID-19 pandemic.
  2. Recognise and support the importance of maintaining public sector funding commitments in order to attract significant match funding from other public and private sector partners.
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### **Wards Affected – All**

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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Manchester International Festivals' Environmental Sustainability Policy and Five-Year Action Plan set out how the organisation will contribute to the city's zero carbon target, both in the delivery of the festival and in operating The Factory. Progress is reported on an annual basis against a series of targets, milestones and key performance indicators.
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Manchester International Festival supports economic growth by substantially raising the city's profile, drawing in national and international visitors, and attracting inward investment by positioning Manchester as a leading cultural city with an ability to showcase major large-scale events. The 2021 Festival was a flagship event within the city's cultural recovery programme during the reopening phase. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, the 2021 Festival had an estimated economic impact of £19.5million.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Manchester International Festival continues to maximise employment opportunities, with 69 permanent members of staff. 83 additional staff and a further 62 office-based freelancers were contracted to deliver the 2021 festival. 680 people were contracted as performers, stage managers, front of house staff, and technicians. The Factory Academy continues to work with partners to provide pathways to training and employment opportunities for Manchester residents.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Manchester International Festival's Creative Engagement Team responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing creative and agile ways to bring people together in the run-up to the 2021 festival – including participants, schools and volunteers. The independent evaluation showed that there was an increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic audiences at the 2021 festival, as well as a growth in younger audiences, those with a disability and people from lower socioeconomic groups. A dedicated Volunteer Collaboration Group provided insights into improving accessibility of the volunteering experience.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Manchester was recently identified as the third best city in the world by Time Out, with Manchester International Festival and The Factory referenced as part of the city's creative scene. 91% of audiences surveyed at the 2021 event agreed or strongly agreed that the festival helps to make Manchester a world-class city, and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that it offers a unique experience unlike anything else in the area. The Festival contributes to the city's carbon reduction targets by minimising the impact of its operations and sharing knowledge and expertise with cultural partners.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	A core objective for the digital team was to develop a blended offer for the 2021 festival, creating live and interactive content for audiences online. This was supported by an on-demand and live platform, a digital studio for virtual events, website content and new partnerships with media partners. As a result the festival recorded 1.2million views across the website and all digital content, with audiences engaged from 187 countries.

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
  - Risk Management
  - Legal Considerations
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**Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The Council provides annual funding support of £1.5million to Manchester International Festival. This was agreed for a 10-year period as part of the 2020/21 budget proposals and is part of the Council's commitment to match the c. £9.8million ongoing revenue support for The Factory / Manchester International Festival from Arts Council England and other government grants.

**Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

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**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.

Report to the Executive: Corporate Core Budget Report 2020/21 – 12 February 2020  
Report to the Executive: Medium Term Financial Plan – 12 February 2020

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Despite the challenges and uncertainty of COVID-19, Manchester International Festival (MIF) 2021 inspired residents of Manchester and beyond to return to the city and enjoy a programme of art, dance, theatre and music, delivered through an immersive series of events that utilised outside spaces like never before.
- 1.2 Because of the context in which this year's Festival has taken place, this report appraises the event not only against Key Performance Indicators (including audiences, box-office and economic impact), but also against measures which recognise the festival's achievements in inspiring joy, encouraging participation, driving open public access and reducing anxiety for audiences seeking to return to cultural experiences in a safe, conscientious and socially distanced manner. This is supported by the Independent Evaluation of the Festival, carried out by the Audience Agency.
- 1.3 The diversity of programming for the 2021 Festival helped to re-emphasise the continued importance for the festival to collaborate with cultural institutions across Manchester to enliven public spaces, profile incredible venues and bring art to every corner of the city.

## **2.0 Context – the COVID-19 pandemic**

- 2.1 MIF21 was delivered in close consultation with the Council, and closely linked to the city's strategy for the city centre as part of the COVID-19 Recovery and Investment Plan. The importance of delivering a festival, in whatever form possible, was established by both parties in Summer 2020, and reaffirmed during the winter as the ongoing impacts of the pandemic became clear. With this contribution to the city centre recovery, and to the social and mental wellbeing of the city's population at the core, MIF developed a range of scenarios for the various potential levels of restriction that might be in place. At any one time, MIF was running five or more differing scenarios for the festival, and for each project within it, ranging from full lockdown to 'business as usual', and with several versions of a socially-distant or blended festival also in play. With government policy in flux through to the last day of the festival, the continued planning of these diverse scenarios remained a significant element of the festival workload throughout.
- 2.2 Early on, it became clear that certain signature elements of MIF were too risky to plan for – for example a mass gathering in a public square for the opening evening; large-scale spectacular stage events with substantial casts; and intensive close on-stage working. Discussions with artists across the globe were ongoing as projects were re-configured, with some being postponed to 2023 and new ones being introduced. Exceptional new ideas were developed for outdoor spaces in particular, and in the end, the outdoor projects which formed the core of MIF21 – *Big Ben Lying Down*, *Portrait of Black Britain*, and *Captioning the City* – brought the festival to wide-ranging new audiences, as

the city itself became a stage and a gallery.

- 2.3 Other projects were reconfigured for new circumstances, with an emphasis in particular on providing exceptional, healing, participatory experiences for the people of Manchester despite the very challenging circumstances. These included *Sea Change*, the re-designed opening event; *I Love You Too*, in collaboration with Manchester Libraries; and *Portrait of Black Britain*, providing transformative experiences for hundreds of participants. The feedback from participants at this festival has been extraordinary – and testament to how important it was in this moment to provide a creative and healing way to re-enter daily life.
- 2.4 MIF had also done a great deal of work over the past year with local artists – providing a daily online drop-in during the early months of the pandemic which provided a lifeline to many isolated freelance creatives. Over the year, this initiative developed into a range of support programmes ranging from *Festival in My House and Yours*, to *Remote Residencies* and *MIF Sounds* - all of which provided funds to independent artists to develop their practice during lockdowns. MIF also had a leadership role in developing “Manchester Independents” - a sector-wide initiative in support of freelance artists, which is currently delivering a wide range of public events, all developed and curated by independent artists and companies. MIF has provided the bulk of funds and support for this project, while ensuring that the decision-making lies with artists themselves, and the initiative is championed by a wide range of Manchester institutions. This work will form an ongoing legacy of MIF’s support for artists during the pandemic.
- 2.5 Equally importantly, MIF21 was an economic lifeline at a very difficult moment for the many freelance professionals in the events industry. By guaranteeing work relatively early on, and by combining this with rigorous COVID-19 safety and contingency planning, MIF was able to help this particularly badly impacted sector of the workforce back into regular employment. The Festival’s partnership with Manchester Central was an important element here, allowing MIF to deliver safe music events in a single space which allowed the maximum permitted indoor audience at the time (1,000) to be welcomed safely, and also allowed MIF to ensure consistent safe working practices across production teams.
- 2.6 Festival Square in Cathedral Gardens was as important a part of the festival as ever, and provided two stages profiling, and providing income to, a huge range of predominantly local artists. With no booking required, Festival Square became a centre for creativity and community. The new location proved popular with families and also attracted diverse adult audiences. The new Neighbourhood Organisers initiative (see Section 6) employed individuals from a range of Manchester communities to support their neighbours in attending the festival, and Festival Square became a key hub for many people attending the festival for the first time.
- 2.7 While one artist (Patti Smith) withdrew due to the news of the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant and quarantine requirements, no other show was

cancelled during the festival, and a huge range of participatory activity was undertaken safely and successfully. The festival achieved significant international attention as one of the first and most imaginatively re-configured public events to take place internationally this summer. Most importantly, it provided enjoyment, celebration, safe opportunities to socialise, employment, refecation and joy for many thousands of Manchester residents.

### **3.0 Assessment of Delivery of Objectives for 2021 – Analysis by objective**

3.1 The following objectives were set for the 2021 Festival;

1. To continue to grow the international reputation of the Festival and the city – with artists, audiences, partners and media coverage from all five continents and from a wide variety of backgrounds – in turn driving reach for the Festival, attracting people to the city and the best staff to our team.
2. To bring the most extraordinary artists from around the world to Manchester to create diverse and inspiring new work – made in Manchester and shared across the globe.
3. To connect in new and ever deeper ways with the city and region of Manchester, increasing the range and diversity of those engaging with the Festival, with an ever more visible and transformative presence in the city.
4. To develop the brand, profile and awareness of MIF/The Factory locally, nationally and internationally in readiness for opening.

#### **4.0 Objective 1: To continue to grow the international reputation of the Festival and the city – with artists, audiences, partners and media coverage from all five continents and from a wide variety of backgrounds – in turn driving reach for the festival, attracting people to the city and the best staff to our team.**

##### Media Coverage

- 4.1 Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the media landscape, MIF21 generated strong press coverage across print, online and broadcast media including news announcements, previews of MIF shows, and features, interviews and reviews. 118 journalists from 85 outlets including The Financial Times, The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian attended MIF21 in person, despite travel restrictions in place in the lead-up to MIF21, to review individual shows or a cross section of the programme. There was also a well-attended press trip on the opening day of the Festival, plus 4 and 5 star reviews for *All of This Unreal Time*, *Poet Slash Artist*, *Arlo Parks*, *Damon Albarn*, *The Global Playground*, and *The Long Waited Weighted Gathering*.
- 4.2 A significant proportion of coverage was generated through continuing relationships with media partners - BBC, The Guardian and Manchester Evening News - who provided extensive support leading up to and during the Festival period. Highlights included an MIF21 special edition of the BBC Radio

4 flagship cultural programme Front Row; BBC Radio 6 Music's Radcliffe and Maconie dedicating a weekend to interviewing local and national artists from across the MIF21 programme; and an MIF special hosted by Cerys Matthews featuring an extensive interview with Artistic Director and CEO John McGrath. BBC iplayer also hosted MIF content – with four specially-made artist films still available to stream.

- 4.3 The Guardian provided considerable editorial support in the lead-up and during MIF21 including launch announcements, reviews and high-profile interview features with the likes of Angélique Kidjo, Cillian Murphy and Max Porter, Marta Minujin, Deborah Warner and Lucinda Childs. They also produced a special MIF themed supplement, distributed nationally and published online which included a spotlight on how *Portrait of Black Britain* and *I Love You Too* engaged with local people and creatives.
- 4.4 Despite restrictions on global travel, MIF's programme featured in international coverage spanning 32 countries, from Armenia to Zimbabwe with news, previews and features in the likes of ABC, Corriere della Sera, Dawn, Financial Times Asia, La Nacion, La Repubblica, Monopol, Nigeria Sun, Pakistan Daily Times, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Strait Times, The Times South Africa and high profile interviews in Argentina's Clarín, Italy's Artribune and USA's Broadway World; as well as coverage in 47 US outlets including Artnet, Billboard, Forbes, Pitchfork, Rolling Stone, The New York Times and The Verge.
- 4.5 The Festival was a significant part of the country's return to live music, a wide range of coverage in national broadcast and music specialist publications was secured for the 'first gigs back' from Arlo Parks and Damon Albarn, collaborations with international partners and the platforming of Manchester based artists who were performing across the Festival.
- 4.6 Extensive regional BBC coverage helped tell the story of MIF's community and engagement work to local audiences. BBC North West Tonight broadcast 19 reports on MIF21 including interviews with artists, participants and staff including key interviews with Artistic Director and CEO John McGrath on the first and final days and BBC Music Introducing in Manchester continued their involvement in the programming of Festival Square, selecting artists from across Greater Manchester to perform.
- 4.7 Despite being unable to broadcast from Festival Square due to COVID-19, BBC Radio Manchester created almost 11 hours of coverage including three special MIF21-dedicated programmes. They also reported live from four different Festival sites and interviewed 33 different artists, staff and participants through June and July.
- 4.8 Supporting audience development objectives to deepen engagement with local communities, the press team worked closely with local radio stations in areas such as Wythenshawe, Moss Side, Whalley Range, Harpurhey and Levenshulme, totalling over 50 hours of Festival broadcasts. City centre-based community station Reform Radio broadcast the digital streams for *Looking*

*Forward to Tomorrow* as well as three specially curated Festival shows presented by a previous MIF participant. A new partnership was brokered with Manchester publication Aurelia, to commission new writing from local people of marginalised genders and host a series of workshops.

4.9 A wider range of media relationships were also built nationally with Alt Africa, a bespoke arts and culture print and online guide for African and Asian art; Gaydio the world's biggest LGBTQ+ radio station; The Voice Britain's only national Afro-Caribbean weekly newspaper; Asian Culture Vulture (a South Asian arts & culture website). Strong relationships were developed with BBC Radio Manchester's Black and South Asian weekly radio shows, Indus and The People, with regular coverage across the programmes.

4.10 Some examples of media coverage are included below:

*"Organisers at the Manchester International Festival have defied the COVID-19 odds, launching a citywide smorgasbord of commissions across the visual and performing arts."* – Art Newspaper

*"From local to global, this year's festival shines a spotlight on Manchester's diverse communities"* – The Guardian

*"[There is] a strong focus on community, inclusiveness and political engagement"* - The New York Times

*"It is to MIF's enormous credit that such a major event has been staged at all while COVID-19 restrictions are still in place, though it's perhaps because of the pandemic that the online projects are so ambitious, going far beyond the 'extension of IRL' role they often occupy. . . It is with good reason that the Festival prides itself on the diversity and inclusivity of its programming and its commitment to reaching new audiences."* Art Review

*"If there's a signature thread that ties together the eclectic works that have appeared at the Manchester International Festival over the past 14 years, it's a desire to push at creative boundaries"* - Creative Review

*"Every two years since launching in 2007, Manchester International Festival puts the northern English city on the global stage with an outstanding range of new work from the world's top performing and visual artists."* - Forbes

*"This year's programme proves that art can create real impact . . . In its vivid depiction of our capacity to envisage change, MIF 2021 proves art can and is genuinely impactful."* - Manchester's Finest

*"A great taster for all that The Factory will have to offer."* - Manchester Confidential

### Audiences

4.11 A socially distanced festival due to COVID-19 meant that there were a limited



number of tickets available for MIF events compared to previous festivals. However, with the large number of free and online events it was possible to reach a record number of audiences locally, nationally and internationally. There were also 36 artworks and events in the public realm for this year's festival, which meant that audience reach was much larger than in previous years. As a result the 2021 festival reached 2,662,244 people (compared with 302,161 in 2019) – 1,462,244 in person and 1,200,000 online.

4.12 The post MIF21 evaluation indicates that 29% of attendees came from Manchester with a further 28% from other Greater Manchester boroughs, 5% came from elsewhere in the Northwest, 32% from the rest of the UK and 6% were international attendees. It should be noted that these numbers include online attendees who formed a very significant proportion of the whole, including most international audiences.

4.13 As with MIF19 a customer survey was carried out, both in-person at several events across the 18 days of the festival and online post-festival. Key data captured included demographic and location information, visitor behaviour, motivations and prompts for visiting, experience and ratings, MIF brand perceptions and awareness of The Factory.

4.14 For MIF21 the focus on audiences was around two key goals:

1. To build and grow relationships with low engaged Greater Manchester audiences
2. To grow digital audiences locally, nationally and internationally

Goal 1: To build and grow relationships with low engaged Greater Manchester audiences

4.15 To ensure the festival was accessible to a wide range of people, initiatives included the following:

- 57% of the programme was free
- 10% of all tickets available at £10 for GM residents on a lower wage
- A further 10% of all tickets free for community groups across GM or at a discounted price for Young MIF members (a new, free membership scheme for aged 16-26 offering reduced priced tickets)
- Online ticketed events were priced at “pay what you feel” (£5, £10, £15, £20)

4.16 MIF welcomed Greater Manchester audiences to the festival, and the city, with a “Your City Your Festival” campaign, which put the people of Manchester at the heart of the campaign. MIF included a wide representation of the Greater Manchester population in the visuals to ensure they knew they the festival was for them, including Neighbourhood and MIF participants.

4.17 Marketing activities included advertising in local areas such as high streets, community centres, train and Metrolink stops, park banners; radio and press advertising; and a highlights leaflet distributed to 200,000 households across Greater Manchester. In addition, MIF aimed to connect with Manchester's

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic audiences by translating leaflet copy and radio adverts into Urdu and advertising relevant events, such as *Portrait of Black Britain*, *Salaam Festival*, *Homecoming Live* and *Rooted in Rhyme* in targeted areas including Moss Side, Whalley Range, Longsight, Rusholme and Cheetham Hill.

- 4.18 MIF worked closely with the Neighbourhood Organisers and recruited Audience Advisors to communicate the MIF21 programme, amplify the marketing activities and build relationships in their communities.
- 4.19 The festival evaluation demonstrated that the diversity of audiences at MIF 21 had increased:
- By working across the organisation from programming, creative engagement, marketing and press, MIF achieved an increase of 9% in the ethnic diversity of audiences in 2021. 15% of audiences identified as Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British or Other (an increase from 6% in 2019). This collaboration between departments will need to continue to ensure that diversity targets are achieved for The Factory.
  - 28% of audiences aged 16-29 (increase from 10% in 2019)
  - There was a marked drop off in audiences above the age of 60 at MIF21, with only 9% of audiences aged 60+ (decrease from 18% in 2019). Wider industry research shows that this population is only slowly returning to cultural attendance and the MIF team will need to monitor this going forward.
  - 11% of audiences identified as a D/deaf, or having a disability or long-term health condition (increase from 6% in 2019)
  - 42% from C2DE social grade (this comprises lower socio-economic groups representing skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, state pensioners, unemployed people and lowest grade occupations). The intention is to continue to build on this figure for The Factory, by working with larger groups of Neighbourhood Organisers in areas where there is lower cultural engagement.
- 4.20 MIF is part of a wider LGBTQI+ arts and culture network and introduced new gender questions in this year's survey as part of best practice reporting. This will be continued for The Factory to get an idea of audiences from an LGBTQI+ background. The audience survey showed that 79% of audiences identified as Heterosexual/Straight, 10% as Gay or Lesbian, 9% as Bisexual and 2% as other sexual orientation.

Goal 2: To grow digital audiences locally, nationally and internationally

- 4.21 To reach a worldwide audience MIF developed the "Festival Like No Other" campaign that focused on reaching global cultural audiences to experience

the festival digitally through MIF Live, live broadcasts, online artwork and video on demand.

- 4.22 Marketing activities included a highlights trailer and digital advertising across a number of platforms such as social media, culture and lifestyle websites and You Tube pre-roll in major UK and worldwide cities (eg London, Berlin, New York, LA, Lagos); partnerships with Time Out and Creative Tourist; and information shared via over 50 UK and international arts organisations and venues.
- 4.23 These initiatives resulted in 6% of audiences attending an MIF event from outside of the UK.

#### Customer satisfaction

- 4.24 A key priority at MIF21 was the safety of all audiences, and the post-festival survey demonstrated that 92% of people thought the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures was 'good' or 'very good'. 98% of people surveyed said the measures put in place ensured they felt safe during their visit.
- 4.25 Audience satisfaction is consistent with previous festivals, with 89% rating their whole experience as 'good' or 'very good' (93% in 2019 and 86% in MIF17) and 90% rating the quality of events either 'very good' or 'good' (90% in 2019 and 86% in MIF17).
- 91% of audiences either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that the festival helps to make Manchester a world-class cultural city.
  - 86% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the festival offers a unique experience unlike anything else available in the area.
  - 81% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that the festival builds a of excitement in Manchester in the run up to and during the festival.
  - 81% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that the festival makes Manchester a great place to live, work and study.
- 4.26 A very wide variety of comments were given by survey respondents, with some examples below. The themes emerging in these comments include a real appreciation of the chance to return to cultural events during the pandemic and praise for the MIF team in their delivery in this environment.

*'A really well organised festival which was so important to the city's cultural revival during a very difficult year.'*

*'Given the additional obstacles that MIF had to manoeuvre this year the team did a sensational job, and none of the operational changes in place tempered my enjoyment of the events. Brilliant work.'*

*'Thank you so much for putting on a wonderful festival, despite all the challenges around COVID. It was wonderful to experience the festival.'*

Many expressed that they were grateful to be able to see work online when they could not travel to the festival in person:

*'Having the option to see things online was great as not travelling much at moment.'*

*'I live in the SW of England so without the online option I wouldn't have attended.'*

*'Thank you for providing virtual options for those of us in other countries who wanted to participate!'*

### Digital reach

4.27 The core objective for the digital team was to develop a blended offer for the festival, creating live and interactive content for international audiences, audiences unable to attend for reasons of travel or health, and audiences not yet comfortable about in person live events. To do this MIF established an on demand and live platform, created a digital studio for virtual events throughout the festival, showcased the new website with multiple web extensions of key projects and developed new partnerships with media partners. The key outcomes included:

- 1.2 million views across the website and all digital content
- 81 individual pieces of content published – including video, live streams, access provision, websites and a browser game
- 32 live streams and pre-recorded broadcasts
- Audiences engaged from 187 countries

4.28 One of the main priorities for the 2021 Festival was to establish a bespoke live and on-demand platform, outside of the BBC ecosystem that MIF Live has been hosted on previously. Key streams and events available on Video on Demand included *All Of This Unreal Time*, *The Global Playground*, *The Patience of Trees* and *Notes on Grief*. MIF partnered with Stream GM for 7 broadcasts from Festival Square featuring local and national talent. This brought an additional 13,532 viewers for a total of 20,497 people enjoying Festival Square from home. The BBC also supported on the distribution of *Postcards From Now*, a series of moving image shorts made in response to the pandemic; these will now stay on iPlayer online for the next 12 months.

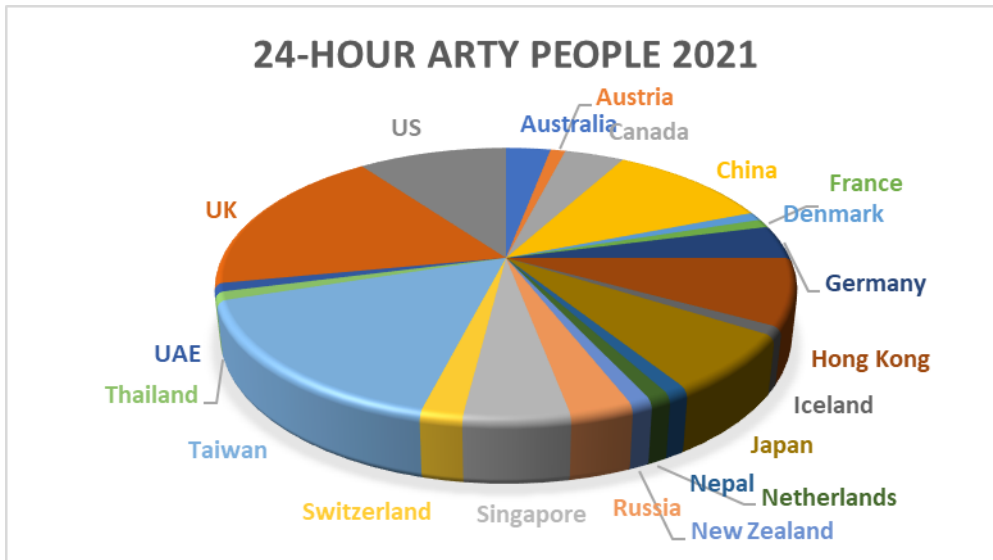
4.29 Access to digital content for disabled audiences has been a key learning across the industry during the pandemic, and MIF is keen to become a leader of good practice in this area. To support the additional online content at MIF21 digital access provision was significantly increased this year, with closed captions provided for all pre-recorded content. MIF also provided captions on all live streams, plus British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation where possible, using tools such as AccessLoop and Stagertext. *All Of This Unreal Time* and *The Global Playground* were also published with audio described versions.

- 4.30 The new website also allowed MIF to create more dynamic project pages and host online artworks, this included a 3D replica of Marta Minujín's *Big Ben Lying Down* sculpture, and her archive. It also allowed MIF to embed an online gallery of *Portrait Of Black Britain* featuring a LiDAR scan of the Arndale Centre. *We Dwell In Possibility (WeDIP)*, the latest Virtual Factory commission, was launched at the start of the festival with excellent press coverage and a very strong reception from the indie gaming community. At over 12,000 plays *WeDIP* has performed better than MIF's previous two game commissions – likely since it can be played directly in the browser on most devices. MIF saw a diverse range of coverage from Gayming Magazine, Pink News, Huck, The White Pube, Vice and Kotaku.

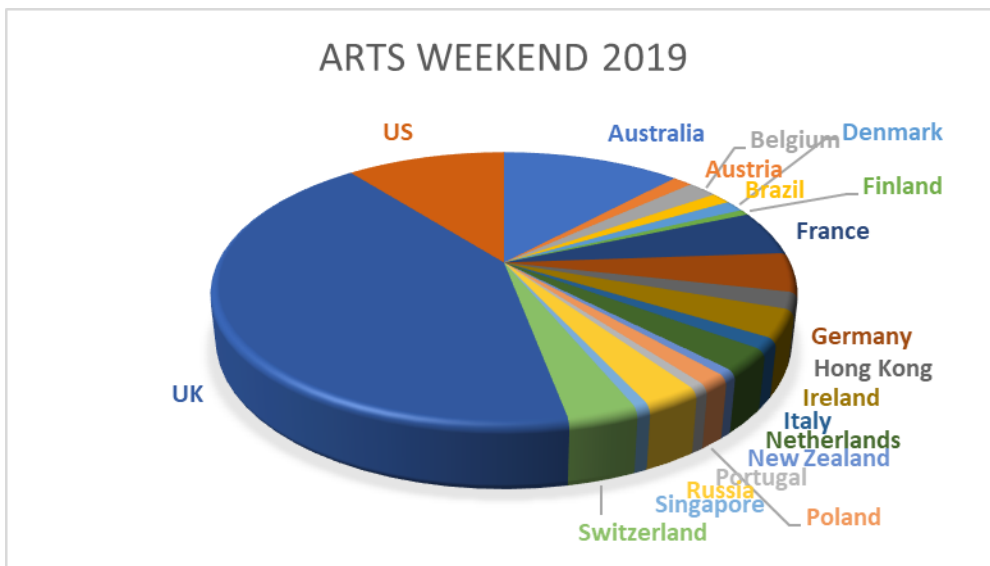
### Artists and Partners

- 4.31 Arts Weekend, held on the middle weekend of each Festival, traditionally offers the opportunity to artists and partners from around the world to come to Manchester to visit the city, the Festival and find out more about The Factory. In 2019 MIF had more than 150 in-person attendees (but with a bias towards UK organisations) but with international travel still largely impossible during this year's festival those numbers were greatly reduced with around 20 visitors in addition to a cohort UK Festival Directors, who met in Manchester as part of the Festival.
- 4.32 To continue this international engagement, MIF created an alternative digital event called *24-Hour Arty People* to engage those international visitors not able to attend in person, whilst using this as an opportunity to engage and support future international arts leaders by working with partners to identify individuals and then inviting them to join the event.
- 4.33 The event itself ran live for exactly 24 hours to allow the invited international audience to join from their time zone during working hours if they wished (or to stay with us for as long as they liked). It showcased both the work of the current festival and those artists and works in development allowing MIF to begin the process of engaging with potential partners for upcoming projects. The aim was to give those attending a sense of the 'feel' of the Festival both with regard to the work being created and the energy of the city itself.
- 4.34 Digital attendees came from a wide range of countries including: Australia (3), Austria (1), Canada (4), China (11) Denmark (1), France (1), Germany (4), Hong Kong (8), Iceland (1), Japan (7), Nepal (1), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (1), Russia (3), Singapore (5), Switzerland (2), Taiwan (16), Thailand (1), UAE (1), USA (10).

As can be shown from the charts below, the 24-hour Arty People event dramatically widened international reach in comparison with similar events at previous Festivals.



24-hour Arty People 2021 (artist and partner event) – attendance by country



Arts Weekend 2019 (artist and partner event) – attendance by country

*‘At a time when people are bound in their countries and time zones, this marathon was really truly inspiring for bridging space with time.’ - Stephanie Cheung - Curator of the Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture’s MaD (Make a Difference) platform*

*‘Congratulations on a successful event! it was a useful alternative to travel in these times.’ - Judith Greer – Director International Programmes, Sharjah Art Foundation*

- 4.35 COVID-19 greatly reduced opportunities for international co-commissioning as lockdowns impacted budgets and border closures and local hardships made partners reluctant to commit money to international projects. MIF did however successfully secure a contribution of £40,000 from Stanford Live at Stanford University for Arcadia with an outdoor presentation planned for Spring 2023. MIF also secured four partners for *Postcards from Now*, the first ever

international digital co-commission; these were Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York), Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris), Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay (Singapore) and Sadler's Wells (London). As well as being available online, two of the films from the *Postcards from Now* series – *Breathless Puppets* and *Download and Run Zoom* – have since been screened in-person at the Biennale Danza in Venice. Local partners this Festival included Contact, HOME, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Jewish Museum, Manchester Libraries and the Whitworth Art Gallery.

- 4.36 Since the close of MIF21, MIF has confirmed touring presentations for two MIF21 projects later this year: Virtual Factory's *We Dwell on Possibilities*, will be presented as part of Queer Lisboa's online programme; and *Poet Slash Artist* will be presented by Kunsthal Charlottenborg in December 2021 on more than 700 sites across Denmark.
- 4.37 In addition, a wide range of presentations from the 2019 festival interrupted by COVID will continue in 2022 and beyond. It is expected that additional projects from MIF21 will be picked up for international distribution in the coming months.
- 5.0 Objective 2: To bring the most extraordinary artists from around the world to Manchester to create diverse and inspiring new work – made in Manchester and shared across the globe.**
- 5.1 *"Every two years since launching in 2007, Manchester International Festival puts the northern English city on the global stage with an outstanding range of new work from the world's top performing and visual artists."* Joanne Shurvell, Forbes, 9 July 2021
- 5.2 Despite the obvious challenges of presenting the work of international artists during MIF21, through a combination of careful planning and embracing of new technology, the Festival continued to bring the work of a global roster of artists to Manchester. Almost 3million people experienced the Festival either in person or online as MIF presented 68 events across 18 days.
- 5.3 The Festival opened with *Sea Change* choreographed by French choreographer Boris Charmatz and his dancers. Working with 150 participants from across Manchester, performing on Deansgate in the city centre, *Sea Change* made for a unique and captivating response to the pandemic - *"an ambitious new dance piece that united Deansgate in a celebration of togetherness"* Alex Mistlin, The Guardian, 2 July 2021.
- 5.4 More than half of this year's MIF programme was free, with a range of public artworks by internationally acclaimed artists at prominent locations and in neighbourhoods across Manchester.
- 5.5 In the first major UK commission by Argentine artist Marta Minujín, *Big Ben Lying Down with Political Books* gave us an extraordinary new landmark for the duration of the Festival. Visitors could explore *Big Ben Lying Down* outside for free around the clock – and journey inside to experience a new film and

soundtrack created by Minujín for the Festival. During the closing weekend, *Big Ben Lying Down* was taken apart – and thousands of people came to Piccadilly Gardens to take home one of the 20,000 books for free.

- 5.6 Christine Sun Kim created a series of installations that captioned the world surrounding us - from descriptions installed on buildings, to a plane with a banner caption flying over the city. The American artist is based in Berlin and the team embraced technology to source, plan and map the installation with Kim. Playful, powerful and political, *Captioning the City* invited us to consider what makes up the essence of a city – and to experience the world in a whole new dimension.
- 5.7 The *Poet Slash Artist* exhibition was an exploration of poets who work with visual art and visual artists who work with poetry. Throughout the history of art and literature, there are more words and images passing between us today than ever before – and *Poet Slash Artist*, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Lemn Sissay, brought together cultures, continents, languages and generations with work by 25 artists from across the Globe.
- 5.8 Rashid Rana has coined the term *EART* to describe moments of self-expression beyond the arts: ways of thinking, being and acting creatively in real life. During MIF 21, the acclaimed Pakistani artist considered how the concept could be applied everywhere from social media to real estate development. And alongside it, Rana opened a pop-up shop at nearby Hanover Street, stocking products that turn capitalism inside out and consumerism upside down.
- 5.9 Commissioned and created at the height of the global lockdown, *Postcards from Now* presented the work of leading international artists of every stripe – choreographers, musicians, visual artists, theatre-makers and animators. These five films explored everything from community to communication, patriarchy to power. And in very different ways, they considered the question that people have all been asking themselves and others: what happens next?
- 5.10 In total, MIF worked with 38 international artists in 2021. While there were less live theatre and dance performances than in the past, the development of hybrid projects such as *All of This Unreal Time*, and digital projects including *Virtual Factory*, meant that the roster of leading performing artists, directors and choreographers in this year's festival remained world-class.

*“About as diverse a platform for international art as you could imagine. New commissioned works – in genres from music, dance and film to exhibitions and outdoor installations – reflect diversity, and many tackle pressing global issues. But the Festival also reaches out beyond elite art audiences, offering something for everyone.”* Herbert Wright, CoBo Social, 15th July 2021

- 6.0 **Objective 3: To connect in new and ever deeper ways with the city and region of Manchester, increasing the range and diversity of those engaging with the Festival, with an ever more visible and transformative**



## presence in the city.

6.1 *"That there was a festival at all this year is remarkable and is testament to a huge amount of work and dedication by all at MIF. That there was the number and range of events there was, that so many of them were free and that many were also available online is, to my mind, outstanding and shows some really creative thinking about what is possible and how to make the festival accessible and relevant to a wider audience. Brilliant!"* - Member of MIF's People's Forum

*"After 15 months of working from home and living alone I've thoroughly enjoyed seeing old faces and meeting new ones! The festival completely woke me up! Less anxious, more confidence, more goals! I'm just sad it's every two years but looking forward to see what The Factory brings!"* - Volunteer

*"When you call it Your Festival, Your City I actually did think that I really did, it's been a great thing to happen in my life and let's see where it leads"* - Neighbourhood Organiser

*"This was my rehabilitation back into social interaction after three lockdowns and it reinvigorated me. My confidence and my positive attitude are back! It was great to mix with strangers, working together on seemingly random but no less important things and being part of MIF rather than just a passive consumer of the festival. I'd forgotten how welcoming and wonderful other people can be and how much fun can be had when you're working together"*

6.2 Over the last twelve months, opportunities to engage with residents across Manchester in the run up to MIF21 were significantly challenged. Following a series of ongoing lockdowns, public hesitancy around any kind of social interaction indicated that there would be a significant impact on planned programmes of work for MIF21. MIF's Creative Engagement team had to draw on new ways of working, developing creative and more agile ways of bringing people together.

6.3 Engagement activity consequently focused on six key areas of community involvement including the following;

- Participation programme (opportunities to take part in five MIF Commissions in a safe and socially distanced way);
- Co-creation programme (co-designing commissions or activity during the festival including our community led talks and discussions programme "Looking Forward to Tomorrow");
- GM Artist Development activity alongside substantial investment in the Independent Artist initiative;
- Volunteering Programme;
- Community Building programmes; and
- Educational activity.

6.4 Year-round activity pivoted online with community chats previously hosted in community centres now taking place in zoom rooms (*Have a Word*); Greater Manchester artists invited to entertain us to create mini Festivals in their

homes online (*Festival in My House and Yours*); regular networking, discussions and support for the freelance creative community took place in online space (*Meet the Artist, Lockdown Conversations* and *Matchmakers*); and ongoing legacy activity co-designed with former commission beneficiaries including participants from Schools of Integration and Manchester Street Poem. Emergency response support was also provided during the pandemic to partner organisations Mustard Tree and Rainbow Surprise.

- 6.5 MIF's pilot Neighbourhood Organiser programme was launched in early 2021, recruiting and employing community representatives across Greater Manchester to take an active role in connecting MIF with their local communities and vice versa. The Neighbourhood Organisers were the inspiration and the cover stars of MIF's "Your City Your Festival" campaign with the programme resulting in new partnerships and relationships across Wythenshawe, Whalley Range and North Manchester. Local residents from these areas benefitted from free tickets, performance opportunities, employment and training.
- 6.6 Engagement with schools was scaled up in the run up to the Festival to help address a health and wellbeing epidemic in schools. Two new flagship delivery partnerships were developed; one with new MIF Sponsor Therme, and a second with Manchester United Foundation. Therme's "Today I Feel Like Manchester" programme involved just under 1,000 primary age school children across Greater Manchester at schools in Collyhurst, Longsight, Baguley, Crumpsall, Monsall, Levenshulme and Stretford. Each child received a wooden art box and were instructed by Berlin based Danish artist Jeppe Hein to paint their breath and a picture of how they were feeling. The paintings will be transferred to 1,000 tiles that will feature in Therme's new health and wellbeing spa to open in Trafford next year (all participating children will receive a complimentary ticket to view their artwork).
- 6.7 MIF's collaboration with Manchester United Foundation resulted in a Talent Showcase at Festival Square, involving sixteen young people from across Greater Manchester. An ongoing relationship is now being developed with the Foundation on new MIF Commission *The Walk* taking place at Castlefield Bowl in November.
- 6.8 Local schools from North Manchester (Holy Trinity Primary School) and Hulme (Rolls Crescent) were also invited to attend free events and workshops including Cerys Matthews' *Catch a Fire* poetry workshops and *The Global Playground*.
- 6.9 Many of MIF21's Commissions took their starting point from residents in Manchester. Cephas Williams' *Portrait of Black Britain* took place in the Arndale Centre; a publicly accessible gallery featuring extraordinary imagery of 50 residents across Manchester. *I Love You Too*, a collaboration between Manchester Libraries and MIF featuring South African artist Kemang Wa Lehulere, featured over 150 love letters from Manchester residents to the city. MIF's opening event invited 120 non-professional dancers to collaborate with French choreographer Boris Charmatz to create *Sea Change* – a performative

encapsulation of everything people had experienced in the last eighteen months.

6.10 More so than any other year, MIF21 played a very significant role in bringing people back to the city and reconnecting after a period of sustained separation. Nearly 6,000 people participated in MIF21 activity (5,761) creating just over 25,000 of total engagement hours. 440 Greater Manchester residents volunteering to support the delivery of the Festival with 167 artists accessing a skills, training or network session. Every ward across Manchester had residents taking part in engagement activity with Hulme, Harpurhey, Ardwick, Moss Side and Rusholme all showing high levels of engagement.

6.11 The external evaluation stated that MIF's widening participation programmes improved residents' confidence, health, wellbeing with an increased impact on their lives through creative engagement and development:

*"Virtually all participants interviewed described how the activities had helped them to develop their self-confidence generally. Many participants stated how the experiences are helping them to reconnect (or connect for the first time 'since school') with their own creative skills and that this experience is helping to build their self-belief in either seeking new creative experiences for enjoyment, creative training for career development purposes or just generally to go on to use their creative skills in everyday life"*

6.12 In addition, increases in connectivity, social and cultural capital could be observed through the public's interaction with the Festival this year;

*"Participants expressed their unanimous appreciation of the quality of care, support and encouragement demonstrated by the staff team and artists in practice. They valued the opportunity to work with other people from across Manchester; to meet new people that they would not necessarily come into contact with in their day to day lives; to make new, authentic, friendships and the encouragement (and the vision) to get more involved in other creative activities within their communities".* Ayla Suveren, Independent Evaluator

6.13 Furthermore, the evaluation highlighted that;

*"Participants (of all activity) can clearly recognise and describe the impact or key differences that engagement with MIF has made to their lives - professional and personal. Examples given include influencing and informing career decisions, confidence to pursue professional goals, becoming more knowledgeable about the arts, the opportunity to apply their skills in different (and related) areas, gaining additional work opportunities elsewhere in the city, the professional value of their affiliation with MIF. Most people state that their personal confidence has increased, along with other skills such as patience, the fulfilment and sense of achievement gained from doing something outside of their comfort zone. Other people cited that the opportunity had enabled them to 'jump start' their lives – reclaiming their self after trauma and a way of reconnecting with self after major changes in life. Other people cited that they had become a better communicator and that the*

*experiences / impact had even affected their choice of where to live (i.e. not move away from Manchester)”*

- 6.14 This was further validated through individual participant comments as follows;

*“My family say it’s changed me – it’s put a bit of fire back in me”*

*“The more I put in, the more I started to break down the constraints I put on myself”*

*“This (experience) will be with me forever...it has made me not feel afraid to step up now in other area so my life”*

- 6.15 MIF21’s engagement activities also continue to have strong representation from the communities of Manchester with 41% of participants (who provided data) identifying themselves from Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British or Other backgrounds, 20% identifying themselves as having a disability and 44% aged under 35. With Greater Manchester artists who took part, 30% identified as from Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British or Other backgrounds, 16% identified themselves as having a disability and 41% were aged under 35 years.

- 6.16 Satisfaction ratings continue to be impressively high with 95% of volunteers and 87% of participants rating their experience as excellent or good.

- 6.17 Whilst the engagement and volunteering programmes have continued to expand and diversify, there remain some areas of the city with low levels of engagement both in terms of audiences (based on ticket bookers and survey respondents) and participation. These are wards which are found to have overall lower levels of engagement in culture in the Council’s annual Cultural Impact Survey and include Charlestown, Sharston Baguley, Northenden and Brooklands. The MIF Creative Engagement team will continue to work on increasing engagement in these wards for the next festival.

### Access

- 6.18 At the 2021 Festival, MIF delivered 29 access performances (those with additional access provision such as BSL interpretation, captioning or audio description) across 10 productions.

- 6.19 This is fewer than in 2019, which saw 42 performances representing 13 productions. Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, a much greater proportion of the MIF21 programme was composed of public art commissions which did not offer the same opportunities for ‘traditional’ access performances, but were still accessible by nature. To guide audiences through these commissions, MIF produced an Access Map, as well as a BSL introduction to the programme which highlighted both BSL-interpreted and otherwise accessible work to Deaf and BSL user audience members. This meant that 45.5% of the productions offered some form of traditional access performance across their MIF21 run, a slight increase compared to 45% at MIF19.

- 6.20 At the 2021 Festival, MIF were able to build on good practice developed during lockdown, and offer access provision equally across live in-person and online presentations (14 in-person access performances and 15 online/digital). In addition, MIF captioned all speech-based digital content, as well as live-captioning the *24hr Arty Party* online event. This felt particularly important in light of the high numbers of disabled people still shielding/exercising caution around in-person events due to both the pandemic and existing health conditions – and is a practice that MIF intend to continue even as live audiences begin to return.
- 6.21 MIF worked with Deaf consultants wherever possible alongside interpreters on BSL translations and performances, and had a local Mancunian Deaf presenter, Raffle Julien, hosting the BSL flyer film.
- 6.22 There was a dedicated Volunteer Collaboration Group focused on access who worked with the Volunteering team. The group provided invaluable insights into improving the accessibility of the MIF21 volunteering experience. They focused primarily on elements of volunteer recruitment and induction, meeting days and digital training sessions.
- 6.23 MIF21 also provided:
- Wheelchair spaces at all venues
  - Accessible viewing platform at Festival Square
  - Wheelchair accessible picnic tables at Festival Square
  - Detailed online access information for all of venues and shows
  - Online booking for all access bookers
  - Dedicated access ticketline
  - Member of the Ticketing team dedicated to access bookings and enquiries
  - Concessionary ticket price for disabled people
  - Free PA/essential companion tickets as required
  - Alternate routes where needed
  - Alternate formats (e.g. large print) as needed
  - Access stewards as needed at live events
  - Disability awareness training for key customer-facing staff pre-Festival
  - Disability awareness induction for front of house staff and volunteers
  - Specialist disability awareness masterclass for Volunteer Academy attendees
- 6.24 Overall, in-person access bookings were low at MIF21 (perhaps an indication of people's reluctance to return to live events), however, accessible online shows were well-used – and MIF intend to continue offering both in-person and online provision in future. Word-of-mouth feedback from those who did attend in-person was positive, with Jacqui Beckford's BSL interpretation of *Notes on Grief* being particularly well received.

**7.0 Objective 4: To develop the brand, profile and awareness of MIF/The Factory locally, nationally and internationally in readiness for opening.**

- 7.1 MIF 21 was the last Manchester International Festival to take place before the opening of the city's new flagship cultural venue The Factory. As such it provided a citywide and international platform to build profile, raise awareness and introduce elements of The Factory brand to audiences, partners, press and stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally.
- 7.2 Inevitably COVID-19 has created challenge in profile building, principally because there are still significant COVID-19 safety and social distancing guidelines in place that limit the number of people who can visit. However, the Festival included a number of events designed to introduce The Factory and be indicative of the ambition and type of artistic work it will support.
- 7.3 *Arcadia* was the first project commissioned for The Factory building itself, created by the artist and director Deborah Shaw. *Arcadia* was a large-scale installation project spanning over The Factory warehouse and auditorium exploring the tension between industrialisation and natural world, principally through a soundscape that filled The Factory with nature poetry drawn from across the world. Installed over a weekend to minimise disruption to working schedules, the installation was open to the public through the night from 11pm on 10th July to 6am on 11th July. It provided a unique opportunity for audiences (almost 1,000 people attended) and press to access The Factory site for the first time, raising awareness of the artistic work to be produced there. Laing O'Rourke worked tirelessly and creatively with MIF to ensure *Arcadia* was successfully installed in the building. The press campaign achieved a range of preview and review coverage including high profile interviews with Deborah Warner on BBC Radio 4's Front Row, The Guardian, and The Times, and previews and reviews in BBC 6 Music, Art Review, Creative Boom, BBC Online, and others. The marketing campaign for *Arcadia* - whilst having national and international reach - primarily focused on raising awareness with local audiences, including those living within a mile radius of the building. The estimated reach for the marketing activity was 4,016,199.

*'Late last night, Deborah Warner's #Arcadia was wonderfully calm & composed, offering temporary escape from the clamour of the city life. Cleverly showcasing The Factory, it created something dreamlike in the middle of what is still a building site #MIF21' - Arcadia audience member*

- 7.4 Daytime tours of The Factory were given to local and national stakeholders on Saturday 11th July. Several tours of the main warehouse and auditorium spaces engaged over local residents, MIF's Young People's Forum, Peoples Forum and Neighbourhood Organisers, Manchester City Council elected members and officers, Arts Council England staff and local and national cultural organisations.
- 7.5 Online The Factory was profiled during *24 Hour Arty People*, MIF's 24 digital event targeting national and international arts organisations, of which 200 accepted with over 100 logging on from 23 countries. As part of the event an interview took place between MIF's Creative Director Mark Ball, lead architect for The Factory, OMA's Ellen van Loon, and the creator of *Arcadia* Deborah

Warner.

- 7.6 The third Virtual Factory project by Robert Yang, *We Dwell in Possibility*, launched during MIF21, providing an opportunity to signpost the digital ambition of The Factory. Building on the profile of the previous two iterations (*Your Progress will be Saved* and *The Neon Hieroglyph*), the press campaign generated significant coverage in the likes of Huck, VICE, Metro and more. To date an estimated 12,000 have played *We Dwell in Possibility*.

### Communications and brand-building

- 7.7 A key focus for marketing during MIF21 was to raise awareness of The Factory with local, national and international audiences. The new Factory brand was included across numerous MIF21 assets including a 200,000 highlight leaflets distributed door to door across Greater Manchester; tote bags worn by staff, volunteers, artists and sponsors; dressing at *Arcadia* and Festival Square; editorial inclusion on all MIF e-newsletters and across social media channels; on animated outdoor digital screens, paid social advertising and all digital trailers and live broadcast. The estimated reach for the marketing activity was 10,027,149. Creative Director Mark Ball also briefed MIF Neighbourhood Organisers about The Factory, each of whom are advocates for The Factory in their own communities across Manchester. In the post festival survey 63% of people said they had heard of The Factory (an increase of 4% from MIF19), and of these 86% were aware of its connection to MIF, and 58% of all respondents said they would be very likely to attend an event at The Factory. The survey results indicate a need to continue to raise awareness of plans for The Factory, particularly as the city emerges from the pandemic news-cycle. The full launch of the new MIF/Factory brand in 2022 will be a key moment in this regard.
- 7.8 MIF21 created a platform for raising awareness of The Factory to press, audiences (on and offline) and stakeholders. Press coverage included a major feature in the Financial Times, linked with *Arcadia*, exploring the potential impact of The Factory on Manchester and the region, and featured interviews with Ellen van Loon, John McGrath and Deborah Warner.

## **8.0 KPIs, Sustainability and Financial Performance**

### Economic impact

- 8.1 Manchester International Festival supports economic growth by substantially raising the city's profile, drawing in national and international visitors, and attracting inward investment by positioning the Manchester as a leading cultural city with an ability to showcase major large-scale events. The effects of COVID-19 have however necessarily meant that the economic impact of the 2021 Festival was lower than previous years – in particular because of lower audience expenditure and lower volunteer numbers.
- 8.2 As a result of this the total economic impact of MIF 2021 is estimated to be £19.5million. This compares with an original target of £25million (the pre-

COVID target being £35million). By way of comparison the economic impact of the 2019 festival was £50.2million.

- 8.3 Delivering 18 original commissions with leading international artists and additional special events through 68 events over 18 days, the Festival attracted over 1,462,244 in-person attendees. This can be broken down into;
- 20,405 attendees at paid ticketed events (excluding video on demand)
  - 50,010 attendees at free and ticketed events (excluding outdoor public realm works around the city);
  - 1,389,784 total attendees at public realm artworks in major spaces; and
  - 2,045 paid ticketed Video on Demand (VOD) audiences.
- 44% of the audience came from outside Greater Manchester. For ticketed events, 63% of available capacity was achieved, and 57% of events were free to attend.

- 8.4 Over 1.2m users actively interacted with digital content and this content reached 187 countries (excluding the UK).

- 8.5 MIF exceeded its KPIs for diversity with 52% of lead commissioned artists from an Asian or Asian British, or Black or Black British background, 52% commissioned female artists and at least one commission from a disabled artist.

#### Income – Revenue & Grants

- 8.6 Arts Council England continues to support the Festival as one of its National Portfolio organisations and invested £20.4m over the two-year cycle, of which £18.3m is a revenue contribution to the running of The Factory and to build Manchester International Festival's organisational capacity to run The Factory and to prepare for its opening.

- 8.7 Box office income achieved during the Festival was in line with the reduced forecast, based on socially distanced capacity, and was estimated at £206,073, compared with £1,220,280 in 2019.

- 8.8 Co-commissioning income and co-producing Value in Kind support was in line with the COVID-19 impacted forecast and came in at an estimated £470,897, in cash and co-production contribution towards the cost of the artistic programme. This compares with just under £2,213,166 for the last festival.

- 8.9 Building on a successful track record of securing funding from sponsorship and individual giving, the Development team continued to secure a good level of funding from these income streams for MIF21. While it was a difficult climate for raising income, many previous MIF supporters as well as some new partners recognised the value of MIF21 to the city and were keen to offer support.

- 8.10 The final amount raised by the Development team for MIF21 was £1.5m, including Value in Kind. This is in line with the revised target to account for the impact of COVID, and is a 37% reduction on the £2.37m raised for MIF19, the



biggest festival to date. This includes partnerships with 36 sponsors, with ongoing support from returning sponsors Bruntwood (at top tier Official Partner level), Electricity North West (Official Provider), Selfridges (Official Provider), Lendlease (Gold) and Aviva (Gold), alongside new sponsorship from Therme (Official Provider), Co-op (Gold), and PZ Cussons (Gold). Significant media Partnerships with BBC, Guardian and Manchester Evening News continued. A number of businesses offered value in kind support as venues (such as Manchester Arndale, Laing O'Rourke),

- 8.11 19 individuals joined as supporters across Commissioning Circle, Patrons and Pioneers generating an income of £64,500. 289 individuals joined as MIF21 Membership raising £14,536, and online donations alongside ticket sales contributed an additional £11,547.60.
- 8.12 Looking ahead to The Factory and MIF23, the Development team are building on existing successful packages for generating revenue income from sponsorship and individual giving to also develop new opportunities. They continue to cultivate relationships with MIF21 and previous MIF supporters, including a number of sponsors and donors who were unable to support MIF21 due to the difficult climate surrounding COVID-19, but have expressed strong interest in re-joining in 2022. In addition, the team are cultivating a prospect pipeline of new potential sponsors and donors, and also working collaboratively with The Factory Trust capital fundraising team on an integrated strategy to cross-pollinate opportunities.

#### Financial outturn

- 8.13 MIF has historically run a biennial Festival so budgets have been prepared over a two-year cycle. However, as MIF is currently in a period of transition in the lead up to the opening of The Factory, the budget for the two-year cycle ending 30 September 2021 (which includes the 2021 Festival) also includes some Factory-related costs which are being incurred to ensure that the organisation is well prepared to open and operate the venue. As MIF will both operate The Factory and continue to put on a biennial festival as a single organisation, an integrated budget for the two years ending 30 September 2021 was prepared (i.e. there are not separate budgets for the Festival and The Factory), as the same staff are working on both the Festival and The Factory.
- 8.14 Final reconciliations of the other key Festival-related income and expenditure are currently being undertaken, but the overall net expenditure on the 2021 Festival programme is projected to be in line with the budget. Similarly, the overall level of Factory-related expenditure incurred during the two-year period is also expected to be in line with the budget.
- 8.15 It should be noted that MIF has delivered this on budget result in the context of a uniquely unpredictable environment, with planning for multiple contingencies needed, and income and expenditure streams under constant revision. Re-budgeting was a constant activity throughout the period from March 2020, with huge effort and commitment from all sectors to achieve a stable financial

position in the run up to The Factory.

## 9.0 Zero Carbon

- 9.1 Since the recruitment of an experienced Environmental Sustainability Manager in October 2020, MIF has developed a new Environmental Sustainability Policy, signed off and published on the website in January 2021. This policy is aligned with global targets (the UN Sustainable Development Goals and 2015 Paris Agreement), national policy (the Climate Change Act) and local policy (Manchester's Zero Carbon 2038 target).
- 9.2 The policy is the foundation of a five-year action plan across all areas of MIF's activity with clear and costed targets, milestones and KPIs, roles and responsibilities. The headline ambition, captured in the business plan, is to be on a committed path towards zero-carbon activity by 2025, using operational data from 2023 (the first year of the Factory) as the benchmark. This will include assessment of the carbon footprint of the construction of The Factory. The plan also includes actions to inspire audiences to think and act more sustainably through the artistic programme, community engagement and in-venue behaviour and innovations. Progress with the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan will be reported to the board on an annual basis.
- 9.3 In MIF21, the Environmental Sustainability Manager coordinated the following activities and initiatives to help reduce the environmental footprint of the organisation and engage audiences.
- 9.4 *Big Ben Lying Down* benefited from sustainable material research - plastic containing 30% recycled content was used for books bags and structural wrap. The material - Sustane - is part of a closed loop of production, and materials were returned to the manufacturers to be recycled after use. This was communicated to audiences at the artwork and when people were collecting books.
- 9.5 For the first time, no additional skips were hired for waste management and the majority of plastic waste was repurposed into boards intended as a replacement for ply sheets. The majority of project materials and items were reused either through community groups, donations and reuse networks. 175 PVC lamppost banners were donated to Plastic Shed who run creative, educational plastic recycling workshops. Plastic Shed also built a relationship with MIF's supplier, ensuring a source of material and reducing waste. Developing circular economy approaches to materials and resources is a key focus for MIF.
- 9.6 The first MIF audience travel survey, at *Sea Change*, gathered data from approximately 10% of the audience. The survey showed that 70% of journeys were by public transport (bus, train, tram) or active travel (walking, cycling). The overall travel carbon footprint of this audience sample was just under 1 tonne (901.19 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e).

- 9.7 Starting to gather data across MIF projects and events will help MIF to calculate the organisation's carbon footprint. Work is underway to calculate the carbon footprint of all artist and organisational travel in 2021. This will enable the development of robust carbon reduction targets. As in MIF19, two electric cars were provided by Electricity Northwest.
- 9.8 Along with the Council, MIF invested in making grid-connected electricity available from the National Football Museum to Festival Square in Cathedral Gardens. The works are permanent, meaning that not only could the festival run stages and cabins from grid connected electricity – rather than diesel generators, but all events happening on Cathedral Gardens in future will have access to this power source.
- 9.9 All cups, cutlery and food serveware at Festival Square were compostable and were sent to anaerobic digestion for processing; this diverted the serveware waste from landfill or incineration.
- 9.10 Much of the environmental sustainability work in MIF21 feeds into plans for operation in The Factory – particularly around material and energy use. Key actions for future years include working with industry partners to test and pilot innovative sustainability technology in the Factory, visualising real time energy performance as an audience engagement tool and implementing circular economy approaches with materials and waste management suppliers.
- 9.11 Through a coordinating presence in the Manchester Arts Sustainability Team, MIF will continue to share knowledge and best practice across the sector in the region. The organisation is also represented in national networks through the Theatre Green Book and the Environmental Sustainability Manager is often invited to share expertise either directly with organisations or through speaking engagements.

## **10.0 Employment and Skills**

- 10.1 The Festival creates and sustains a significant number of jobs. 69 staff now work for the Festival all year round and a further 83 were contracted by the Festival for a minimum of three weeks during the Festival period as well as an additional 62 office-based freelancers. In addition, to deliver the festival, MIF contracted a further 680 people who worked as performers, stage managers, front of house staff or technicians on MIF commissions. Provision of freelance and fixed-term employment was seen as a crucial contribution of the festival to COVID-19 recovery for the cultural and creative sector, and was one of the factors informing the decision to ensure the largest-possible festival in the original planned dates.
- 10.2 To build capacity in preparation for opening The Factory, MIF has put in place a programme of organisational development and change to support this growth. This involves a new organisational design and staffing structure which is being implemented incrementally. With an approximate 50 new roles to be recruited over the next 12 months, and more in the final run up to venue opening, including casual staff roles for front of house.

- 10.3 MIF has also implemented a comprehensive review of recruitment, induction and staff training processes – committing significant resources to diversifying the staff base, encouraging transferable skills into the sector and targeting regions and demographics which have not previously engaged with the Festival.
- 10.4 This has resulted in strong diversity across both the core and contracted staff in comparison with other Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisations and is an area MIF intends to continue to develop moving forward. With strategy around Positive Action in recruitment, working cross-departmentally to expand networks and reach new potential candidates, and building in early careers engagement to outreach work.
- 10.5 MIF are committed to paying the Manchester Living Wage to employees and aim to become an accredited Real Living Wage employer moving forward. The organisation guarantees employees a minimum number of hours and does not use zero-hour contracts.
- 10.6 MIF has increased the support given to new Freelancers joining the Festival via our process of integration into the organisation and culture. This has been achieved through additional training and the development of a Freelance Handbook which provides guidance to everyone contracted. The purpose of this was to enrich engagement with wider freelance networks as well as to support those coming back into work after a period of unemployment due to COVID-19.
- 10.7 The Creative Engagement and Artist Liaison Teams, as well as the Producing and Technical departments, were very mindful of the challenges in re-entering the workforce for some, post-COVID, and provided a range of support and advice to artists and other freelancers. MIF continue to provide a range of freelance artist support, and are exploring ways to provide ongoing support, including professional development, to the wider freelance community as part of our work on The Factory. The core staff are well-networked into freelance communities and also provide a range of informal support.
- 10.8 The Factory Academy continues to work with a range of Manchester venues and employers to develop exciting opportunities to learn new skills. 141 people completed a Factory Academy programme with partners such as HOME, Sick! Festival, Eight Engines, Vision in Colour and Dock10, between October 2020 and July 2021. During the period March 2021 – September 2021 there have been 12 paid interns at MIF along with 5 apprentices (x2 Royal Exchange, x1 Lowry Theatre, x1 HOME, x1 MMU) from January 2020 to present date.
- 10.9 COVID-19 restrictions limited the volume of work experience opportunities linked to programmes of delivery. Due to the restrictions all Factory Academy programmes were delivered in virtual classrooms, using Microsoft Teams to ensure the programmes were accessible to all. To minimise the effects of digital poverty all students were provided access to wifi-enabled iPADS and

laptops where required.

- 10.10 The Factory Academy will continue to scale up and broaden its membership and invite partners from the wider creative industries. This wider membership will feed into sector wide conversations around skills shortages, programme co-design, keep learning industry current and cement the ambition of the Factory Academy for being the destination for programme design, programme delivery and the gateway to opportunity for all.
- 10.11 To diversify the arts and creative industries - by creating new entry points that do not require degree-level qualifications - remains a critical ambition and between now and 2023. The Factory Academy aims to have established itself as a champion for underrepresented creatives and underserved communities, by creating credible pathways into opportunities that improve life chances, while in turn, supporting organisations in Manchester to access richly diverse, and often hidden talent, and embed inclusive skills, training and recruitment practices into their respective organisations.
- 10.12 Development of all programmes will continue to be guided by MIFs principles centred on Access and Inclusion, with accessibility being an absolute criteria for success, and beneficiaries reporting underrepresented characteristics in greater numbers than Manchester's demographics. This will be achieved through continued collaborative working practice with colleagues in Creative Engagement, and their established community engagement networks and continued oversight and co-authoring of elements of learning and training content from Access colleagues.
- 10.13 Understanding that travel from locations outside the centre of Manchester can be a barrier to underserved communities looking to engage in creative practice, and the visibility of opportunity, the Factory Academy aims to have established satellite learning hubs co-located in community spaces in underserved wards across Greater Manchester. These hubs will be where local people can access world-class skills and training programmes, and in turn, job opportunities which may otherwise feel out of reach, and ensure the Factory Academy is fully integrated into the heart of community.

## **11.0 Manchester International Festival 2023**

- 11.1 Planning is already underway for the July 2023 Manchester International Festival. In recognition of the expected capacity constraints with MIF23 close to the opening of The Factory, MIF has reviewed how to deliver the 2023 festival in this unique year to create a focused and impactful programme that continues to celebrate the city and drive international and national impact.
- 11.2 MIF23 will consist of:
  - 5-7 new projects commissioned and produced by MIF, including:
    - A large-scale participatory opening event building on the successes of MIF17 (*What Is The City But The People*). MIF19 (*Bells for Peace*) and MIF21 (*Sea Change*)
    - A commissioned work by an international artist, presented in

#### Manchester

- A commissioned work by a Manchester based artist, presented in Manchester
- Festival Square will be relocated to its new home outside The Factory, featuring a free programme of music and community events with a pop-up food and beverage offer.
- A ticketed live music programme running for the duration of MIF23 in The Factory's Auditorium
- 6-8 events and productions produced by Manchester-based cultural institution co-commissioned by MIF23. This expands on previous success with the Whitworth, City Art Gallery, the Jewish Museum and others.
- A series of artist residencies across Greater Manchester focused on ideas and projects for MIF25.

11.3 Planning for MIF23 will take place alongside preparations for the opening of The Factory, which will include developing the skills, audiences, artistic vision, community engagement and commercial revenue plans required to deliver the Factory's Vision. This will be underpinned by the submission of a revised business plan for The Factory which will be submitted to Arts Council England in December 2021.

### **12.0 Future Manchester City Council support for the Festival and The Factory**

12.1 The Council provides annual funding support of £1.5million to Manchester International Festival. This was agreed for a 10-year period as part of the 2020/21 budget proposals and is part of the Council's commitment to match the c. £9.8million ongoing revenue support for The Factory / Manchester International Festival from Arts Council England and other government grants.

12.2 The ten-year funding arrangement will be delivered in two parts; an interim agreement prior to the opening of Factory, followed by a longer-term funding agreement for Factory. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods, Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer and the City Solicitor will negotiate and finalise the terms of these arrangements in consultation with the two Deputy Leaders. The funding will be subject to confirmation of revenue funding from Arts Council England, and will contain terms aligned to those of the third party funding agreements with Arts Council England and/or others, including break clauses aligned to Arts Council England funding cycles and decisions.

### **13.0 Contributing to a Zero-Carbon City**

13.1 Manchester International Festivals' Environmental Sustainability Policy and Five-Year Action Plan set out how the organisation will contribute to the city's zero carbon target, both in the delivery of the festival and in operating The Factory. Progress is reported on an annual basis against a series of targets, milestones and key performance indicators

### **14.0 Contributing to the Our Manchester Strategy**

### **(a) A thriving and sustainable city**

- 14.1 Manchester International Festival supports economic growth by substantially raising the city's profile, drawing in national and international visitors, and attracting inward investment by positioning Manchester as a leading cultural city with an ability to showcase major large-scale events. The 2021 Festival was a flagship event within the city's cultural recovery programme during the reopening phase. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, the 2021 Festival had an estimated economic impact of £19.5million.

### **(b) A highly skilled city**

- 14.2 Manchester International Festival continues to maximise employment opportunities, with 69 permanent members of staff. 83 additional staff and a further 62 office-based freelancers were contracted to deliver the 2021 festival. 680 people were contracted as performers, stage managers, front of house staff, and technicians. The Factory Academy continues to work with partners to provide pathways to training and employment opportunities for Manchester residents.

### **(c) A progressive and equitable city**

- 14.3 Manchester International Festival's Creative Engagement Team responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing creative and agile ways to bring people together in the run-up to the 2021 festival – including participants, schools and volunteers. The independent evaluation showed that there was an increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic audiences at the 2021 festival, as well as a growth in younger audiences, those with a disability and people from lower socioeconomic groups. A dedicated Volunteer Collaboration Group provided insights into improving accessibility of the volunteering experience.

### **(d) A liveable and low carbon city**

- 14.4 Manchester was recently identified as the third best city in the world by Time Out, with Manchester International Festival and The Factory referenced as part of the city's creative scene. 91% of audiences surveyed at the 2021 event agreed or strongly agreed that the festival helps to make Manchester a world-class city, and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that it offers a unique experience unlike anything else in the area. The Festival contributes to the city's carbon reduction targets by minimising the impact of its operations and sharing knowledge and expertise with cultural partners.

### **(e) A connected city**

- 14.5 A core objective for the digital team was to develop a blended offer for the 2021 festival, creating live and interactive content for audiences online. This was supported by an on-demand and live platform, a digital studio for virtual events, website content and new partnerships with media partners. As a result the festival recorded 1.2million views across the website and all digital

content, with audiences engaged from 187 countries.

## **15. Key Policies and Considerations**

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

15.1 This is set out in the main body of the report.

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

15.2 The funding relationship will be managed under the terms and conditions of the grant funding agreement, with monitoring and review carried out by Council officers.

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

15.3 The Council has power to enter into the grant funding arrangements under the Localism Act 2011