

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee – 8 October 2020

Subject: Economic Recovery of the City's Cultural Sector

Report of: Strategic Lead Policy and Partnerships and Director of Culture
(Home Manchester)

Summary

The report provides an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on the City's cultural sector; outlines access to local and national financial support for the sector and the gaps identified in the assistance needed for the cultural economy.

The sector faces unprecedented challenges as one of the last industries able to reopen on a financially viable basis. It is also an industry reliant on a highly-skilled, flexible but vulnerable freelance workforce that has been severely impacted by a loss of business. The cultural offer is an intrinsic part of the city centre economy and is fundamental to the wider economic recovery of the city.

A Manchester Culture Recovery Plan has been developed with a wide range of partners and stakeholders and a COVID-19 Culture Recovery Board has been established to lead the city's response to the pandemic and aid the sector's recovery.

Cultural partners have responded creatively to the crisis with many seeking new and digital solutions to engaging audiences and participants. And there have been campaigns to reach out to residents and visitors to connect them to the available offer and promote the reopening of some of the city's key institutions in recent weeks.

There are a number of initiatives to assist businesses, support freelancers and deliver reopening strategies at a local and national level. Emergency assistance was made available by Arts Council England and the Government has put in place a Culture Sector Recovery Fund for England. However, there is evidence that the current level and means of support available will be insufficient to sustain the sector for the duration of the continued period business disruption and that additional support will be needed to stimulate a recovery.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the information provided in this report.

Wards Affected: All

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

Cultural organisations in the city lead the way in their response to the climate crisis with joint efforts to reduce carbon emissions and by engaging audiences.

Our 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	The city’s cultural offer is an intrinsic part of the economic and social life of Manchester and is interconnected with the hospitality sector and night time and visitor economies. The sector is under huge threat as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Manchester Culture Recovery Plan described in the report sets out a strategy for the stabilisation and stimulation of the cultural sector so that it can play an active role in the city’s economic recovery and emerge from the financial impact of the crisis.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success	The cultural and creative industries sector employ a wide variety of staff, freelancers and creative practitioners. The strength of Manchester’s highly skilled talent pool is a key feature in the city’s attractiveness for inward investors and the report highlights a raft of projects and programmes that nurture the talent and skills of the city’s residents, provide pathways into the sector and access to employment.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Culture Recovery Plan identifies the need for the sector to recover and support inclusive growth. The cultural sector delivers entry-level jobs and levels up educational achievement for residents. It brings neighbourhoods together in mutual understanding. It proudly showcases the diversity in our communities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Manchester has a world-leading cultural offer for residents and visitors to access. It adds to the vibrancy of the city centre providing key visitors attractions which engage local people and connect to the city’s schools and education offer.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Contact Officers:

Name: David Houlston
Position: Strategic Lead Policy and Partnerships
Telephone: 0161 234 1541
E-mail: d.houlston@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Dave Moutrey
Position: Director of Culture
Telephone: 0161 228 7621
E-mail: dave.moutrey@homemcr.org

Name: Neil MacInnes
Position: Head of Libraries, Galleries & Culture
Telephone: 0161 234 1392
E-mail: n.macinnnes@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Sarah Elderkin
Position: Principal Policy Officer
Telephone: 0161 234 4241
E-mail: s.elderkin@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.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Arts and culture has an important role to play in the recovery of Manchester and the UK. In addition to the direct economic impact of the culture sector, it plays a key role in the city's complex economic system. The cultural sector has a crucial role to play in promoting and encouraging a return to normal economic activity by demonstrating confidence, positivity and care which will be vital in support of Manchester's plans to mitigate the worst impacts of the impending economic recession. Promoting Manchester as a city that is open for business and leisure both locally, nationally and ultimately internationally will need the arts and cultural sector to be open, active and at its creative best to support the city's place-based promotional activity.
- 1.2 However, the COVID-19 crisis has, and continues to have, a devastating impact on the sector, The Council is working with strategic partners and cultural organisations to support and advocate for the urgent needs of the sector.
- 1.3 Officers have been in regular contact with the cultural organisations that the council supports through its investments and funding agreements and have conducted wider surveys of cultural businesses in April and May 2020 to gain an in-depth insight to the challenges and risks being faced by organisations in the sector. They are continuing their ongoing close relationship with cultural partners providing advice, information on access to funding and support accessing business grants.
- 1.4 The Cultural Leaders Group chaired by the Director of Culture has become an invaluable resource, meeting weekly and now fortnightly to share knowledge and prepare joint strategies for reopening and recovery.
- 1.5 The information and depth of awareness of the impact of the pandemic on the sector has enabled the council to respond to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on the sector and brief Arts Council and other strategic partners on the challenges faced in the city.

2.0 Overview of the impact of COVID19 on the city's cultural sector

- 2.1 From the start of the national lock-down, organisations began modelling a number of scenarios working towards a return to full operations. As it became clear that social distancing measures will continue at least to the end of the calendar year, companies started to cancel all public facing and live events planned for the remainder of the summer and their autumn/ winter 2020 seasons.
- 2.2 For most cultural businesses, their autumn/ winter period is the most important period in their business cycle, delivering the most densely packed cultural season and providing a substantial proportion of annual earned income through ticket and other revenues. For companies that run festivals, they

cancelled their spring and summer events at short notice and programmes planned for the autumn/winter were cancelled or online versions arranged.

- 2.3 From the start of the crisis, it was anticipated that some organisations would be facing insolvency as their reserves became exhausted and that businesses would have to make difficult choices around staff redundancies.
- 2.4 Most cultural organisations are reliant on a significant amount of earned income from sources including ticket sales and earnings from cafe, bar and retail operations. Those companies most reliant on earned income include theatres, cinema and music venues and venues with significant pre-sales have had to refund tickets compounding cash flow difficulties. The dramatic changes to these businesses has a major detrimental impact on their supply chain many of whom are freelancers.
- 2.5 In Manchester, our cultural sector includes major theatres, large-scale event spaces and music venues that are wholly reliant on commercial income sources and are impacted nationally (and in some cases internationally). They too are critical to the cultural ecology and night time economy, and their continuation is important to the city centre recovery strategy.
- 2.6 Organisations providing rented work spaces and rooms for hire also have had a major gap in income. As restrictions were relaxed in the summer and within the rules for social distancing and return to work, we have seen a return for tenants seeking to operate again from premises e.g. artists' studio groups, craft makers workshops, and dance studios.
- 2.7 Earned income from private sector sponsorship and individual giving has been growing in the city over recent years but the financial pressures sponsors are under means businesses have had to withdraw their financial support. University funding is also at risk given the considerable financial pressures they face.
- 2.8 There are several live capital cultural projects in the city and the temporary suspension of building work and other impacts to construction industry supply chains has led to programme delays and increased costs.
- 2.9 Freelancers make up a significant proportion of the sector's workforce and supply chain. The Council's 2018/19 Cultural Impact Data Survey reports a total number of 2,010 employees, across 1128 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles and total number of 2,112 FTE freelancers (*responses from 39 public funded cultural organisations*). Across the wider creative industries sector, the freelance rate is even higher, with over 80% reported amongst film and broadcast industries. This community of workers is a crucial feature of the sector; having a flexible and skilled talent base in the city is one of the reasons Manchester has been able to grow its cultural offer and attract creative and digital sector growth. The sector acknowledges that freelancers in the supply chain are possibly the most vulnerable and the most valuable in terms of the creation of artistic products. Without creative practitioners, there is no creative and cultural offer.

- 2.10 In response to announcements in July of the difficulties facing live music venues in the city, the Council has been working in collaboration with the Music Venue Trust to develop its understanding of the needs of music venues which are cornerstones of the music industry and night time economy. In August 2020 music charity Brighter Sound hosted a music venue round-table with the Executive Member for Skills, Culture & Leisure - Cllr Rahman, to discuss the sector's challenges. In response a range of advisory support was put in place to assist businesses access the government's Culture Recovery Fund and the feedback has been used to inform plans for outdoor events.
- 2.11 Government business support measures such as the Job Retention Scheme and emergency funding for the sector has to date helped to sustain organisations, delaying the point at which some companies have had to make staff redundant. Many companies now await news of their applications to the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund in mid-October 2020 which was launched in the summer.

3.0 Local and national financial support

3.1 Access to mainstream government funding for businesses

- 3.1.1 Business grants and rate relief - The Government's Coronavirus related business grants and extension to business rate relief have been of benefit to some businesses where the nature of the premises, business functions and size of the business rate liabilities have made it possible for cultural business to apply. Unfortunately many cultural companies are also registered charities which rendered them out of scope for Small Business Rate Relief and the Small Business Grants.

The extension of Retail Rate Relief to the hospitality & leisure sector has been of benefit to small public venue operators which have also been able to access the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grants. Cultural officers worked with the Business Rates team to assist cultural businesses with their applications, helping them to access these programmes and benefits where they apply.

The Culture Team identified almost 100 small cultural businesses and micro enterprises that were unable to access the government's COVID-19 business grants and worked with the Work and Skills team to encourage applications to a Council administered Discretionary Grant programme which was available to small businesses that were ineligible for the grant schemes above.

- 3.1.2 At least one major cultural organisation has reported use of a government backed loan. The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounceback loans are available to the sector but many have fears about their ability to repay the loans available. But The Job Retention Scheme has been a welcome and vital form of support and cultural organisations have been furloughing staff where possible. An extension to the furlough scheme is being called for by the sector to avoid further redundancies this autumn. The newly announced Job Support Scheme is likely to benefit those companies able to return, at least in part, to operation but will not be able to protect jobs in

cultural companies which are still unable to reopen or those subject to local or further national COVID-19 restrictions.

- 3.1.3 Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has, and will continue up to the end of April 2021, to provide a assistance to established freelancers in the sector but it has been widely reported that the eligibility criteria excludes freelancers that, for instance; started in their roles after the tax year 2018/19; or who have portfolio careers with earnings from a number of sources (which is a common situation for many freelancers in the cultural and creative industries sector). There are fears that those new entrants to the industry, working as freelance artists and creative practitioners, will have been the most adversely affected and there may be a significant impact on talent retention.

3.2 **Public & Lottery Cultural Funding**

Arts Council England (ACE) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund both responded very quickly to the crisis, repurposing existing grants programmes to provide COVID-19 Emergency funding measures designed to ensure companies stay solvent and survive the initial months of the crisis.

ACE also announced that its National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding programmes will be extended from 4 to 5 years. This is widely seen as a helpful move allowing greater time for recipients to undertake the extensive business planning process required to inform NPO proposals.

ACE also announced some targeted support for creative practitioners and has grant-aided a number of industry bodies to distribute funds e.g. Help Musicians UK and Outdoor Arts UK. This is widely seen as being a very positive step.

However, commercial operators in the creative sector such as commercial theatre and events venues and music venues - were not able to access any of the ACE Emergency funds because they are not normally funded by the public sector for their work. These venues are a highly valued part of the creative and cultural ecology in the city.

3.3 **Culture Recovery Fund**

- 3.3.1 In July 2020, the Government announced a £1.57 billion package of support to protect cultural, arts and heritage institutions and at the end of July, details were released about how the first round of funding (£622m) from the £880 million grants programme for England would be distributed by Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England.

The Culture Recovery Fund comprises:

- £270 million of repayable finance
- £880 million grants
- £100 million of targeted support for the national cultural institutions in England and the English Heritage Trust.

- £120 million capital investment to restart construction on cultural infrastructure and for heritage construction projects in England which were paused due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- £188 million for the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland (£33 million), Scotland (£97 million) and Wales (£59 million).

3.3.2 A £500 million Culture Recovery Fund Grants fund administered on behalf of the Government by Arts Council England is distributing the majority of the £880 million grants programme. This is providing grants to profit and not for profit cultural organisations based in England who are at imminent risk of failure. Applications range from a minimum value of £50,000 up to a maximum of £3 million and the funding is to be used to ensure that by 31 March 2021 organisations were able to be fully or partially reopened, or to be operating on a sustainable, cost efficient basis, so that they are able to reopen at a later date. Applicants will be notified about the success or otherwise of their applications in October 2020.

In August, there was also an early release of a portion of the grant fund targeted at 'grass roots' music venues which benefited 11 of Manchester's small live music venues.

3.3.3 The Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage is being administered jointly by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England which are presently considering grants between £10,000 to £3 million from a £92 million fund. This was open to heritage organisations, heritage sites, venues and attractions to ensure that by 31 March 2021, successful applicants can reopen or can operate on a sustainable and cost-efficient basis so that they are able to reopen at a later date.

3.3.4 Culture Recovery Fund - Repayable Finance - the scheme has been made available for cultural organisations requiring economic support over £3 million. The application process is being administered by a new independent Culture Recovery Board appointed by DCMS and has a total value of £270 million to loan. Organisations have been prohibited applying for both a Culture Recovery Fund grant and repayable finance.

3.3.5 Cultural Capital Kickstart Fund provides £120 million for capital projects, £55 million of which being distributed by Art Council England with the other £65 million being managed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Historic England. It will provide additional capital funding to existing capital grant awarded projects that can demonstrate a funding shortfall due to COVID-19.

3.4 Funding Flexibilities

3.4.1 Three main funding sources for core funding for Manchester arts and cultural organisations include Arts Council England (ACE), Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Manchester City Council (though the Cultural Partnership Agreements Grants and Strategic Cultural Investments). All three funders moved in-step at the start of lockdown to suspend the

conditionality of their funding agreements, allowing recipients to plan and implement contingency measures and use the funding where it is most needed and without having to adhere to their projected outcomes and outputs.

- 3.4.2 The Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure advised organisations that reporting on their funding agreements was suspended from the beginning of April 2020 for the first quarter of 2020/21, with a further communication in May to extend the arrangement to the second quarter until 30 September 2020, in line with ACE and GMCA.
- 3.4.3 Reflecting the tentative steps to reopening the sector over the summer in September, the council wrote to funded organisations to advise them that their funding agreements and associated monitoring will be reinstated from 1 October. The deadline for the culture team's annual Cultural Impact Survey was extended in line with ACE's annual data survey until 30 September 2020.

3.5 Other local support for the sector

- 3.5.1 The need for the sector to respond to the very immediate and significant challenges being faced by freelancers has led to two new initiatives. Manchester International Festival's Artists & Freelancer Drop with the development of online resources and a GM Artists Hub.
- 3.5.2 MIF Artist And Freelance Creative Drop-In - MIF has been hosting free regular drop-in sessions on Zoom where artists and creatives can come together to share experiences and ideas during lockdown. The sessions were initially run daily and are currently weekly hosted by different leading creative practitioners across creative disciplines.
- 3.5.3 GM Artists Hub - The project has been backed by Community Arts Northwest, Contact, hAb + Word of Warning, HOME, Manchester International Festival, Octagon Theatre Bolton, Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Royal Exchange Theatre, SICK! Festival, Sustained Theatre Up North, The Lowry, Waterside Arts & Creative Industries Trafford and Z-arts. Leading arts professionals from these companies are providing 1-2-1 advisory sessions.
- 3.5.4 United We Stream Greater Manchester is a new on-line broadcast platform established by GMCA during the lock-down period to provide a way of promoting live music and performances from the city to audiences locally and further afield. Events on the platform are free to view, but audiences are invited to make donations. Funds raised through donations have supported a relief fund for night-time economy businesses, the Mayor of Greater Manchester's Charity and Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy Charity.

4.0 Culture during local-down

- 4.1 At the start of lock-down, companies were forced to postpone or cancel exhibitions, events and project plans. Most cultural partners have reacted quickly to the challenge of the suspension of face-to-face activity by seeking alternative ways to deliver their programmes on-line or in different ways. Alternative COVID-secure projects and special initiatives during lock-down

have demonstrated some creative approaches to maintaining relationships with audiences, participants and artists.

- 4.2 **The Men's Room** is an arts and health charity supporting men and trans people who sex work, are homeless or both and is supported through the council's Cultural Partnership and Our Manchester Grants programmes.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lock-down arrangements, The Men's Room has continued managing its casework with clients and has been working through emergency accommodation hostel work; helping vulnerable service-users to isolate and to receive food parcels, medicine, and prescriptions in conjunction with health and social care professionals, while also providing ongoing emotional support.

The organisation has been supporting service users to maintain mental well-being in a number of ways, including through access to creative activities through a Creative WhatsApp group, 'arts packs', setting daily arts challenges and the team has also been live-streaming our creative sessions on the platform Zoom. Equipping service-users with digital technology has also been a priority, utilising funding to provide devices and mobile data to service-users who are currently less digitally connected allowing them to access vital services such as the housing options team, benefits services, make pip claims, contact GPs and to access digital creative sessions.

The Men's Room is now open 3 days a week on an appointment basis and the company is delivering COVID-safe face-to-face small group sessions, with the support of developers U+I providing the temporary use of a railway arch in the Mayfield Depot.

- 4.3 **Manchester Histories** works with resident communities and heritage partners to mark Manchester's people, histories and heritage. It is supported by the City Council's through a Cultural Partnership grant and promotes an annual Manchester Histories Festival. Normally held each June, this year's festival was disrupted due to the COVID crisis but the team moved quickly to create an alternative online event.

In September 2020, Manchester Histories broadcast its first ever *DigiFest* live from Manchester Central Library. It celebrated 50 years of the landmark legislation *The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act 1970*, affectionately known as 'Alf's Act', and 50 years of Disabled People's Rights. It was free and open to all, raised the profile of the ongoing struggles for disabled people's rights bringing new perspectives to many watching. Over 3,000 people tuned in over the two days of live and pre-recorded content, contributed by a public open call and commissions. Led by disabled people, and with high levels of access for the audience the team and contributions *DigiFest* made the most of the medium.

Compered by comedian Jackie Hagan, viewers were led into thought provoking, moving, entertaining and fascinating online experience, exploring the positive legacy of Alf's Act as well as the contemporary challenges of

today. Debates about the right to life in the wake of doctors encouraging disabled people to consider 'Do Not Resuscitate' orders at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, mingled with art and music commissioned from disabled artists in response to the festival's themes. Projects exploring disabled people's 'life-worlds' - including one by young deaf sign language users in South Africa using the medium of photography, lockdown blogs from disabled people's perspectives and historical dramas including the stories of incarceration experienced by people with learning difficulties.

The two-day live digital event was accompanied by in-depth filmed pieces and an online gallery which are still accessible now, including three short films about the life and work of Alf Morris specially produced for the event.

- 4.4 **Manchester Jazz Festival (mjf)** is the city's longest running music festival and is an established part of Manchester's cultural programme. It has been supported since its inception by Manchester City Council through Events funding.

The festival, held annually, has grown to feature hundreds of musicians, across over 80 free and charged events, partnering with multiple venues in the city. The festival champions jazz artists and presents new and original material through commissions and premieres, as well as delivering year-round talent development opportunities and international debuts.

The festival, planned for May 2020 - its 25th anniversary, had to be cancelled and tickets refunded and instead Manchester Jazz Festival produced in just six weeks an innovative four-day digital alternative *mjf2020:Jazz Unlocked*. Streamed on the festival's Facebook and YouTube channels the programme featured live 'from home' performances, specially filmed commissions, discussion, interviews and highlights from previous festivals.

mjf proudly committed 100% cancellation fees to its contracted artists that were due to perform at the physical festival (the first in Europe to do so). 194 individual musicians participated in *mjf2020* and all live performers were paid. Of the musicians featured, 74% were based in the north; 44% based in Greater Manchester, with the programme's contributors exceeding mjf's diversity and *Keychange* (gender balance) targets.

mjf2020:Jazz Unlocked attracted nearly 39,000 views across social media platforms, and set a programming format and standard that other festivals across Europe have since championed and emulated. This format will inform mjf's planned hybrid festival model for 2021.

The digital festival was delivered with producing partner Jazz North, and the programme was top and tailed with what became the first UK live jazz group performances since lockdown. It was held at Bury Met in partnership with United We Stream GM.

- 4.5 **Contact**, Manchester's flagship is a council supported arts venue for young people and for diversity. It continued to partner with Spoken Word organisation, **Young Identity** to provide a platform for young poets to talk about the issues that are important to them, alongside established authors

(E.g. Tony Walsh and Louise Wallwein). These are uplifting events that also provide opportunities for peer support and feedback from industry professionals. In April, Contact hosted the first ever *Young Identity: One Mic Stand* as a live-streamed event on their website, at which participants contributed from their homes and in June the organisations partnered again to deliver *One Mic Stand Black Lives Matter* special via Young Identity's YouTube channel.

4.6 The visual arts charity, **Venture Arts**, which is also supported through the council's Cultural Partnership Grants, worked hard to ensure their clients, adults with learning disabilities, remained connected to creative activity and to each other by delivering sessions on the meeting platform Zoom and ran a successful crowdfunding campaign to provide participants with i-pads as both a creative and communication tool. Venture Arts participant, Emlyn Scott, said, *"The new iPad gave me so many things – hope, routine, communication! I love it and am so grateful to all those who donated to the appeal! I had my passion back in my life, I started photographing my garden more and the moon – because there were no planes the sky was clearer."*

4.7 **Community Arts NW (CAN)** is an arts development organisation supported by the council that works with diverse communities and artists to increase access to cultural production for people who may be marginalised (e.g. refugee and asylum seekers / unemployed / self-taught etc). The *Horizons Festival*, co-produced by CAN and HOME, was unable to take place during Refugee Week in June 2020 as planned. In response CAN curated some exciting digital work, sharing a programme of workshops, performances, films and discussions in association with some of the international artists in CAN's creative community in Manchester, many who are refugee or asylum seekers. As well as still being able to celebrate Refugee Week and Manchester's status as the most linguistically diverse city in Western Europe, CAN was able to provide paid opportunities for artists.

With funding from the European Social Fund, CAN is offering free training for unemployed creatives and community leaders who use the arts with communities. Following a successful pilot, a further 11 participants will benefit from *CAN DO Creative Training* with professional development sessions on employability, self employment including finance, project planning, fundraising and health and safety.

Dominic, a current participant, says of his experience of the training: *"It's a great course! So far, it's helped me get my passion back for my art form. If you want to improve your CV and sell your work, this is a great place to start."*

4.8 **Manchester City of Literature** - In response to the Coronavirus crisis and responding to the needs of its partners, the newly formed City of Literature team quickly launched an interim web presence www.manchestercityofliteratureconnected.com. In a crowded online realm, the new website helps to bring together all the literary focused activity in the city in one place, gives profile and prominence to partner projects, local publishers' promotions, online-events and activities and resources such as those for

school children - as well as poetry and other writing competitions, international opportunities.

5.0 Reopening Strategies

- 5.1 As part of the work of the Cultural Leader's Group, chaired by the Director of Culture, three subgroups have been meeting virtually to jointly plan and develop reopening strategies and have been consulting with national industries bodies to review government guidance. There is a Museums and Galleries group, a Performing Venues group and a team looking at the safe return of Participatory Cultural Activities.
- 5.2 The first organisations to fully or partially reopen were museums, galleries and heritage attractions from 4 July 2020, as restrictions were lifted and because of the relative ease with which they can operate in a COVID-safe way, managing the physical distancing of visitors. In Manchester, these include the National Football Museum, Manchester Art Gallery and most recently the Science and Industry Museum, the Whitworth and Manchester Museum. Organisations have pre-booking systems in place for audiences with the ability to welcome additional visitors up to their COVID-safe capacity level.
- 5.3 Cinema and outdoor performances were also allowed to resume activity from 4 July 2020, with many cinemas finding it difficult operating below capacity and encountering issues around the international release schedules for films that had been disrupted. HOME for example chose to delay the opening of its cinemas until early September 2020.
- 5.4 Performing arts venues, including theatres such as HOME and the Royal Exchange, music venues such as the Bridgewater Hall, Stoller Hall and smaller independent music venues were permitted to reopen from 11 July 2020. However, performance venues continue to find it hard to do so in a way that meets current government guidelines on physical distancing in enclosed spaces, whilst opening in a way which is also financially viable. Local lockdown measures in Greater Manchester limiting the meeting of mixed households has compounded the issue in the city for the sector. There are also complex requirements to ensure that performers are safe which impacts on actors, musicians, orchestras, ensembles and choirs.
- 5.5 The Culture Recovery Plan looks optimistically towards 2021 and if funds allow, the opportunity to announce that Manchester's cultural offer back in business. 2021 is a Manchester International Festival year and planning is underway to focus on a high profile spring and summer citywide programme and high profile campaign.

5.6 Re-opening dates

N.B.: Most venues are opening with modified operating hours and services.

July

- Halle St Peter's (wedding venue and restaurant only)

- Manchester Central Library - City Library only
- 8 Manchester branch libraries
- National Football Museum

August

- Manchester Craft & Design Centre
- Elizabeth Gaskell's House
- Museum of Science & Industry
- Manchester Central Library
- Manchester Art Gallery

September

- People's History Museum
- The Portico Library
- Further 6 branch libraries and 5 community libraries
- Centre of Contemporary Chinese Art
- HOME (cinemas, bars and restaurant)
- The International Anthony Burgess Foundation
- The Whitworth
- Manchester Museum
- Castlefield Gallery
- Z-arts planning to reopen for participatory activities

6.0 Culture Recovery Plan and Culture Recovery Board

- 6.1 The cultural and creative industries sector forms a vital part of the city's economy - 'creative and digital' is identified as a key growth sector and a global strength in the Local Industrial Strategy. Seeing a return to this normally thriving community of businesses and freelancers is essential. The Council has established a COVID-19 Culture Recovery Group with a reporting line for the Director of Culture into the Economic Recovery strand of the city's plan.
- 6.2 For our towns and cities to recover, attracting employees, shoppers and visitors to our urban centres, we are reliant on there being a vibrant cultural offer. The cultural sector can play a catalytic role in recovery strategies with campaigns to attract people back to city life. In Manchester, we also hope that cultural offer will also play a key part in rebuilding active neighbourhoods and be an integral part of high street programmes.
- 6.3 **The Manchester Culture Recovery Plan** articulates a need for a £72m investment to secure the future of the city's cultural institutions and cultural offer - making it possible for the sector to recover and reopen. (Culture Recovery Plan attached as Appendix 1 and the financial plan as Appendix 2).

The plan has been developed in collaboration with sector representatives to:

- a) Stabilise organisations to ensure they do not become insolvent as a

result of the crisis and are in a position to reopen when that becomes possible again.

- b) Stimulate cultural activity, re-start the cultural economy and enable the sector to play a central role in rebuilding the citywide economy.
- c) Provide place-based coordination, communications & marketing support.

6.3.1 The two-year plan aims to provide a flexible place-based strategy and programme which will enable the city to respond to the changing challenges of the pandemic and city's economic recovery. It has been codesigned with partners and there will be an inclusive approach to delivery and coordination with the active promotion of cultural diversity and community cohesion at its heart.

6.3.2 The plan features new collaborations and partnerships connecting the creative industries and cultural sector to pool and share resources and to widen reach. It will involve freelance practitioners, small, medium and large scale organisations, working together, to help to build a more robust and inclusive sector.

6.3.3 *"The sector will be one of the last out of a devastating lockdown. This is devastating because arts and cultural organisations are about mass gatherings – something we can no longer take for granted. As social distancing is likely to be here until the end of the year or beyond, some arts and cultural organisations are unlikely to survive. Others will need fundamental changes to what they do and how they do it.*

The domain of freelance artists and creatives – vital to our city's creative health – is now damaged, possibly devastated, clearly threatening their ability to support the recovery of our communities and economy.

This harm goes wider – into the creative industries sector and its web of shared people, supply chains and the cross- fertilisation of ideas and content.

Now, more than ever, we need this sector's power to help our residents understand their history – what Manchester means to the world, and what it means to be part of Manchester."

Manchester Culture Recovery Plan - August 2020

6.3.4 The plan has been developed with varied forms of engagement and consultation within the sector and with strategic partners. At a local level the Recovery Plan was informed by consultation with;

- Cultural Leaders Group;
- GMCA;
- ArtsChain (network of participatory arts practitioners);
- What Next? GM;
- HiDDEN (network of small heritage venues);
- GM Theatres Network;
- Small Theatres Network; and
- Age Friendly Manchester.

6.3.5 Nationally, the Culture Recovery Plan was informed by consultation with;

- Arts Council England;
- Information provided by Core Cities;
- Local Government Association;
- UK Theatre;
- Cinema Exhibitors Association;
- plus Tate Network; and
- What Next? (National).

Subsequently, the plan has been shared with colleagues in the Core Cities Network and the newly established Northern Culture Network.

6.4 Delivery strategy

6.4.1 Manchester's submission to Government as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review included a summary of the city's Economic Growth Plan which will be published in early October. The Plan is structured around the People, Place and Prosperity themes of the *Our Manchester Industrial Strategy* and includes a number of capital projects to support the cultural and creative sector in the city and a '*Phoenix Programme*' to support the sector between autumn and spring/summer 2020.

6.4.2 Officers are working to support creative and cultural businesses to access all the relevant business and sector specific support available to them. Cultural partners with the council are also seeking a diverse range of additional funding sources to bring forward the initiatives described in the Culture Recovery Plan. Together we are putting forward the case for coordinated and cooperative place-based programmes so that in Manchester we can drive the recovery strategy in a collaborative way, leveraging the best possible outcomes for the sector, the city and our residents.

6.4.3 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has prepared a draft GM Culture Recovery plan which also recognises that the cultural sector is well-placed to help support the economic and civic recovery of Greater Manchester and to encourage residents to return to our high streets, town and city centres. It is important to support complementary Greater Manchester wide working where possible.

7.0 Concluding challenges

7.1 The sector is under significant pressure because of the COVID-19 crisis with many organisations making casual and contracted staff redundant in an effort to reduce costs until such time that they are able to return to full operation. The sector has also seen huge disruption to its talent base and freelance ecology.

7.2 Whilst Government support through the Culture Recovery Fund and the efforts with funding flexibility provided by Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund and others has been welcomed, it is becoming clear that the existing measures up to 31st March 2021 will not be sufficient to sustain the

sector in its current form. Without additional targeted support this financial year and next, cultural organisations, including venues large and small are likely to become insolvent and fail.

- 7.3 If across the country more major national and regional institutions fail, local authorities and other strategic partners may need to mothball sites and encourage new operators in the future. There is a long-term risk of city centres being blighted by having anchor institutions out of operation for years to come.
- 7.4 Officers will continue to maintain contact with cultural partners and music venues supporting and advising individual businesses and sharing information, advice and guidance and details of funding opportunities. The Council with its strategic partners and cultural leaders will continue to champion the needs of the cultural sector in the city and seek the support needed to deliver the Culture Recovery Plan.

8.0 Recommendations

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the information provided in this report.