

## **Appendix 10 – Manchester City of Literature update**

### **Background to Manchester City of Literature**

31 October 2022 was the fifth 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) 290 UNESCO Creative Cities across seven creative fields: literature, design, crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, music and gastronomy. There are (now) 42 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 policies such as the Council's Family Poverty Strategy and Our Manchester Industrial Strategy.

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.

The UNESCO designation links with a range of other strategic priority areas and Executive Member portfolios, 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. In 2022, Cllr Rahman spoke in Santos, Brazil at this global forum about the Our Manchester strategy, linguistic diversity and libraries as community and creative hubs. The cost of travel was paid for by Manchester City of Literature.

Manchester submitted its first Membership Monitoring Report to UNESCO in late 2021 covering 2017 to 2021. Following peer and expert review, UNESCO rated Manchester's Report as EXCELLENT in all relevant categories. It is exceptional for a city to receive the highest score for its first Report.

## 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 and 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 Sharon Handley for Manchester Metropolitan University; and Professor John McAuliffe for the University of Manchester. They are joined by 7 Community Trustees selected via open recruitment.

There is a staff team of three (two FTE): Ivan Wadeson, Executive Director; Reece Williams, Community Engagement Manager; and Del Derrick, Partnerships and Communications Manager (maternity cover for Jo Flynn). Freelance project staff are engaged for funded initiatives such as Festival of Libraries.

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 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. A selection of these 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 2023 has just been announced and can be viewed [here](#).

#### **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. To date poems have been created [about Manchester's languages](#) for World Poetry Day, about [the John Rylands Library](#) for Festival of Libraries and about Manchester's history of protest for Manchester Literature Festival.

#### **Festival of Libraries**

This is a unique Festival in the UK that celebrates the role of public, heritage, specialist and medical libraries. The first festival was in 2021 with a mixture of socially-distanced and online events. 2022 was fully in-person with 98 events across the five days of the Festival in all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.

Footfall in libraries during the 2022 Festival was 27,764 and 3,518 people attended individual, bookable in-person events.

The independent evaluation showed 95.5% positive rating of events for enjoyment, that 63.4% gained new knowledge; 59.7% reported improved wellbeing; 37% will visit their libraries more often and 47% will encourage other people to visit and use libraries.

*“Was lovely to go to an event with my little boy (age 7) and see him listening and wanting to ask questions and making links – very inspirational, I will certainly look for other events we can attend together.”*

## **Community Champions**

Since 2020, our Community Champions pilot work has successfully used a community-led model to engage people from marginalized groups with literature, reading and writing. It empowers participants to improve their lives and communities through art and creativity. Over 20 community sessions have been delivered to build stronger communities with the Black Caribbean Pentecostal community in Moss Side and Hulme; with young South Asian women in Longsight and with families in Mostyn and Harpurhey. The Community Champions programme is now engaging African Caribbean NHS workers and their families to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the NHS and Windrush in partnership with MMU.

## **Opportunities for Writers and Artists**

Manchester City of Literature has supported 20+ Manchester writers to take part in international projects or residencies developing their work, profile and connections. Some residencies are only open to writers resident in a UNESCO City of Literature. Events like Festival of Libraries have created over 100 paid opportunities for writers, illustrators, musicians and artists since 2020.

## **Growing Publishing in Manchester**

Manchester City of Literature has played a brokerage role to integrate London trade publishers setting up Manchester offices within the local ecology. Commercial publishing giants Hachette and Harper North are now active members of the partnership network alongside local and long-established independent publishers such as Carcanet and Comma Press. This together with the new MA in Publishing at MMU promotes Manchester as a growing force in UK publishing.

## **Securing Additional Investment**

Manchester City of Literature has been highly effective at leveraging investment into Manchester’s literary sector. In just two years, Manchester City of Literature has secured over £240,000 of new investment into literary activity from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, British Council and corporate sponsors. Working with the University of Manchester and MMU has secured a further £150,000 of investment from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for literary and community projects in the city during 2023.







## Manchester's Multilingual City Poets: Ali Al-Jamri, Anjum Malik and Jova Bagioli Reyes

Films of 'This Here; by Anjum Malik [2 minutes and 43 seconds]

In Urdu: [https://youtu.be/JAdjpbP\\_Siw](https://youtu.be/JAdjpbP_Siw)

In English: <https://youtu.be/7JONG6IL8pg>

In Arabic: <https://youtu.be/OoWKzX5kV1E>

In Spanish: <https://youtu.be/tm3cy3fTlgU>