

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

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

A summary of our response to the specific recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

### **Recommendation 3. The closer involvement of the British Library**

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

### **Recommendation 4. An expanded library membership**

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

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

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

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

### **Recommendation 5. Strengthening the volunteer network**

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

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

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

### **Recommendation 7. The establishment of a Libraries Laureate**

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

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

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

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