

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

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2019

**Subject:** Manchester Libraries: Our Manchester – Our Libraries

**Report of:** The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods

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### **Summary**

The purpose of the report is to provide the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Library 2020 strategy and to present future plans for Our Manchester - Our Libraries.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### **Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
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.
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.
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.
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
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Our libraries are a key location for residents to access digital technology, and activities such as code clubs are helping build skills that will assist

	future generation of Mancunians to sustain the growth of the city.
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**Contact Officers:**

Name: Fiona Worrall  
Position: Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods  
Telephone: 0161 234 3926  
Email: f.worrall@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Neil MacInnes  
Position: Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture  
Telephone: 0161 234 1902  
Email: n.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jane McKelvey  
Position: Citywide Services Manager (Place)  
Telephone: 0161 234 1316  
Email: j.mckelvey@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

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

- Manchester Libraries – Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee 27th October 2015
- Manchester Libraries – Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 22nd June 2016
- Manchester Libraries – Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 12 October 2017

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester's libraries embody the Our Manchester Strategy, providing locally based, customer focussed services at the heart of communities. 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 service also operates a 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.
- 1.2 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 80% of its libraries into new or refurbished or co-located premises. 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.
- 1.3 Our libraries are valued community spaces and act as a shop front and an 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.
- 1.4 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 play a vital role through the provision of free public access to computers, access to information, benefit validation and advice sessions.
- 1.5 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 to deliver the 7 outcomes as identified by the Libraries Taskforce publication "Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021"
  - Improved digital access and literacy
  - Helping everyone achieve their full potential
  - Healthier and happier lives
  - Cultural and creative enrichment
  - Greater prosperity
  - Increased reading and literacy

- Stronger and more resilient communities

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.

- 1.6 In 2019, Central Library celebrated its five-year anniversary since reopening. It continues to be the most visited cultural building in the city, attracting a diverse range of residents and 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. Five years on, Central Library's cultural programme, Library Live, exists as a busy and diverse cultural programme for everyone to enjoy. Along with smaller-scale gigs, spoken-word events and visual-art exhibitions, there are larger events where activities take over the whole building (highlights of the 2018/19 programme are given at Appendix 1). In addition, Central Library has hosted a range of popular events, including Silent Discos and 2084: a 1984-inspired Immersive Theatre Production. We have hosted Manchester Literature Festival and Manchester Science festival events. High-profile authors, including Simon Armitage, Alexander McCall-Smith, Jackie Kay and Dani Dyer, have all appeared at sell-out talks and book launches.
- 1.7 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. 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.
- 1.8 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 an increasing number of libraries across the city.
- 1.9 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 the Arts Council (England). Over 400 volunteers enable us to make the best use of the resources available within the city.
- 1.10 Evidence shows that the city's library service is thriving. Visits to libraries and engagements with the various aspects of the service increased again in 2018/19. There were over 3.2 million visits to libraries across the city; this was a 9% increase compared to the previous 12 months, with 1.8 million of these visits being to Central Library. Booklending also increased by 8%. Central

Library has now reached it's planned target of 2 million visits per year.

**Table 1 - Manchester Libraries performance information for 2018/2019**

<b>Libraries 2018-19 Key Measures</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Visits</b>	<b>2,955,450</b>	<b>3,230,650</b>	<b>9%</b>
Virtual Visits (includes Archives+, online resources and externally linked websites)	9,485,600	11,062,820	17%
<b>Total Book and AV Loans</b>	<b>1,252,371</b>	<b>1,356,038</b>	<b>8%</b>
Book issues	792,110	759,870	-4%
eBooks and eudio books	52,670	76,970	46%
Audiobooks	25,830	46,020	78%
eMagazines/eNewspapers	49,070	154,510	215%
Online Renewals	247,740	247,670	0%
Telephone Renewals	8,680	6,800	-22%
Books to Go (Housebound)	76,260	64,200	-16%
<b>Total ICT Uptake (sessions)</b>	<b>982,760</b>	<b>980,300</b>	<b>0%</b>
PC Usage (hours)	396,510	393,540	-1%
PC Usage (sessions)	490,840	468,670	-5%
WiFi Usage (sessions)	495,080	511,630	3%
<b>Active Users (borrowed stock, and/or used a PC)*</b>		<b>99,360*</b>	
Events and Activity Sessions	9,220	9,630	4%
Events and Activity Participation	191,100	192,560	1%
Education Sessions (class visits)	850	940	10%
Education Session Participation	40,250	43,250	7%
Volunteers	350	420	19%
Volunteer hours	21,080	23,490	11%
Benefit Validations (including Universal Credit)	13,530	10,510	-22%
<b>Self Service</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>% change</b>
Proportion of transactions through RFID self service	60.4%	65.4%	5.0%
Proportion of renewals that are online	19.8%	18.3%	-1.5%
Proportion of online reservations	75.8%	76.4%	0.6%
<b>Prison Library</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>% change</b>
Loans	24,110	20,470	-15.5%

Visits	13,050	13,240	1.5%
Stock	13,170	12,520	-5%
Members	516	500	-3.5%
Information Provided (photocopying/internet searches)	2,570	3,360	30.8%
Story Book Dad DVD/CDs	37	28	-24.3%

## 2.0 Library 2020 Strategy

- 2.1 The Library 2020 programme, which began in 2016, consists of a number of key strands aiming to:
- Introduce the successful new customer self service transformation seen at Central Library to all of our libraries.
  - Strengthen existing self service provision.
  - Bring new technologies to the service to increase opening hours and widen access for our customers.
  - Transform Withington library and refresh other key sites.
- 2.2 To support the strategy, £2.1 million has been invested over the past two years. This includes:
- Refresh of RFID (radio frequency identification) self service equipment.
  - Refresh of public PCs and introduction of self service printing.
  - Introduction of Open Plus technology and library refresh at Withington.
  - Introduction of on-line payments for customers.
  - Upgrade front of house and customer experience.
  - Introduce wifi printing across the city.
- 2.3 The transformation of Central Library enabled the development of a new suite of customer self service opportunities including self service printing and updated PCs along with streamlined support from IT. This model has now been rolled out to all libraries across the city. This form of channel shift is cost effective, convenient and empowering for customers who want easier, faster access to information, library resources and the ability to manage their library accounts online. The library website is a key part of the service with access to 24 hour resources, local and family history material and ebooks for loan and magazines available.
- 2.4 We introduced online payments for fines and charges for overdue or lost books and postal overdue reminders, and already a large percentage of these charges are paid for online. Open+ is a technology that enables customers to access their library 'out of hours' using library card and PIN. We have successfully rolled out Open+ to Withington and Forum libraries where we have used the technology to extend opening hours by 20 hours at each library. Customers are able to issue/return books, use PCs and WIFI, pay fines and pick up reservations during these self-service hours.
- 2.5 RFID (Radio Frequency Identifier) Self Service was originally rolled out across the service in 2010 and a key part of Library 2020 was to refresh and update

this equipment. Over 60% of customer transactions now go through the self service channel which has allowed the service to focus on customer and community engagement, library programs including class visits and under 5's storytimes, widening access and participation which has ultimately seen an increase in use of our libraries.

- 2.6 To further support Library 2020, Manchester City Council has continued to invest in its libraries in recognition of the key role they play as community hubs at the heart of neighbourhoods. Over the last year, Withington Library has had a major refurbishment, with £1 million invested to make major repairs, provide a full refurbishment and create two new community meetings rooms. As above, the Open+ system has also been introduced, which enables the space to be available for customers outside of staffed opening hours.
- 2.7 In partnership with the Forum Trust, Wythenshawe Forum library has also had a significant makeover to modernise and refresh the space, install the Open+ entry system, whilst also introducing elements of the library offer with Job Centre Plus and MAES. Hulme library in Moss Side Leisure Centre also had a mini makeover as part of the wider leisure centre works.
- 2.8 Preparatory work has begun on building the new multi-agency Gorton Hub, which will include a new library to replace the existing building. The new library will be the same size as the current library and will have the same facilities in terms of meetings rooms and an ICT suite. Being part of an integrated building with a wide range of other community services including a GP practice, community health services, One Manchester housing, Manchester Adult Education Services (MAES), mental health services and adult social care will mean that local residents will find all the main local services under one roof, and enable close working between the partner agencies. The new building is due to open in late 2021.
- 2.9 We are currently engaging with residents with plans for a new library and leisure centre to replace the provision at Abraham Moss. The new centre is planned to open in Spring 2022. A temporary library would be provided within the overall site whilst the works are underway to ensure that local residents, including school pupils, can continue to access library services.
- 2.10 Research has shown that residents use of libraries changes during their lives. Libraries future usage depends on meeting the needs of our communities and neighbourhoods. During 2019, we began producing Library Development Plans as part of the widening access agenda for each of the 22 libraries across the city. These are 3 year plans that analyse existing library performance, activities and reach into communities, and outline priorities for action in each locality in the context of the ward plans relevant to each branch. These give a wealth of information about our libraries and how they serve our communities, and show how local libraries draw in people from a wider catchment than would be expected. Staff at each library who work directly with customers within their local communities, are engaged through an Our Manchester process, so that their local knowledge and experience is used to help identify customer needs and to set priorities. These sessions have demonstrated the very strong sense of customer care that library staff have for

their customers.

### **3.0 Libraries 2025 - Our Manchester - Our Libraries**

- 3.1 Building on the current success of the Library 2020 programme to strengthen self service provision and introduce new technologies to improve access, Library 2025 will ensure further improvements to access and participation with increased use of our community assets.

We recognise the growth in the population of the city and see increased use of our libraries as a result of this. We will be ensuring our services and offer is widely publicised and available to all who work, live, study and visit the city.

The huge increase in the city centre population to date and as planned will see increased use of Central Library and we are developing a range of programmes targeted at those new audiences and looking at how we can increase targeted engagement through the use of social media.

At its core, Library 2025 utilises the fundamental principles of Our Manchester and adopts a strength based approach to working with customers, partners and our staff. The core aims of the Library 2025 vision *Our Manchester - Our Libraries* are that libraries will:-

- Be **welcoming** places where residents from all backgrounds feel comfortable, safe, and can find the information that they need to live well, achieve and aspire.
- Improve **health and wellbeing**, and support people to make healthier choices.
- **Improve educational attainment**, and increase the number of children arriving at school ready to learn, and enhance activities for **young people**.
- Encourage **reading** and improve literacy.
- Support **digital inclusion** of residents.
- Create a **strong cultural offer** in libraries across the city that engages, reflects and celebrate the diversity of our communities, and that engenders pride in the city.
- Support the positive contribution **older people** make and their active contribution to city life and their communities.
- Increase **volunteering** opportunities.

### **3.2 Places that are welcoming to all**

Libraries are some of the few buildings that are open evenings and weekends, free to access, non judgemental, warm and welcoming to all. Many services and agencies, within and outside the council, also use libraries to disseminate information and obtain feedback from communities as well as a venue for delivery.

Library facilities support all our communities, and can be especially important to communities newly arrived in the city. They are a first point of contact and a safe, non threatening place to spend time and access computers. During the next 12 months Manchester will develop four Libraries of Sanctuary as part of



the City of Sanctuary movement, which aims to increase community cohesion, and understanding of the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. We have received funding for this from The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Controlling Migration Fund in a joint project with Oldham Libraries and Bolton Libraries. This initiative will result in increased engagement with asylum seekers and refugees, and an increased understanding from the wider community.

Libraries ensure they are welcoming and reach out to support people facing homelessness or in temporary accommodation. Our libraries are used regularly by rough sleepers. Of particular use to people in this situation is access to information and services that are available online. For example many applications for housing can only be done online, and universal credit needs to be applied for and managed online. Libraries provide supported access to IT, for those who otherwise are likely to be digitally excluded and deprived of access to services through their circumstances. Over 100 people have benefitted from partnerships with local charity Lifeshare and Booth Centre, The main barrier to library use for people who are sofa surfing, homeless, or rough sleeping is they don't have proof of address. This means that traditionally they could not register for a library card and use the full library services. To overcome that barrier. The initiative enables people without permanent address to access the Internet and borrow books, knowing that they will not receive fines. This meets AIM 2 of the Homelessness Strategy - "Make experiences of homelessness as brief as possible". We have also introduced an outreach collection of stock for young people using the service at Lifeshare. We propose to develop the scheme further by increasing the number of people benefitting from this scheme with those organisations, and expanding the scheme to other organisations such as Centrepont and Barnabus. Also by the end of this year a leaflet will be available to rehousing advisers to be given with a library card to their clients when they are being housed in a new area / community in temporary or permanent accommodation. The leaflet will inform where their local library is, and details the most relevant services available – for example Internet access (for job search, Universal Credit, housing applications), activities etc.

### **3.3 Improving Health and Well-being**

Libraries are a trusted community space, whose unique benefits include assisted digital access, health information, resources and services, and the volunteering and recreational opportunities they provide. This makes them perfect to deliver a range of health and wellbeing benefits to local communities including those who may not normally access other services. Libraries are working with key partners such as Buzz and local LCOs to ensure that we are part of the network of services to support wellbeing at local level. Manchester Libraries is also taking an active role on the Greater Manchester "Healthy Libraries" programme, that has brought together the ten authorities with colleagues from Public Health to produce an annual programme of health information and promotion in order to increase residents' awareness and access to this information.

As part of the Libraries 2025 strategy, libraries will help people manage their health and wellbeing by:

- Providing a welcoming, safe, free and non threatening space where people can feel socially included and less isolated, without there being any demands or expectations on them.
- Signposting and referring the public to information and local services who can provide advice and support.
- Providing tailored information - every library has a Health Information Point with Reading Well self-help reading lists and Books on Prescription collections covering key areas of health and wellbeing such as mental health, dementia and long term conditions.
- Providing creative and social reading activities for a range of targeted groups such as people living with dementia or long term health conditions, teenagers and older people.
- Social and support groups to reduce isolation and help individuals connect with the community.
- Supporting literacy and health literacy.
- Providing a space for other agencies and community groups to use to connect with local residents.
- Providing access to a range of cultural activities which positively support social interaction whilst celebrating identity and culture, all of which have a beneficial impact on mental well being and self esteem.
- Increase the number of volunteering opportunities within the service through the MCRVIP website.
- Increase the number of volunteers engaged within the service beyond the current level of 420.

The Health and Wellbeing offer has been developed by Libraries Connected and the Reading Agency and further information can be found at - <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/universal-offers/health>



www.reading-well.org.uk

The Libraries Taskforce, led by Arts Council England and supported by DCMS has also published

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/712807/Libraries\\_Taskforce\\_-\\_Healthier\\_and\\_Happier\\_Lives.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/712807/Libraries_Taskforce_-_Healthier_and_Happier_Lives.pdf)

### 3.4 Improve educational attainment and enhance activities for young people

Libraries are a safe place for parents and children to visit with a range of books, attractive children's areas, and policies to help make the library visit a positive experience for parents and children. Manchester Libraries and Bookstart gift book packs to more than 16,000 babies and three-to-four year olds each year, to encourage an early love of books and reading. The Summer Reading Challenge encourages 4-11 year olds to maintain their reading levels over the summer holidays by reading any six books and receiving incentives along the way. Libraries also offer a range of free activities for families including storytimes and crafts.

Holiday hunger is a recognised problem in areas of high deprivation. During school summer holidays, free school meals are not available, and children can face an increased risk of malnutrition and related health/developmental problems. Manchester Libraries' highly successful Read and Feed initiative tackles holiday hunger and also maintains children's engagement with reading through the strong links with the Summer Reading Challenge. Read and Feed ran at Fallowfield Library (Place at Platt Lane), Gorton Library and Newton Heath Library.

### **3.5 Encourage reading and improve literacy**

Increasing levels of reading is core to our service offer. Reading delivers a wide range of benefits to people and is vital to creating an informed, healthy, resilient and imaginative society. At the same time, poor literacy skills can have a significant impact on educational achievement, employment and life chances.

Book borrowing has increased over the last 12 months, largely because of the popularity of our Borrowbox e-book/e-audio service. We promote our books more effectively through the new 'mobile-friendly' web catalogue, which we'll continue to develop in coming years. We are continually improving the way books are displayed in libraries, including the installation of a new 'power-lending' area in Central Library.

Reading for pleasure will continue to be promoted in multiple ways including hosting reading groups, supporting reading groups in the community, contributing to the Becky Want reading group on BBC Radio Manchester, hosting reading/author events, and tying into Read Manchester initiatives such as the Readathon and Drop Everything and Read. In 2019 we hosted the national World Book Day event, and will do so again in 2020.

We are integral to the success of Manchester UNESCO City of Literature, and will be developing numerous initiatives that ties into this designation. As part of this we will continue to celebrate the linguistic diversity of Manchester as highlighted by our recent work with International Mother Language Day and the Made in Manchester multilingual poem.

We are leading Read Manchester with Education Services and a separate report is included as part of this meeting.

### **3.6 Support digital inclusion of residents**

Libraries are the foremost venues to support digitally excluded Manchester residents - providing access, improving skills and giving residents motivation to go online. All 22 Libraries provide free supported Internet Access, free public Wi-fi, access to printing. Residents are helped to develop their digital confidence and skills through workshops, courses and drop in sessions, delivered through a variety of methods, including libraries staff, volunteers, private sector companies and partner agencies such as Citizens Advice Manchester and MAES. Online learning resources such as Learn My Way, iDEA and Cisco's Netacademy are also promoted to customers.

Residents are supported with their use of services which are only available online. Examples of digital assist include the Council's parking scheme roll-outs where hundreds of residents near the Etihad Stadium were supported at Beswick Library, and the national scheme where residents are supported to navigate the gov.uk website by our library staff, to assist them with their visa applications.

Libraries are also used to increase digital skills and creativity amongst children. Coding clubs for 8-12 year olds are held in 10 of our libraries. Digital skills have been integrated into class visits and other events for children, including the use of green screen and roving robots.

### **3.7 Strong Cultural Offer**

Libraries are playing a key role in increasing access to and engagement in culture across the city. Library 2025 will further develop this role, working with community groups, young people and local creatives, as well as cultural partners, establishing libraries as welcoming venues for a wide range of creative and cultural activity and engagement. Continuing to build strong partnerships between our library venues, the people who are using them and the city's cultural organisations remains a key part of developing and attracting investment to support a good local cultural infrastructure and offer in neighbourhoods - linked to the city centre and building on the success of Central Library as a significant cultural venue. Development of strategic partnership between the Greater Manchester Libraries and Greater Manchester Arts networks, with a view to joint procurement, shared programming and leading the development of arts practice and production in neighbourhood libraries. We also work with partners to deliver and support a range of community based local history projects and programmes including Black History Month, Disability History Month and LGBT History Month.

Following the successful pilot of the Creative Spaces programme at three branch libraries, a further grant was secured from Arts Council England to develop this work further. The programme invites people to come be a part of their local library to enjoy the arts and get creative, right on their doorstep. Manchester Literature Festival, Brighter Sound, Manchester International Festival and Big Imaginations are partnering with libraries over the next 4 years to deliver engagement, skill development and event opportunities. There is also activity in each library supporting young people to lead activity, including Creative Community drop in sessions, showcase events and festival style happenings. The programme also incorporates creative activity already delivered by libraries, as well as, some long established community led session. The breadth of activity is really important in making these Creative Spaces welcoming, relevant, whilst also offering new experiences and opportunities. The development of the Creative Spaces initiative has been shaped through consultation with some sixty organisations and groups and in evaluation from the pilot participants reported a wide range of positive outcomes: developing confidence, feeling more empowered, able to have a voice in their community, and gaining creative leadership and volunteering skills.

We have received £500,000 over three years from the British Library to be the north west hub of the Unlocking the UK's Sound Heritage project. This project will digitally preserve and make available thousands of at-risk sound recordings. Many of these recordings are oral histories that provide a fascinating insight into the lives of residents of Manchester and the north west, increasing awareness and pride in our communities. We will improve access

by making it easier for people to find and listen to audio archives, engage the public in audio archives through events and activities, and provide opportunities for residents to volunteer as part of the project.

### 3.8 Supporting Older People - Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries already host a wide range of social activities for older people. These include coffee mornings, Grand Day Outs, reading groups, local history talks and yoga. These activities help to promote mental health and well-being, increase social engagement and help to combat loneliness and social isolation. For example North City Library host a 'Grand Day Out' group every Monday afternoon enjoying 'Silver Surfer' computer sessions, craft activities, quizzes and cultural day trips. This group, with support from staff, has been successful in receiving funding to pay for trips out to museums, art galleries and other destinations.

During 2019, we developed an Age Friendly Action Plan and consulted the Age Friendly Manchester Assembly on this. A key part of this is that all libraries will be assessed before to see if they meet the Manchester Libraries Age Friendly pledge - see below. This will ensure all library facilities and services meet a set of common standards that older visitors can expect to find across all of Manchester's Libraries. This assessment will be done in partnership with volunteers who are older people:-

#### *Manchester's Age Friendly Library pledge*

Our library:

1. **Makes everyone feel welcome**, with a friendly smile. The library is your place.
2. **Encourages social engagement** – we will give you opportunities to meet others
3. **Is accessible** – no services are only accessible by stairs. You can fit a wheelchair in the door and between the furniture. The library is well lit. Even, clutter free flooring.
4. **Has places to sit** – feel free to 'Take a Seat'.
5. **Offers volunteering opportunities** – pass your experience onto others.
6. **Has large print books, talking books and e-books**
7. **Supports you with your computer use** – and has IT training sessions.
8. **Provides information**
9. **Displays leaflets and posters**
10. **Has toilet facilities** including accessible toilets

The majority of the Books to Go customers for housebound people are older people. Over the past 12 months, the level of Books to Go customers has increased by 20% to 470. In addition to deliveries of books every 4 weeks, we now show people how to borrow ebooks and eaudio books, and use the

libraries catalogue, and lend tablets to customers, if they don't have their own devices. Our 2025 Strategy will build on the Age Friendly work already underway and ensure that we offer venues and services that support and engage with Manchester's Older residents.

### **3.9 Increase volunteering**

More people are volunteering and becoming involved in community life through libraries and archives and this is also helping to widen the range of services on offer and to secure others. In 2018/19 we had 420 volunteers work with us, enabling us to make the best use of the resources available within the city.

For example a volunteer at North City Library's Storytime sessions has now gained a job with us.

"I saw the volunteering opportunity at the library and applied because I wanted to give something back to the community. I was also looking to take the opportunity to get myself in the best possible position to gain employment, so I took advantage of all the courses being offered to the library volunteers"

"Through my volunteering opportunity, I gained confidence in speaking to members of the public and answering their questions".

In our 2025 Strategy we will continue to recognise and utilise the benefits of volunteers and the voluntary sector in bringing a wide range of skills and experience to the wider library service. Continue to try and diversify and increase the volunteer base – particularly with young people, developing skills and helping to create positive pathways to work. Continue to help activate community and voluntary heritage projects at neighbourhood level.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

Over the last 10 years, Manchester Libraries has transformed itself, change has been rapid and the service is now highly regarded and seen as playing a vital role in the heart of every neighbourhood and community in the city. The vision for a modern, quality, sustainable and comprehensive public library service has been delivered through a programme of modernisation, refurbishment and replacement of library buildings with a focus on co-location, digital development, wider community engagement and partnership. The Library 2020 strategy was a key part of this programme, enabling significant capital investment in library systems and buildings to improve and widen access to services for our customers.

The library service and offer is supporting Our Corporate Plan - with the service plan aligned to ensure that the Council's priorities for the next 2 - 3 years around young people, healthy, cared for people, housing, neighbourhoods, connections, growth that benefits everyone and a well managed council are at the heart of our strategy and delivery.

These are exciting and challenging times for Manchester Libraries. As we move forward, Library 2025 will see the service building on the excellent work

that has already been done, with a renewed focus on future development - new locations, new partnerships and new technology - all within an Our Manchester approach that puts residents at the heart of our service.