

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 11 October 2018

**Subject:** Cultural Ambition

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive

---

**Summary**

This report provides an overview of work undertaken to develop and deliver the Cultural Ambition. The Cultural Ambition sets out a series of aspirations for art and culture over the next ten years and demonstrates how the cultural sector can contribute to the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy. The Cultural Ambition articulates some of the ways in which cultural organisations can work to ensure that opportunities for access and participation are as wide as possible and inclusive of all Manchester residents.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to note the report.

---

**Wards Affected:** All

**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	Cultural Ambition is a strategy which seeks to support the growth and skills priorities of the city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The report details the working groups and approaches to delivering the Cultural Ambition including skills and talent development.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Central to the Cultural Ambition is the priority to make Manchester the UK's most culturally democratic city, engaging with a much greater number and diversity of people across the city. The report describes the work of groups focusing on expanding cultural audiences and addressing engagement 'cold-spots'.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live,	Joint working amongst cultural partners includes marketing and communications initiatives

visit, work	encouraging residents and visitors to access the cultural riches Manchester has to offer.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Cultural Ambition encourages organisations to showcase international work and can also offer digital connectivity to worldwide cultural activities. The Manchester International Festival report provides additional content.

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Dave Moutrey  
Position: Director of Culture  
Telephone: 0161 212 3426  
E-mail: dave.moutrey@homemcr.org

Name: Neil MacInnes  
Position: Strategic Lead - Libraries, Galleries and Culture  
Telephone: 0161 234 1392  
E-mail: n.macinnes@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Sarah Elderkin  
Position: Principal Policy Officer, City Policy  
Telephone: 0161 234 4241  
E-mail: s.elderkin@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):** None

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides an overview of work undertaken to develop and deliver Cultural Ambition 2016 - 2026.

1.2 Cultural Ambition is a strategy which sets out a series of aspirations for art and culture over the next ten years and demonstrates how the cultural sector can contribute to the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy. It is available to download on the Manchester City Council website:

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/5644/cultural\\_ambition](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/5644/cultural_ambition)

1.3 Cultural Ambition articulates some of the ways in which cultural organisations can work to ensure that opportunities for access and participation are as wide as possible and inclusive of all Manchester residents. This connects with broader work on Widening Access and Participation in Leisure, Libraries, Galleries and Culture is discussed elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

1.4 Dave Moutrey, Director and CEO of HOME, Director of Culture for Manchester and Chair of the Cultural Leaders Group, will attend the meeting to speak about the Cultural Ambition.

## **2 Background**

2.1 Manchester has a dynamic and diverse cultural offer including major festivals, arts companies, community led groups, artists, producers, promoters and leading cultural institutions including museums, heritage attractions, galleries, theatres, arts centres, concert hall and venues.

2.2 Cultural Ambition is the city's cultural strategy (2016 – 2026) and describes a set of aspirations for arts and culture in Manchester. It represents the cultural sector's response to the Our Manchester Strategy, demonstrating how arts and culture can help to realise the Our Manchester vision of a thriving, creative and equitable city.

2.3 Cultural Ambition is also closely linked to the Our Manchester approach - in working with and for the people of Manchester, and seeing people and their talents and ideas as the city's greatest assets. It was informed by the city's largest and most diverse cultural sector conference in 2016 and authored by a group of the city's leading cultural partners.

2.4 Cultural Ambition provides a call action for the cultural sector and other partners to work together to achieve a set of ambitions and priorities. It provides a strategic framework that can be adopted by partners in the sector to support their work and Manchester's priorities.

2.5 Cultural Ambition has also been used to inform Manchester's response and contribution to the Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy which is currently in development and shaped the vision for the GM-wide Great Places project.

2.6 The Council has a longstanding commitment to working in partnership with the cultural sector, recognising the role which arts and culture play in benefitting the city's

residents and contributing to economic growth, and by maintaining a commitment to invest both in major cultural institutions and small to medium arts organisations. Cultural Ambition priorities and those of the Our Manchester Strategy and Approach have helped to inform the council's ongoing relationships and investment decisions.

### **3 The Cultural Ambition 2016 – 2026**

3.1 The Cultural Ambition document sets out a number of shared principals, a call to action and 3 priorities.

*“We will act together to ensure that culture makes a bigger difference to more people in our communities – our litmus test of cultural growth – helping to realise the Our Manchester vision to be a thriving, creative, equitable city.”*

3.2 **Priority 1 - Manchester will be known for distinctive work that could only have been made in this place:** Manchester's distinctiveness is in producing great art and culture, which is enjoyed by the widest possible audiences. Cultural partners will develop new collaborative ways of working, where appropriate linked to Factory, and make more work that is internationally recognised for its quality and impact.

3.3 **Priority 2 - Manchester will be the UK's most culturally democratic city, engaging with a much greater number and diversity of people across Manchester:** Cultural organisations will work together to transform the demographic of audiences and participants, to ensure that greater cultural impact for under-represented groups becomes a reality. This will involve prioritising the needs of particular places or neighbourhoods and exploring the unique qualities of place. This will necessitate forging new relationships and different conversations, taking an Our Manchester approach to widening and deepening engagement.

3.4 **Priority 3 - Manchester will be regarded as the city which values and nurtures creative talent, skills, diversity, and expression more inclusively and successfully than any other:** This priority supports Manchester's aspirations as a highly skilled, progressive and equitable and liveable city. The ambition is for Manchester to attract and nurture the next generation of creative producers and technicians and to be a national exemplar for training, production and engagement.

### **4 Working Groups and Partnerships - Delivering the Cultural Ambition**

4.1 In addition to the individual and collaborative efforts by cultural organisations to deliver Manchester's high quality cultural offer, under the leadership of the Cultural Leaders' Group, there are a number of working groups and joint strategic initiatives, including;

- Arts & Health Working Group
- Cold Sports Working Group
- Education, Skills & Talent Group
- Audiences Group

## 5 Arts & Health Working Group

5.1 This group is investigating the how best to capitalise on the collective impact that cultural organisations in Manchester can have on the health of residents.

5.2 There are some leading areas of practice in arts and health by cultural organisations in Manchester. Connecting the opportunities around health devolution in Greater Manchester to imaginative new approaches to helping residents stay well and live healthy lifestyles, has been the central focus of the group.

5.3 The GM Population Health Plan has a commitment to;

- develop a programme of activity on arts in health and social care and social action on wellbeing and
- embed this approach in commissioning of health and social care services and wellbeing services.

5.4 In December 2017, the Health Board supported a proposal that a group is established to determine the next steps towards a GM Arts for Health and Wellbeing programme. The Arts & Health Task Group has developed to take on this role and includes cultural sector representatives and health service professionals.

5.5 The group has identified the need for a commitment to commission arts for health and well-being as a sustained health and social care programme. Doing so would position Greater Manchester as an exemplary city region in achieving better health outcomes through supporting the creativity of its citizens and access to arts and culture.

5.6 A proposal has been developed for the next 3 years to focus initially on supporting some large scale projects such as the national 'Dance to Health' programme which pioneers falls prevention amongst older people and drawing on local expertise on arts activity related to dementia - both of which have been particularly impactful. Then to focus on community based arts and wellbeing activity with a focus on Person and Community Centred Care and implement an evaluation programme to inform future phases.

5.7 In addition to this, members of the Culture Leaders group and other sector representatives are supporting the World Healthcare Congress (Europe), which will take place in Manchester over 2019 and 2020. Arts for health and social change is one of the three main themes for the congress giving the sector a unique opportunity to place culture, heritage and the arts at the heart of public debate.

5.8 The recently published All Party Parliamentary Group report, *Creative Health*, was the result of a 2 years inquiry into the impact of arts and culture to wellbeing. Greater Manchester is highlighted as a leader in arts and health and in recognition of this, the report was launched in Manchester, as well as London.

5.9 Manchester continues to pioneer in this field and a number of organisations are beginning to explore how their approach to health and wellbeing can be part of their whole organisational approach - not just their engagement work. Just a few examples are detailed below:

5.10 *And Breathe . . .* is an exhibition of artworks at Manchester Art Gallery that was co-curated with mental health groups and young people. The works chosen, explore the link between art and positive mental health and wellbeing and is promoted as wellbeing exhibition with a specially created audio guide.

5.11 As Manchester Museum embarks on a major capital re-development project, a health and wellbeing programme, Boost!, has been introduced for all staff to participate in. Boost! is a proactive approach to promote a greater awareness of wellbeing and its importance for healthier individuals and healthier working practices. Boost! provides and promotes a range of high quality, accessible and engaging initiatives, activities and events to encourage participation in wellbeing. The six ways to wellbeing (connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give, care) inform and shape the programme.

5.12 Examples of activities available so far include, Low carbon lunch – monthly themed ‘bring and share’ lunch with colleagues led by the Primary Learning Coordinator, Museum Wellbeing Choir – weekly singing for fun with the Curator of Earth Sciences, Bhangrercise – 5 dance sessions led by a professional teacher, Origami Orchids – weekly origami folding drop-ins with the Curator and Curatorial Assistants for Botany.

*“great to be able to take 10 minutes away from my desk and have a chat with colleagues whilst folding paper orchids”*

5.13 Streetwise Opera, working closely with the Booth Street, runs weekly singing and acting workshops for people who are or have been homeless. There are opportunities to perform in public, see professional productions, volunteer and take part in other arts activities.

5.14 Streetwise Opera partner with many of the cultural organisations in city, with public performances taking place at HOME, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester Cathedral, St Ann’s Church and Whitworth Gallery and trips to see operas at the RNCM, the Opera House, as well as The Lowry.

5.15 Streetwise Opera’s evaluation of the impact their activities had on the people who took part demonstrates significant improvements in health and wellbeing. In 2017/18, their evaluation showed that:

- 92% of surveyed performers reported feeling their mental health had improved as a result of their involvement with Streetwise Opera.
- 89% reported feeling their physical health had improved
- 82% reported feeling healthier in general

*“I sometimes feel very down, but if I can get myself here, I always feel better when I leave, I never feel worse, I always feel better.”*

## **6 Cold-Spots Working Group**

6.1 To deliver the depth of reach into the city’s diverse neighbourhoods that the Cultural Ambition sets out for the city, a group of cultural partners are leading a research project so that a new strategic and collaborative approach can be designed.

6.2 The group is made up of cultural education and engagement professionals from

the city's leading cultural organisations. They meet every month to share where activity is taking place both to map and strategically plan future activity. The group is being supported and working alongside the council's cultural and intelligence teams to explore developing an online mapping platform to develop a richer picture of what currently happens in the city's cultural 'cold-spots'. Partners are working together to boost cultural participation levels in these target neighbourhoods.

6.3 The majority of organisations have a very active approach to engaging with residents, where they live, as well as offering welcoming and accessible opportunities to experience their venues.

6.4 The Royal Exchange is creating strong and sustained relationships with communities by being present in neighbourhoods, bringing creative experiences, connecting with neighbourhood cultural assets, contributing to local events and getting to know local people. Initial work has focussed on Cheetham Hill and, working with the Cold-Spots Working Group, the theatre is now identifying several other areas of the city to connect with.

6.5 Some of the activity that has taken place in the Cheetham Hill area includes;

- The Listening Exchange at Abraham Moss Library - an interactive art installation that invites people to share their memories, dreams, thoughts about theatre in the C21st and their relationship with the Royal Exchange;
- Presentation of productions by the theatre's Elder Company (*Moments that Changed Our World*), and the Young Company (*The Tempest*) at the World Irish Centre and the theatre at Abraham Moss Community School respectively.
- Along with with other large, city centre cultural venues supporting locally led events, such as the Cheetham Hill Festival and Fun Palaces, a national initiative celebrating arts and science, happening in libraries across the city (Abraham Moss, North City, Longsight, Wythenshawe Forum).

6.6 HOME launched its new programme of #HOMEinspires last month. #HOMEinspires is the venue's communities programme, which connects with groups, charities and voluntary organisations from across Manchester to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to take part in and experience HOME, both as audiences and as artists.

6.7 The #HOMEinspires Community Programme includes:

- **Inspire Gallery:** A dedicated exhibition space in HOME's downstairs bar area showcasing work by partner organisations.
- **A City Seen:** A quarterly film screening exploring the creativity of our city's most essential charities, community groups and voluntary organisations
- **Inspire Ticket Scheme:** Providing £1 tickets to community groups, charities and voluntary organisations who wouldn't ordinarily be able to visit for a variety of reasons.
- **HOME Tours:** Free behind the scenes building tours and gallery tours.

6.8 Over 4000 Inspire tickets have been used by over 100 community groups from Greater Manchester with a further 250 groups engaging in free tours, talks and outreach projects. Groups regularly involved include Manchester Cares, Reform Radio, Rainbow Noir, One Manchester, the Wai Yin Centre and Salford Heart Care.

6.9 The Mustard Tree, The Booth Centre, Chorlton Good Neighbours, Reel Mcr and One Manchester have been involved in showcasing their work as part of the quarterly screening night and in the #HOMEinspires gallery which are new programme strands for 2018.

6.10 HOME is partnered with Manchester Deaf Centre and Venture Arts to create inclusive and accessible programmes plus Community Arts Northwest work with HOME each year to programme a Refugee Week festival and a youth theatre company called CYA@HOME.

6.11 In addition, HOME has created strong links with schools and organisations based in Wythenshawe and has worked with Wythenshawe Community Housing Group, Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre, Newall Green High School, Manchester Enterprise Academy, Baguley Hall Primary and The Willows Primary.

## **7 Education Skills & Talent Working Group**

7.1 A group has been set up to develop a strategic approach to employment & skills which recognises the links between engaging young people in cultural activity and pathways into employment in the sector. The ambition is to create a joint approach preparing residents for employment and self-employment in the cultural and creative industries and diversifying the sector's workforce. The group is working to ensure that the sector attracts our local young talented residents from all backgrounds into creative employment fields and provides access to a diverse range of technical, front-of-house and other roles behind the scenes.

7.2 The Education Skills & Talent Group is made up of representatives from a range of leading cultural organisations, especially those that have key programmes around skills, pathways to employment, entrepreneurship and professional development. With the opportunity of the Factory development and the learning, skills and training offer being planned – feeding into this has been central to the agenda of this group.

7.3 Manchester International Festival has recently appointed to the post of Cultural Skills and Training Director. As well as delivering on the The Factory's commitments to apprenticeships, a major focus will be the development of a consortium across the sector to establish a work academy approach to offer skills development and employer led training including apprenticeships. Opportunities will be developed across the sector's areas of delivery; technical, management and administration and operational/facilities

7.4 The Cultural Skills & Training Director is working closely with the Education, Skills and Talent Group and the wider sector. Following a consultation and research phase, they will present potential models of delivery to take the work forward.

7.5 A number of organisations have their own talent and employment initiatives. For example the National Football Museum has launched a new programme of free adult learning courses for Manchester residents, with a focus on engaging people who may not have thought of the museum sector as a potential employer. Achieve Your Goals offers a choice of a 15 and 50 hour course, the latter includes a museum work placement. Modules include customer care, financial literacy and maths, museums for health and well-being, time management, ESOL or literacy development. The course, which is being promoted strongly through community networks, also aims to build participants confidence and employability skills. The initiative is supported by Manchester Adult Education Service.

7.6 For Manchester to meet the ambition - to be a city which nurtures creative talent and is a place where new work is written, produced and created, the group has also focused on workspaces for artists and spaces where new performances and productions can be built and rehearsed.

7.7 Manchester's success in attracting investment and growth in the city centre is displacing creative and cultural uses in formerly affordable buildings around the city fringe. The recent experience of relocating Rogue Artists' studios to a former school site in Openshaw has been a great success but there is a growing demand amongst artists, performance arts groups and other creative and digital companies for affordable spaces.

7.8 Recognising that a more bespoke approach may be needed to fully realise the ambitions regarding Cultural Education and a Manchester Cultural & Creative Curriculum – there are plans for a new separate group with a Cultural Education focus to be formed.

## **8 Audience Development Working Group**

8.1 Cultural organisations have delivered unprecedented levels of audience growth in recent years and attracting paying audiences to concerts, performances, events and exhibitions provides essential primary income sources needed to support the high quality work being promoted in the city. In addition, for the sector to reach the depth and breadth of audiences described in the Cultural Ambition, reaching more successfully than ever into the city's neighbourhoods - a coordinated approach to audience development is key.

8.2 The Audiences Group has been established to look at the challenges and opportunities for collaborative work on audience research, use of intelligence and joint promotional activity. It has been arranged on a Greater Manchester basis to include key cultural partners that make up the city region's diverse offer such as the Lowry, Imperial War Museum North and Bolton Octagon. The group is planning a symposium in December 2018 looking at current audiences and potential audiences as the start of a big-data project.

8.3 This work will build on existing joint working between cultural organisations, Marketing Manchester and the city's hoteliers, which has led to a number of exciting campaigns to attract visitors to Manchester and to engage them in our cultural offer whilst they are here. One of the outcomes of this work has been the creation of

Culture Hosts, a shared listings database / platform that allows partners to upload event and venue listings online. Culture Hosts supplies listings to the online magazine creativetourist.com and generates bi-weekly What's On cultural briefing notes to local hotel partners and front of house teams.

8.4 With this in place, and the breadth of the cultural offer now available in digital form, Manchester is in a great position to capitalise on this resource to launch a new resident facing website. Having been developed by leading sector marketers with the input of cultural partners in the city, Manchester has never been in such a strong position to effectively communicate its rich offer to the city's residents. Details of the website being scoped is featured in the Widening Access Report also presented to this Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

## **9 Conclusion**

9.1 The articulation of the city's cultural ambitions in a strategy plays an important role in enabling cultural partners to work collectively on new and innovative ways of working, and make a clear signal to external partners, including funding bodies, about the city's commitment to arts and culture.

9.2 The Cultural Ambition 2016 – 2026 shows a clear connection between the ambitions of cultural organisations and the Council's own priorities on Widening Access and Participation, and demonstrates how the sector can support the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy.

9.3 The Cultural Leaders Group is currently reviewing implementation in of Cultural Ambition in the light of recent changes to the strategic environment. This is with a view to sharpening focus and increasing the rate of change and delivery in order to increase effectiveness as resources become more scarce and the landscape more challenging. There is also a strong desire to keep Manchester at the forefront of innovative and collaborative practice in arts management in the UK and beyond to ensure that good value is delivered to audiences, participants and communities.