

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 7 February 2023

Subject: Manchester Libraries Strategy Update

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the library strategy and to present a draft vision for libraries.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and consider the draft vision for libraries.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Libraries support the zero-carbon agenda. This includes high quality, low-carbon buildings that are community hubs to be used by multiple organisations, that libraries encourage books to be read by multiple people and the increase in eBooks – reducing the use of paper.
More details contained within section 2.5.1

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

As this is an update report, an EQIA has not been carried out specifically on the report. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of the library service. Examples of excellent EDI initiatives are outlined in 2.13

| Manchester Strategy outcomes | Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS |
|---|---|
| A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities | Libraries enable people to improve their skills, apply for work on-line, offer and offer volunteering opportunities, increasing residents' employability. Libraries lead the Council's work on reducing digital exclusion amongst residents. More information in 2.5.2 |
| A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success | Libraries assist in raising literacy and skills levels, and with enabling our youngest residents to become school ready, helping to deliver Read Manchester. More information in 2.11 |
| A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities | Libraries are at the heart of our communities and offer a wide range of services and activities for free that help to build and maintain community cohesion and place pride. More information in 2.5.8 |
| A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work | Good local libraries are part of the fabric of neighbourhoods, helping to sustain pride in Manchester and its communities. Manchester Central Library is a regional, national and international visitor attraction More information in 2.5.1 |
| A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth | Our libraries are a key location for residents to access digital technology and helping build skills that will assist future generation of Mancunions to sustain the growth of the city. Our digital inclusion work is increasing connectivity in homes. More information in 2.5.6 |

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

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

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Background documents (available for public inspection): None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester's libraries embody the Our Manchester Strategy, providing locally based, customer focussed services at the heart of communities. The service contributes greatly to Manchester Strategy Outcomes, as detailed in section 2.5. Manchester's Library, Information and Archives Service delivers leisure, cultural, learning and information services through a network of 15 neighbourhood libraries, 6 community partnership libraries and the internationally renowned world class Central Library – the most visited public library in the country. The service also operates 24-hour virtual library, HMP Manchester Prison library and Books to Go (housebound) service and supports a number of neighbourhood-based book collections. Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA which holds records from across the city region. Manchester Libraries also leads on digital inclusion for the Council and city.
- 1.2 We have produced a new vision for Manchester Libraries which is included in Appendix 1. The vision sets out how libraries contribute to Manchester being a high-class city improving the lives of residents and neighbourhoods and sets out the priorities for coming years. The key priorities identified are: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. This vision will be consulted upon, to help shape the future priorities of the service.
- 1.3 The library service has evolved and reinvented itself over the past decade and whilst seeing significant reduction in revenue funding we have seen £80 million capital investment, including the £50 million transformation of Manchester Central Library. In the last 10 years, and we have relocated over 80% of libraries into new or refurbished or co-located premises. The Libraries Capital Programme continues to see significant investment into the service, improving the estate and service further. The latest Adult Public Library User Survey reported that over 93% of customers were satisfied with the service – the highest satisfaction rating we have ever received.
- 1.4 As valued community spaces, libraries act as a shop front and access point for a range of other council, government and public services and partner organisations, enabling people to access these services at a local level. A wide range of council services are delivered through our network of libraries for example adult learning (including learning specifically aimed at getting people back to work), youth provision, councillor surgeries, benefits advice and many other advice sessions. This has been particularly beneficial to residents during the cost-of-living crisis, where libraries have been the Council's warm spaces, acting as the neighbourhood living rooms.
- 1.5 Library services also provide significant support for key Manchester City Council objectives such as raising literacy levels (both reading skills and digital), reducing dependency, sustaining local neighbourhoods and creating economic growth, and have a critical and key role in supporting the City Council's priorities. Libraries manage Read Manchester with the aim of spreading the love of reading throughout the city and increasing literacy levels

with children and adults. Manchester Libraries have a leading role with digital inclusion for the Council and city. We work with the VCSE sector to reduce digital exclusion across community venues and in people's homes. Libraries also play a vital role through the provision of free public access to computers, free Wi-Fi, access to information and advice sessions.

- 1.6 In terms of a strategic planning framework, Manchester Libraries continue to provide a strong, key and vital role in the heart of their communities and neighbourhoods supporting learning, literacy, economic opportunity and inspiration, through the 4 universal public library offers around reading, information & digital, health & wellbeing, culture & creativity. This ensures that we have a coherent structured offer which meets the current and future needs of our residents and also ensure that our service offer is aligned to support the delivery of Our Corporate Plan.
- 1.7 It is now nearly nine years since Central Library reopened following its transformation. It continues to be the most visited public library in the country, attracting a diverse range of residents as well as being a key attraction for visitors from outside the city. Part of the transformation vision for Central Library was to be an inclusive space, appealing to families, children and young people, aspiring entrepreneurs and visitors to the city, as well as traditional library visitors. Eight years on, despite the pandemic, Central Library's cultural programme, Library Live, exists as a busy and diverse cultural programme for everyone to enjoy, and Central Library remains the most visited public library in the country. Last year, in recognition of the importance of Central Library and Archives+, the library became the Northern Hub for the 1921 Census, being only one of three venues in England and Wales that was able to offer free access to the census.
- 1.8 Across the city, our neighbourhood libraries and community partnership libraries - play an integral role in their local communities, acting as safe, trusted, socially inclusive, free, accessible, welcoming and non-threatening spaces, that play a significant role in helping to address deprivation and inequality. Research has shown that using libraries improves residents' health and wellbeing by combating loneliness and social isolation, as well as providing a quiet place to study and read. We support customers with reading for pleasure and literacy, and the level of book-borrowing is increasing again after a fall due to the pandemic, whilst the borrowing of eBooks/eAudio has increased dramatically since the start of the pandemic.
- 1.9 Libraries are the primary community venue for residents to access IT, and offer training, support and assistance to residents. This is done through staff, volunteers and partner organisations, for example Citizens Advice Manchester, which offers highly popular weekly digital-advice sessions at libraries across the city.
- 1.10 Fundamental to our ability to provide a high-quality breadth and range of services is the need to work well and effectively with a broad spectrum of partners and volunteers. Our partnership working across the city ranges from local community groups to specialist intellectual property lawyers who give

their time pro-bono to support fledgling entrepreneurs, to the British Library, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Manchester, the Manchester College and Arts Council, England. Pre-pandemic, over 400 volunteers enable us to make the best use of the resources available within the city, and we are building up volunteer numbers again.

2.0 Delivering the Library Strategy in 2022 and beyond

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

- Introducing and strengthening customer self-service transformation to all libraries.
- Introducing new Open Plus technology to increase opening hours and widen access at Withington Library, Wythenshawe Forum Library and Avenue Library.
- Transforming Withington library

2.2 A further £500,000 was allocated 2021-2024 for citywide library renewal works to ensure that all libraries are in a strong position to serve their local communities for the next 10/15 years. Works include redecoration, replacing worn furniture, shelving and carpets, plus redecoration where needed. For example, as part of this programme of activity,

- Remodelling Newton Heath Library to create a meeting room and interview/advice room.
- Refreshing other libraries such as Central Library and Archives +, Hulme High Street, Forum Library, Didsbury Library and North City Library.

2.3 Gorton Library moved into the new Gorton Hub in mid November 2022. Gorton Hub is a pioneering new community, integrated health and learning hub at the heart of Gorton district centre, which brings together a range of local services under the same roof. The Hub is a one-stop-shop for local people to access a GP, health and social care services, employment support and library – all in a purpose built, highly accessible development. These services have been delivered in different parts of the local neighbourhood, and the Hub makes it easier for residents in Gorton to access joined-up support, based on the understanding that all of these services are interconnected. Housing and good health, good employment, education and social care. Residents need all of these things to work together to lead happy, healthy and prosperous lives. Services include:

- A vibrant and modern library and learning space
- NHS community health teams, such as district nurses, health visitors and physios, including treatment rooms for both children and adults
- Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)
- Jobcentre Plus

Further services moving into the hub through to Spring 2023, include:

- a new home for the Gorton Medical Centre GP practice
- a pharmacy
- A new café
- Working with One Manchester to bring a housing office to the Hub

In the first full month of opening (December 2022) the library saw over 7000 visits, nearly double pre-pandemic levels for December 2019. The library offers a range of community meeting rooms, that are already busy with a wide range of community support and creative activities. It is also designed as an Age Friendly space, with an area set aside with comfortable and attractive furniture plus a memorabilia cabinet and sound archive unit, where older people can read a book or the daily paper, or just enjoy being in a busy, social space without anything else expected from them. Local history has played a strong role in the design of not just the library, but the wider Hub, as a way of embedding the new building into the history and community of Gorton and creating a strong sense of place. Archive maps have been creatively used throughout the building, and these have proved popular with visitors and staff alike, who look for buildings, roads and places that they know or grew up in – providing a link back to the past in a building designed for the future.

- 2.4 There will be significant in capital works to libraries from 2023 to 2024. The grade 2 listed Chorlton Library will be fully refurbished during 2023, with a £600,000 budget for capital works, supplemented by additional AMP works and Open Plus budget. The works include remodelling and refurbishment of the newer extension area, creation of a new community meeting room, full redecoration, enabling the Open Plus access system, and restoring the historic dome over the lobby area that has been covered over in previous refurbishments. The library will close for approximately 10 months with a small temporary library operating from a nearby shop unit, and story times taking place at The Edge Theatre.
- 2.5 The new joint library and leisure centre at Abraham Moss will open to the public in late Summer 2023. The development is currently progressing. The library will work on the same model as Hulme High Street and Arcadia libraries, with the library being accessible outside of staffed hours for customers to use self-serve, making library services available from early morning until the centre closes, plus all day on Sunday.
- 2.6 Libraries played a crucial role during the pandemic. Being designated as an essential service, they remained open apart from the first 3 months of lockdown. Visitor figures obviously reduced with many residents staying at home, reduced capacity due to social distancing and a full engagement programme not possible. We resumed a full engagement programme and full range of services by the start of January 2022. By Autumn 2022, Libraries had approximately 66% of visitors compared to the same period in 2019. Six libraries have outperformed pre-pandemic visitor levels. In Autumn 2022 there were 20k participants in education sessions, which was higher than at the same time pre-covid, with 57,000 attendees of our events programme - a 16%

increase on pre-covid levels, with both regular and half term activities proving popular. In 2023 we will be focussing on developing and delivering the vision, including increased outreach activities and engagement to attract new customers and encourage lapsed users to return to libraries.

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

2.7.1 Contributing to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Libraries are possibly the longest standing re-use and recycling programme through the borrow and use of a book by multiple people. The increase in lending of eBooks and eAudio books reduces the carbon footprint of reading in the city still further. Each library is now a collection point for old devices – these get refurbished by Community Computers and sold to Manchester residents for discounted price, benefiting the resident and reducing waste. The library estate contains generally good quality buildings with excellent carbon emission standards, and the capital investment into several of the libraries improves this further. By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, supporting the Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approaches. They can also be used for environmental and climate change campaigns, including Keep Manchester Tidy, which itself contributes towards carbon emission reductions.

2.7.2 Growth that benefits everyone

Libraries develop and implement the Council's Digital Action Plan, which feeds into the Digital Strategy. This work reduces the number of digitally excluded residents in the city and increases the level of digital skills. People without digital skills are at increased the level of disadvantage – e.g. unemployment, low wage employment, social isolation, financial poverty. The Business & IP Centre (based at Central Library) and the Build a Business in GM Libraries initiative support the establishment and growth of start-up businesses, increasing the number of successful businesses in the city and the creation of jobs and opportunities. Libraries play an important role in supporting the business community in Manchester, and across Greater Manchester, offering insights and access to free resources, training and events. In 2022 the BIPC offered more activities and support than ever before.

2.7.3 Young People

Libraries support young people from 0-18 years, as outlined in the Libraries Services to Children and Young people in Appendix 2. Libraries contributed greatly to Our Year and have started running very successful HAF Sessions Working with Read Manchester, children and young people and their families benefit from library use, resulting in increased skills, confidence, happiness, literacy, educational attainment and job prospects. Libraries are positive environments that children and young people choose to use. A new children's

library has opened this year, in partnership with Manchester Libraries, at Z-Arts in Hulme. Two of our libraries offer times in the week where young people are the only users of the library. We are working with Youth, Play and Participation to develop a Strategy for Young People and Libraries. Section 2.11 outlines more information on the offer for children and young people.

2.7.4 Healthy Cared-For People

People who use a library have improved health and wellbeing. A Central Library survey during the pandemic reported that 87% of respondents said they felt happier after using the library. The CIPFA Public Library User Survey of 2019 reported that over 80% of Manchester's respondents who sometimes felt lonely, felt less lonely after using the library. Libraries reduce social isolation in a whole range of its customers – from Mums and Dads attending storytimes with their children, to older people who use the library for social interaction in a welcoming environment, and Books to Go customers who are housebound and may not see anyone else for a few days apart from the delivery driver who provides a range of books. Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. Libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions. All library staff have received training on dementia and are Dementia Friends.

2.7.5 Housing

Libraries contribute to the social infrastructure of successful and cohesive local communities. We work in partnership with Housing providers to reduce digital exclusion within their residents – to the benefits of the tenants and the housing providers. We work with organisations such as Lifeshare and Booth Centre to encourage and enable homeless people to access library services.

2.7.6 Neighbourhoods

Libraries are the beating heart of communities, being used and owned by the communities they reside in. They are well used venues key to successful and cohesive local communities. As community hubs they are used to gain access to skills, creative opportunities, digital access and access to a wide range of services at neighbourhood level. Libraries are increasingly becoming community hubs used to meet a whole range of priorities of people in the neighbourhood. The existence of a library within the neighbourhood is a critical factor to the quality of life of communities and residents in the neighbourhood. They are vital in the Council's response to the current cost of living crisis, with each library acting as a 'warm space' - more details in section 2.9. Throughout 2022 we participated in roadshows and events with partner organisations in neighbourhoods where digital exclusion is highest to talk to residents and raise awareness of digital inclusion offers in their area.

2.7.7 Connections

Libraries ensure residents are digitally connected – particularly those who do not have Internet access at home. Each library offers free Internet access and high-speed Wi-Fi. Libraries are digital hubs where residents can access other services through video technology – for example Citizens Advice Bureau. More information about digital inclusion in section 2.10

2.7.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are at the forefront of everything libraries do. Libraries are representative of the diverse communities in which they are located and are a key means to increase community cohesion. The book stock is diverse, including the recent ‘See Myself in Books’ initiative and the events programme outlined contains artists and authors from diverse backgrounds and is attractive to all. Key EDI events are celebrated in libraries such as Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, International Women’s Day, LGBT History Month and International Mother Language Day. Manchester Libraries are accredited Libraries of Sanctuary. More details on this and our wider EDI work in 2.13.

2.7.9 A Well Managed Council

By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, in an Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approach.

2.8 The Latest Public Library User Survey (PLUS) that we conducted in 2019-20 reported that over 93% of customers were satisfied with the service – the highest satisfaction rating we have ever received. We believe that this figure will increase further when its next carried out, as the feedback from customers to our service during the pandemic has been positive. We have been a lifeline to so many residents. The survey provided some powerful insight into the libraries role in reducing social isolation. As part of the Survey, four in ten respondents reported experiencing feelings of loneliness or isolation from others. Respondents who indicated that they often or sometimes experience feelings of loneliness were asked whether the library helped combat these feelings. More than 80% of these people agreed that it did. So over 80% of people feel less lonely as a result of using the library. We are holding a further Public Library User Survey later in February 2023, and will present the results at our next report to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

2.9 Central, Neighbourhood and Community libraries

Each library has a huge impact upon its local neighbourhood and residents. Here are brief examples from each library that show the range of services we deliver and impacts on residents.

- **Abraham Moss Library** - The library is in a temporary unit currently with the brand-new library in Summer 2023. The temporary library

offers a full range of library services for everyone from a thriving, well-attended Storytime for pre-school children with parents & carers to popular visits for classes of children from local primary schools. It is used by all sectors of the community and has partnerships with the local community from the Cheetham & Crumpsall Festival, Independence Day at the Ukrainian Club, Bollywood Nights dinner dance and Pamper Days with Winning Hearts.

- **Arcadia Library** - Arcadia's joint partnership with GLL (Greenwich Leisure limited) ensures that the library offer is seamlessly available to customers from 6.30am - 10pm on weekdays and 9 – 5pm at weekends, including Sunday. Working together we provide a joint coffee morning for gym users, swimmers and library users. We now have a full schools' programme bringing the fun of reading to our young children.
- **Avenue Library** - Avenue Library is busy and popular with a packed programme for community groups including 2 Age Friendly knitting & craft groups, a well-attended and fun Hello Saturday art club for children and families and a fortnightly Code Club for kids. A thriving Latin Club and reading groups as well as weekly employment and information session from Yes Manchester and Citizens Advice Manchester make this library an essential hub in the Blackley and Charlestown community.
- **Beswick Library** – Local residents continue to be supported online by Beswick Library for their local needs such as parking permits and other digital offers. This recently refurbished library is a cornerstone of East Manchester with a great network of partnerships and events with local organisations including the Etihad stadium, Manchester Active and East Manchester Youth and Play Partnership. We're building a strong Ambassadors group with partners Royal Exchange Theatre group offering free community theatre tickets.
- **Brooklands library** - We were delighted to have the wonderful author Pip Jones come to launch the Summer Reading Challenge, who was joined by children from Baguley Hall Primary School. We also had a very popular wise owl event for Harry Potter day and Zoo Lab attended in October with a very popular animal handling session- Over 40 people attended. The library is also popular with older people with weekly Age sessions with Board games and socializing using new seating.
- **Central Library** - is at the heart of the city's 22 libraries with an exciting cultural programme. This year we have worked with some great partners including Manchester Jazz, Literature and Science festivals to bring activities to our users. Our special Sunday openings for Chinese New Year, Libraries festival, Manchester Day, Halloween, and Winter brought thousands of visitors into the library to specifically engage with our cultural and creative program. We have a new regular activity in our chess club which has gone from strength to strength and enabled us to

engage with a diverse audience who have created their own small community. We launched the 'package for Val' scheme to help eliminate period poverty, anyone can ask for a package and supplies are handed out discretely. The packages are generously supported by donations from the Central Library and Town Hall Extension teams. Our weekly digital drop-in sessions are in demand and help an average of 10 people per session and have supported over 300 people since July.

- **Chorlton Library** – Our customers are excitedly waiting the newly refurbished library. The Age Friendly coffee morning is growing from strength to strength after restarting following covid. We have around 10 attendees each week who love stopping for a drink, a chat and a couple of biscuits. It's a great way to meet people, build friendships and find out what's happening in the community.
- **Didsbury Library** - We have run adult craft sessions in the library and at the Didsbury Good Neighbours Centre. These sessions covered many types of art from porcelain painting to gift tag making and have been very popular. Local Schools attended and enjoyed Alfie's First Fight and were all given a signed copy of the book. Working with DGN and Barlow High we have started an intergenerational ICT drop in.
- **Forum Library** – Forum Library Funday was part of the Festival of Libraries, and it was an amazing day. It was lovely to see the library busy with people having such a great time and the library was beautifully noisy with sounds of music from the various different workshops. We have restarted the STEM club and also started a Saturday Colouring Club. Toys and Games are now also available in the library.
- **Gorton Library** - Gorton Library is now in the Gorton Hub, a new library that really represents the community. We have successfully brought all our groups to the new building including the Local History Group. We have a new Local History glass cabinet which displays the mayor's diary who was from Gorton which is situated under the original library plaque of the original Gorton Library 1901. In addition, we have a Local History Kiosk which holds childhood memories of visiting the Belle Vue Zoo and the Speedway collected by the Manchester Histories Festival in 2014. It brings history to life through recorded conversations on a purpose-built tablet for everyone to access.
- **Hulme High Street Library** is a popular library reflecting the community it serves. The library programme with its IT digital drop in and Talk English sessions are so important as they support our residents who are digitally excluded to gain new skills in IT. The conversational English helps those residents to access courses in English and Maths and onto further education.

- **Longsight Library** - This library is a busy community library with lots of activities for adults and children. Reading levels of children dropped during the pandemic, so the library team wanted to prioritise building closer links with our local schools - both Primary and Secondary. A strong programme of school inductions promoted reading as fun and school classes were invited to the library with 2836 children attending. Our partnership with Plymouth Grove school was so successful this year that we worked together with the school visiting every week.
- **Moss Side Powerhouse Library** – The library has a community offer 11-2pm and a young people’s offer from 3-7pm. This has enabled provision of a warm space in the mornings and events in the afternoons and early evening. We are working with all the local schools who regularly visit us and recently recruitment of volunteers has enabled us to begin a homework club. The children are growing up really appreciating their library and also coming to the centre means that they are joining in with the youth offer provided by the Millennium Powerhouse Centre. Working together with the centre with joint events & us all supporting families where English is not their first language.
- **Newton Heath Library** - Vibrant and busy, this library is a true community hub and a lifeline for local people with a strong offer for all ages from pre-school story time to teens and a popular coffee morning for older folk. The Holiday Activity Fund sessions for local young people has seen the summer and Christmas holidays offer a terrific range of activities including jewellery making, writing rap and performing a traditional Sierra Leone song with musicians and performers. Library staff work hard with local partners Winning Hearts and Minds to engage local young people with creative and positive, diverting activities including ping-pong, games, karaoke and music. Our weekly Saturday activity club for children continues to attract new families and the recent Women’s Euros saw us hosting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to create a Manchester anthem and offer an orchestral taster session.
- **North City Library** - This Creative Space library offers high quality cultural highlights on the doorstep for Harpurhey and Moston folk such as International Mother Language Day, Manchester’s Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces family fun days. This library has a busy atmosphere with Film Clubs, art exhibitions, workshops by local poet Kingsley Bray plus riotous sessions by shouty storyteller Gav Cross, amongst other events for schools. Great partnerships with internationally renowned Sick Festival, Contact Theatre Agency, Brighter Sounds and Manchester Youth Zone bring brilliant and imaginative events and local talent to our community. Toys and Games for children to play whilst in the library help make this a favourite family destination for kids to share and enjoy and for parents to relax and socialise with others in this diverse and busy community.
- **Withington Library** – In December 2022 we started a partnership with The Bread and Butter Thing. The library recruited volunteers to work

with TBBT to pack the bags of groceries for the library Hub and distribute to residents. About 50 people attend weekly to buy the bags of food for an extremely discounted rate. In January an information/support and Covid drop-in day was organised to coincide with The Bread and Butter Thing session.

Community partnership libraries – run in partnership with community groups and volunteers

- **Barlow Moor Library** - Library Staff supported Barlow Moor Community Association with Mersey Fest 2022, running a stall offering Free Crafts. As part of Chorlton Book Festival we attended the after-school club and delivered a creative fabric printing session. We promoted and delivered the Summer Reading Challenge running craft activities for Children to support this. The children's library has some new furniture and additional seating added to the adult library.
- **Burnage Library** - School visits to the library remain popular as well as the story times and ICT drop in. Ian Morris, who designed the new children's library card ran a workshop to support our competition for children to design a new children's card. They came up with some wonderful creative designs. The library is supported by Southway Housing and the Friends of Burnage Library.
- **Fallowfield Library** - Library staff supported Fallowfield's 90th birthday Celebration event by running a craft stall. Children and adults enjoyed making fabulous 3D fish. Very busy event which was enjoyed by all. We organised full day summer school holiday workshops to support the Place at Platt Lanes holiday club.
- **Miles Platting Library** - This compact library punches above its weight with activities from Christmas Fun days with local housing partner Adactus, to a diverse programme of Holiday Activity Sessions with food for local teens including traditional dance, African music, arts and craft which engage with mental health, environmental and climate change and the natural world. The rich cultural and recreational activities offered here to local families and schools are unique due to its pleasant green space and play facilities.
- **New Moston Library** - New Moston Library's Wednesday coffee morning has enjoyed a programme of special events with visits from Cheetham Sketcher Mary Burke talking about art for recovery and exhibiting her exquisite illustration to ad-hoc Story & Play sessions for local preschool families and Festive Mince Pies.
- **Northenden Library** – The storytime session remains popular with good attendance as does all the school holiday children's crafts. At October half term we had a Zoo Lab animal handling activity attended by over 40 people. The age-friendly afternoon is popular as well as a

brew and a biscuit regulars attend to play board games and just have a chat. This library is supported by the Friends of Northenden Library.

Other libraries

- **Books to Go** – This service delivers books, information and other resources to housebound residents. Many Books to Go customers have been shown how to borrow eBooks and eAudio books from the libraries' Borrowbox service, enabling vulnerable residents the choice of 1000s of books available in an accessible format, in addition to their usual book delivery. All customers were delivered Winter Warmer packs, as many are in a vulnerable situation.
- **HMP Manchester Library** - The prison library aims to improve the literacy levels of prisoners, as low literacy levels correlate with a higher likelihood of re-offending on release. The Prison Library is actively developing Age Friendly services, as many prisoners fall within this category. The library has worked with a number of partners within the prison and there are 3 collections in the library that support the work of DELPHI (Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation), MHIT (Mental Health In-Reach Team) and AIG (careers support for men). The collections have been chosen by each team, are branded in the library and are being used within the men's work plans encouraging the men to actively use these resources. The prison library works closely with a number of wings who are unable to visit the library and have satellite collections that are regularly updated/new stock purchased for. The library also works closely with POPS (Partners of Prisoners) to promote family contact – this was particularly important during the time that face to face visits were not taking place in the pandemic and included attending the family forums to speak about the activities run by the prison library such as Story Book Dad, SWAPS, DPIL Making it Up and a new project – Raising Readers. Men are also able to access legal reference works and case law using a variety of sites.

2.10 Warm Spaces and Cost of Living Crisis

2.10.1 Libraries have a key role to play in the Cost-of-Living crisis. In October 2022, each of the 22 libraries became the Council's designated warm spaces, registered on <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>. They are continuing to offer the free, welcoming service in a warm space where people can stay as long as they want in comfortable seating, with access to a wide range of resources including Internet, wi-fi, newspapers, books etc. With a wide range of support and leaflets available. We introduced new services as warm spaces.

- Free hot drinks are available, with over 20,000 drunk since October. This will continue until the end of February 2023.
- Free SIMs that provide 6 months free data.
- The Bread and Butter Thing now operate weekly from Withington Library, Gorton Library, Beswick Library with Newton Heath Library to follow soon.

- Central Library offers free sanitary products, to tackle period poverty, using donations mostly from City Council staff.
- All libraries in the North Area are donation points for Winter Warmth packs which are being donated to residents in need across the north of the city, including some of our housebound Books to Go customers
- Several libraries act as donation points for their local foodbank
- Most libraries have been fuller than normal, especially in December because many people stayed in the library longer, and lots of residents came in that staff hadn't seen before.

2.11 Digital inclusion

2.11.1 Libraries have always been the primary community venue to provide access and support to use the Internet. However, over the last couple of years, we have increased our role and taken responsibility for developing and implementing the Council's and city's strategy to combat digital exclusion, especially crucial during the pandemic and with the current cost of living crisis. The Digital Inclusion Action Plan that we have developed and are implementing for the Council is included as Appendix 2. Libraries have expanded their role in tackling digital exclusion inside and outside of the libraries, supported by £50k per annum from GMCA. A report on digital inclusion is being taken to Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on 7th March, which will give more details. There were over 1.1 million uses of free Internet in libraries in 2022. Every library now has at least one session per week where extra support is available – from staff or volunteers or partner organisation. We have continued to manage telephone support to residents who have Internet access but don't have the skills or confidence to use it effectively. We assisted nearly 150 residents in 2022. Residents access it themselves by texting us on 07860064128, or they can be referred by another person/organisation via email. In addition to this we have supported people who have no Internet access at home by delivering 250 devices (Chromebooks or laptops or smartphones) and over 400 free data SIMs have been provided so far from libraries, that are available from every library. To ensure there are low cost devices available to Manchester residents, we have commissioned Community Computers to deliver a refurbished device scheme. Each library as a donation point for old devices, with over 100 old devices been donated by residents to the scheme. Our role supporting digital excluded residents is highlighted by the need for voter ID from May's elections. Each library has at least one session per week where residents can receive support for applying for ID online, including support taking and uploading a digital photograph. Support for voter ID applications is also being offered via our telephone support service. We will continue to deliver this support in coming years, more details to be provided in the Report to March 2023's Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

2.12 Libraries play an important role in supporting the business community in Manchester, and across GM. The Business and IP Centre (BIPC) in Central Library supports entrepreneurs from the first spark of inspiration to successfully launching and growing their business. Offering insights and

access to free resources, training and events, in 2022 the BIPC offered more activities and support than ever before:

- Over 650 one to one sessions, workshops and events
- Over 4000 attendees in person and online

The Business & IP Centre Manchester is the most attended in the national network outside London. Alongside offering access to the business information assets, the team have a track record of delivering innovative programming engaging with entrepreneurs and local enterprises.

Our ERDF part-funded business support programme, Build A Business in GM Libraries continues to engage across the Combined Authority and has delivered over 150 workshops to date. More information in Appendix 5.

2.13 Children and Young people

2.13.1 Libraries have a core offer to children and families which is shown in Appendix 3 – Children's and Young People Offer. This includes Bookstart, storytimes, Summer Reading Challenge and class visits, as well as a year-round programme of author visits and support for national campaigns including World Book Day, Empathy Day, Refugee Week and National Storytelling Week. Libraries also programme authors and activities for local events such as Chorlton Book Festival and the Festival of Libraries.

2.13.2 Libraries and Education work together to support literacy and reading for pleasure through the Read Manchester campaign, which operates as a National Literacy Trust hub. This helps to improve literacy levels across all ages and communities in Manchester and spread a love of reading. Ensuring access to books has played a large part in this, including our Bookgifting programme which has provided brand new books for children and adults to own.

2.13.3 In 2022, libraries and Read Manchester were a key delivery partner of Our Year, enriching the lives of children from 0-18 years. This included a competition for children to redesign library cards which attracted 500 entries and participating in the Baby Week activities in July including an Artful Playground session at Central Library. Libraries are often a child's first introduction to cultural activity, including storytimes and events such as Baby Week, and are a free, safe space for parents and children to visit, meet others and share stories. Our libraries are bright, attractive, and well-stocked, supporting a child's literacy journey through life. In 2022, a new children's library was opened at Z-Arts, in a partnership between the city council and the charity, using funding from the Arts Council England and Manchester City Council. An unused space in their building was transformed into a beautiful and welcoming children's library, launched by author and Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho. Local children and families helped to co-design the space. The library is very attractive and is well used with over 100 children becoming members in the first couple of months of opening.

2.13.4 2022 also saw Read Manchester gift the first of its See Myself in Books collections to schools. These are mini libraries of 25 books which feature books by authors of colour, and characters from different ethnic backgrounds. As Manchester has such a diverse population, we wanted to ensure this was reflected in our book stock, and also in the authors, poets and illustrators we bring in for class visits. The mini libraries have now been gifted to almost 40 schools, and importantly these include some of the least diverse schools in the city as well as the most diverse. This means that children in the city can see themselves reflected in books but also see other communities too. A See Myself in Books event was also held at the Festival of Libraries in June, featuring online and in-person author visits and a celebration of storytelling at Central Library.

2.13.5 Manchester Libraries and Bookstart gift book packs to more than 10,000 babies and 3–4-year-olds annually to encourage an early love of books and reading. The baby pack remains a universal offer, gifted via the Registrars, whilst the Toddler and Pre-schooler are targeted, delivered via Early Years partners.

2.13.6 Since the pandemic started Libraries and Read Manchester have also gifted books and magazines through our programmes and community work, targeting the 1 in 8 disadvantaged children who don't own a book. During the pandemic, access to reading material was more limited and now the cost-of-living crisis has also impacted families' ability to buy books. Publishers have donated books to us, and we have gifted them through a variety of partners including foodbanks, community grocers, mental health organisations, Early Years partners and schools. This has enabled us to grow our partnerships with grass roots organisations and reach new audiences. During the calendar year 2022 alone, Read Manchester has gifted 114,000 books and since the start of the pandemic, we have gifted almost 160,000 books. The infographic in Appendix 9 shows the 80,000 books gifted in the academic year September 2021 to August 2022.

2.13.7 We have received feedback from various partner organisations including:

Emmie's Kitchen, a charity supporting families with children in hospital received 200 books as part of our Festive book give-away. The books were used as part of a Christmas bag that was given to parents that were staying in Royal Manchester Children's Hospital with their poorly child over the Christmas period.

'The parents were overwhelmed to receive something for themselves through their child's potentially long and difficult stay. They were grateful to be thought about and said they love the books to help keep them distracted or provide a little down-time/self-care. Escapism.'

Feedback from Rainbow Surprise, foodbank:

'These books are amazing. I can never afford to buy books for my children.'
(Father of three comment).

2.13.8 Our Transition Read is now in its third year and gives a book to every year 6 pupil to support the move up to high school, with over 7000 pupils receiving a free copy of *The Lion Above the Door* by Onjali Rauf. Teaching resources are available for years 6 and 7 and the book provides a conversation topic and shared experience as children navigate the journey to their new high school. Onjali launched the read to teachers at an online meeting in April and also set and judged a writing competition for the pupils.

2.13.9 The Summer Reading Challenge encourages 4–11-year-olds to maintain their reading levels and avoid the slide in literacy over the summer holidays by reading any six library books and receiving incentives along the way. Libraries also offer a range of free activities for families including storytimes and crafts. We were part of a national Summer Reading Challenge extended pilot in 2022, having taken part in the original 2021 pilot, aiming to work collaboratively with other partners to increase take-up of the Challenge, an evaluation of this is detailed in Appendix 4. In Manchester, Education funded and supported the pilot approach with fifty primary schools which signed up to be involved. Thirty-seven out of the forty schools involved in 2021 took part again, with thirteen new schools signing up. Pupils in the pilot schools were automatically joined to the Summer Reading Challenge and resources were delivered into schools for them to distribute to pupils. Additionally, children who were not already library members were automatically joined to the library. Children from non-pilot schools were also able to join the Challenge in their local library as part of a universal offer. Both pilot and non-pilot schools were offered a suite of Summer Reading Challenge engagement sessions, with 17,000 children participating in these. As part of the Challenge, Libraries also ran a book review competition and received an impressive 700 entries.

2.13.10 Class visits have continued and grown compared to pre-pandemic, with many schools attending virtual class visits with authors. During the academic year September 2021 to July 2022, 123 schools engaged with libraries (58% of total schools). Over 36,000 children attended class visits in the academic year 2021/22. Six of our libraries were venues for the Holiday Activities and Food programme in Easter, Summer and December. Sessions involved lunch and activities such as arts and crafts, reading, music and other positive, engaging activities, and were aimed at ages 11-16. In summer 2022 over 400 young people participated in these sessions at Forum, Miles Platting, Withington, Central Library, Gorton, Newton Heath and Fallowfield. These aimed to keep young people fed and entertained over holiday periods when they were out of school, and also to engage them with libraries.

2.13.11 From October 2022, six libraries started to offer a selection of games, toys and play equipment to keep children and families occupied. These include board games and educational toys and are available at Forum, Longsight, Newton Heath, North City, Powerhouse and Withington.

2.13.12 A priority of the service is to increase engagement with teenagers to build on the success of young people's sessions at Arcadia and Hulme High Street,

and also the HAF sessions. We are working with staff from Youth, Participation and Play to create a Strategy for Young People and Libraries.

2.14 Age Friendly Libraries

2.14.1 Manchester Libraries are committed to ensuring that all our libraries become recognised as Age Friendly places, and we provide services that meet the needs of our older customers. Manchester Libraries have now been formally assessed and proudly display the Manchester Age Friendly Library logo.

2.14.2 They are creative community hubs, offering older people a safe, enjoyable and positive experience when they visit with comfortable places to sit and enjoy the company of others. In partnership with Age Friendly Manchester, we have agreed and adopted a set of Age Friendly standards - see Appendix 6. Library staff have recently carried out a customer service audit to find out what is important to older service users, after listening to their feedback we have produced an action plan and started to make positive changes. We created cosy welcoming Age Friendly areas with dedicated seating for people to relax, read newspapers /magazines, we are improving signage and are currently planning a programme of activities and events for 2023. As a playlist for Life Help Point, Manchester Libraries are a place where people can access information about creating and using a personal playlist to help someone living with Dementia. All Manchester Libraries offer a weekly Age Friendly drop in for older people, everyone is welcome to pop in for a drink and chat, access information displayed on our dedicated Age Friendly noticeboard or to enjoy an activity/event. Partner agencies and services often attend these sessions to share information, such as making sure everyone is claiming their benefit entitlements, promoting the nearest food banks and signposting to relevant health information; support online is also available at these sessions. There are several older people's social groups which meet in libraries on a regular basis, including the Grand Day Out groups which are friendly informal groups of local people who meet once a week at the library to chat, discover new friends, explore new interests and arrange trips out. Three libraries in South Area now have their own Age Friendly QR code corner thanks to the Wythenshawe Age Friendly network. The QR code takes you directly to the Age Friendly Wythenshawe app. Each corner has contact details, location links and immediate access to the venues' website. It also gives informative direct links to local health services, advice, community hubs and organisations such as Age UK and Citizens Advice. As part of our exciting programme of events, on International Day of Older Persons, libraries hosted four intergenerational events, our fabulous Fun Places – which are a nationwide initiative celebrating people's passions and sharing skills, took place in four libraries across Manchester, each hosting a day of free activities for all ages. Archives+ have installed Unlocking Our Sound Heritage listening stations in two of the community libraries' refurbished Age Friendly areas, where people can relax in comfortable surroundings and search for images and sounds of local places and people in Manchester. This project includes hundreds of oral history interviews with Manchester people, describing all aspects of their lives touching work, play, music, family, housing, leisure and lots more. Several age friendly activities and events are planned as part of this project. We have

developed a bespoke Dementia Friends session for libraries staff, and training is ongoing; workshops have also taken place training staff in how to set up and facilitate Age Friendly groups, activities and events. Manchester Libraries is committed to supporting Manchester City Council becoming recognised as an Age Friendly Employer. We have supported staff who want to reduce their working hours or take flexible retirement and through open recruitment events we have recruited a number of new staff over the age of 55.

2.15 Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

Manchester Libraries are at the heart of the community and are welcoming and used by all and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

In June 2021 Manchester Libraries received the accreditation of Libraries of Sanctuary. This award from the national City of Sanctuary organisation demonstrates that asylum seekers and refugees receive a warm welcome in our libraries. Our commitment to asylum seekers and refugees has again been shown with the welcome we have given to Ukrainian residents. We have Ukrainian language children's books in 3 libraries, several libraries have hosted Ukrainian information sessions and we took part in a celebration event in Cheetham Hill.

There are many other examples of libraries promoting equality and diversity across the service. The following are examples from Archives+ at Central Library

2.15.1 Disability

Young Creatives

Following on from last year's project in which young disabled people learnt about the Disabled People's Archive and produced and delivered creative performances at Contact MCR, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) were successful in their funding application to extend to a second project. Archives+ are supporting this again throughout 2023, working in close partnership with GMCDP and Contact MCR.

International Day of Disabled People (IDDP) 2022

Tying in with "Our Year 2022", young disabled people from the Young Creatives project were invited to lead on the planning, organisation and delivery of our celebration event for IDDP which took place at Central Library on 2nd December 2022. In the lead up to the event, Archives+ and GMCDP held hybrid sessions with these young people to discuss what important issues they would like to include at the event, which artists they would like to invite to perform and how they would like the event to be delivered. The event was compered by Anis Akhtar, one of the curators of the "Nothing About Us Without Us" exhibition at the People's History Museum. Artists included Dennis Queen, disability activist/singer-songwriter, neurodivergent young people from the "Changeling Project", a creative writing group, and a classical

music trio with Ilana from the "Young Creatives". With speeches by GMCDP staff members and support from Manchester City Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, the event was a huge success.

Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Building on our close connections with local colleges, Archives+ have delivered a number of workshops to SEND students, utilising the fantastic resources in the archive collections to discuss and share Manchester's rich history. In addition to these workshops, Archives+ have also provided student placement opportunities for SEND students in our "Digital Journalist" volunteer role, digitising the Town Hall Photographers' Collection. A new exhibition displaying highlights from this photographic collection is currently in the main exhibition hall at Central Library. Students have gained many skills on these placements including confidence in visiting the city centre and improved communication skills. Workshops will continue throughout 2023.

2.15.2 LGBTQIA+

Working closely with volunteers from the LGBT Foundation, archive handling sessions were held to promote the collections during Pride Month (August 2022) and Transgender Awareness Week (November 2022). An exhibition of items from the Transgender collection was curated by one of the Archives+ apprentices and these were displayed to coincide with Transgender Awareness Week.

LGBTQIA+ themed family crafts are planned for February half term during LGBT History Month, plus the LGBT Foundation will hold a handling session and are working closely with the North West Film Archive to potentially make a call out for material from our communities to tie in with the theme this year "Behind the Lens". Also, during LGBTQ+ History Month, the "Legacy of '67" exhibition will be launched at Central Library. This project will illuminate the stories and histories of LGBTQIA+ people before and after the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967.

2.15.3 Race

To celebrate Black History Month, Manchester Libraries commissioned the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relation Resource Centre and Education Trust (AIURRRC) who curated a resource pack on Carnival History, delivered workshops with local historian Linford Sweeney for adults, families and children/young people, and held a Carnival Party celebration event, with dance, music, spoken word and lots of fun! Library staff received training from AIURRRC, prior to delivering Carnival History workshops in branch libraries citywide. Archives+, working closely with members of the wider MCC staff team, invited Manchester Carnival elders involved in setting up the first carnival in Manchester to share their memories of past carnivals at a carnival showcase event. Carnival performers, dance troupes and costume designers joined in the celebration and members of the local community shared photographs from their own collections to build on the carnival archive held in

Archives+. We plan to utilise the new additions to the archive to share widely this important community led Manchester history.

2.16 Culture and Creativity

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

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

2.16.3 During 2022 libraries have worked hard to re-invigorate the 'live' cultural and creative programme following the pandemic as a priority to re-connect and engage with residents in celebratory and communal events. The libraries are essential element of the city's Culture Covid Recovery Plan as safe, local spaces for people and culture to re-engage. Here are some examples of activity that has taken place over the last year.

2.16.4 Fun Palaces returned to libraries in October 2022, with events at North City, Longsight, Forum and Central Libraries. Fun Palaces are a national initiative, part of a campaign for community at the heart of culture and culture at the heart of communities. They are intergenerational, celebratory community events that champion everyone as artists and scientists. Activities were provided by local artists, organisations and groups with an emphasis on sharing skills, socialising and having fun! All the Fun Palaces were packed with an amazing, diverse range of activities and refreshments. A selection includes: poetry writing inspired by Moston and Harpurhey, making bags and bunting with the Anamika Cultural Group, a Black History Postcard activity with artist Tina Ramos Ekongo, crafting with Afrotots, music with Brighter Sound, drama, dancing, drawing, archives and much more. Nearly 1,500 attended the Fun Palace events, with great feedback from people running the activities and participants.

[I learnt that] *"everyone can be a poet"!*

"It was such a lovely atmosphere and so many people told us how much they and their families had enjoyed things"

"Just wanted to congratulate you all on a fantastic fun palace!!"

2.16.5 After their a four-year partnership in Cheetham and Crumpsall, with much activity taking place at Abraham Moss Library, the Royal Exchange's Local

Exchange programme began in Beswick, Openshaw and Clayton this summer. Local Exchange is a long-term programme, which sees the theatre take up residency in communities across Greater Manchester, building upon existing partnerships, developing new connections and bringing together people, places and artists to cement long-lasting relationships with the communities. Beswick Library is a key partner in the programme and as well as holding regular creative session for young people and adults in the library, staff are supporting the theatre to make local connections and networks – including recruiting Local Exchange Ambassadors to help shape the programme.

- 2.16.6 Manchester Libraries are members of Big Imaginations, a network of organisations working together to bring excellent children’s theatre to the North. The network is led by Z-Arts and receives Arts Council, England funding. Proud and Loud’s, Shadow Girl Origins was a new play about a girl with a vivid imagination, incorporating Makaton sign, it is an adventurous show about friendship, growing up and discovering what it means to be brave. Proud and Loud worked with Big Imaginations and the libraries to create a versatile and atmospheric show adaptable for non-traditional theatre spaces. The play was written by Chrissy Jones, a Manchester based artist living with a learning disability and long-term member of Proud and Loud. Shadow Girl Origins sees her work expand and develop to reach wider audiences, specifically young people. Chrissy wants to provoke a positive discussion about learning disability with a wider public audience. The play was seen in May/June 2022 by an audience of 150 at Beswick, Forum and Central libraries.
- 2.16.7 When Another Dragon Roars, a play with outstanding puppetry and distinctive storytelling was about a mum and boy learning emotional resilience and how stories help us figure out a complicated world. It was first programmed by libraries for schools on zoom during the Spring term in 2021 and returned for 2 live performances last November.
- 2.16.8 Following the Manchester Hip Hop Archive exhibition at Central Library during the summer of 2021, the archive has been submitted to Archives+. These resources will be a major element of Manchester Hip Hop Archive’s education programme, building on pilot delivery to 18 schools during 2022. The Manchester Hip Hop Archive is the first archive for the Hip Hop movement in the United Kingdom. It is dedicated to telling the untold story of Hip Hop in Manchester, collecting and verbal, visual, audio and physical documents, to curate a rich collection that authentically highlight the events, groups and individuals that contributed to the social and cultural phenomenon known as Hip Hop. The project is led by Unity Radio working with community curators, volunteers and partners, including Manchester Libraries and Archives+.
- 2.16.9 Manchester Libraries were finalists in 2 categories in the 2022 Manchester Culture Awards for their work as Libraries of Sanctuary with the Refugee Response Team offering engaging creative children’s activities, which also assisted with learning English and resettlement and for a rich, culturally

diverse programme for International Mother Language Day. The Manchester Hip Hop exhibition at Central Library was also a finalist for Best Exhibition.

2.17 Archives

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

2.17.2 In recognition of the quality and popularity of Archives+ and the library, Manchester Central Library was designated the Northern hub for the 1921 Census, meaning people have had completely free access throughout 2022 when all other people needed to pay. Since becoming available in January, over 300,000 1921 Census records have been viewed for free, that would have otherwise been charged for. A launch of the Greater Manchester rate books and electoral registers project with Findmypast is planned for during May's Local and Community History Month – this new resource will make thousands of indexed family history archives accessible online for free at Greater Manchester archives and libraries for the first time. The Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Helpdesk has been extremely busy throughout 2022. Over 4500 customers have been assisted compared to 3500 pre-pandemic.

2.17.3 The National Lottery supported Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project at Archives+ digitised over 4,500 at-risk sound recordings from around the North West Region. A selection of these recordings will be published at a new British Library website scheduled for launch in 2023. These include oral histories and radio shows from Bolton, Manchester, Oldham and Tameside which provide fascinating insight into lives of residents between the late nineteenth century and the present day. A successful two-year £22.5k Networks for Change bid was made by Archives+ to the National Archives in summer 2022 which will create a new network to improve skills, equipment and awareness of sound heritage around the North West.

2.17.4 Using capital funds, the Archives+ exhibition area is being overhauled to ensure it is sustainable for the next seven years. The film pods are being transformed into Sound and Vision pods which will feature sound archives for the first time alongside the films. This includes Unlocking Our Sound Heritage archives and Manchester Voices material – an MMU project that explored the accents of Greater Manchester.

2.17.5 A great example of contemporary collecting is the tributes left at the Marcus Rashford mural in Withington. Following the European Championships Final in July 2021 the mural was defaced. In the following week the mural was covered in messages of hope and support from local residents and visitors from across the country. We worked with Withington partners to gather the messages which are now held at Archives+ alongside the tributes left at St Ann's Square after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The three-year project to

catalogue and make accessible the Disabled People's Archive in partnership with the Greater Manchester Coalition for Disabled People is progressing well and has made important disability archives available online in a variety of formats for the first time and has contributed archives to the high-profile "Nothing About Us Without Us" exhibition at the People's History Museum – more information in the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion section in 2.12.

2.18 Manchester City of Literature

2.18.1 One of the library service's key partners is Manchester City of Literature. The report in Appendix 10 gives an overview of the commitments to UNESCO and the benefits the designation brings; the governance model for Manchester City of Literature, the independent organisation that coordinates the designation, and its vision, achievements and impacts for residents, local writers and for international initiatives. It also shows how high-quality community celebrations such as Festival of Libraries have impacted on wellbeing and engagement for residents (59.7% reported improved wellbeing; 37% will visit their libraries more often and 47% will encourage other people to visit and use libraries). It shows how Manchester City of Literature has generated an additional £250K+ of external investment in literary activity in the city and supported and created new partnerships. It shows how Manchester is contributing to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3.0 **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this Report, and consider the draft vision for libraries.

4.0 **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Vision for Libraries (Draft)
- Appendix 2 Digital Inclusion Action Plan 2023
- Appendix 3 Libraries Children and Young People's Offer
- Appendix 4 Integrated Authority 2022 Summer Reading Challenge Report
- Appendix 5 Images of Z-Arts Children's Library
- Appendix 6 Manchester Libraries Age Friendly Pledge
- Appendix 7 Supporting Businesses – BIPC and Build A Business
- Appendix 8 Performance in 2022
- Appendix 9 Infographics showing libraries performance in 2022, Summer Reading Challenge, first 2 months as warm spaces
- Appendix 10 Manchester City of Literature update