

# ALWAYS EVERYWHERE



Manchester's  
Cultural  
Ambition  
2024-2034





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Cover photography left to right:

Manchester Pride Sunday,  
photo by McGill Productions

MCRCammerata Music Café at The Monastery.  
Dancing group by Duncan Elliott

Frankie goes to Bollywood: HOME Theatre production.



# FOREWORD



Councillor Garry Bridges,  
Deputy Leader of  
Manchester City Council and Executive  
Member for Culture

From place, to people, to prosperity, culture has had a transformative impact on our city, and it continues to be vital to our prospects.

In our efforts on regeneration for example, culture has been critical – just look at the Hallé at St Peters in Ancoats, or HOME at First Street, and Aviva Studios in the St John's area. We've also announced a new culture hub, right in the heart of Wythenshawe town centre, that will continue to drive regeneration in that area too.

We know that the culture sector is one of the largest employment sectors in the city, and our Cultural Impact Survey shows culture was worth at least £280million in direct economic activity in our 2022/23 review. Music brings around 800,000 tourists to the city each year, is worth £308million and supports 6,800 jobs.

Of course, culture has been a key driver in terms of the health and wellbeing of our city as well. For example, there are areas of the NHS that are using culture as part of their social prescriptions, and in the survey conducted for this strategic framework, 82% of people told us culture brings them happiness.

Thanks to the city's artists, creative workforce, venues and festivals, culture is a core part of our international brand, and a key reason why we've been highlighted internationally as a city to visit and attract major events year on year.

We have seen huge successes, but for our next period of growth and development we need to be making sure that all Mancunians have a stake in our cultural activity, and that they can access and participate in our cultural offer. This was one of the

central strands of the wide-ranging and extensive conversation we've been having with residents, businesses and cultural partners as we drafted this new framework.

Culture and people shape our city, and that's why it is so fundamental. Each year, Manchester City Council directly invests around £7.5million in culture, which generates over £80million in additional revenue for our cultural partners.

It's an investment we make in the sure knowledge that it will be returned many times over.



The Halle Youth Project, Halle St Peters

'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.'

Article 27, UN Declaration of Human Rights





Manchester Pride Parade.  
Photo by The Vain Carl Sukonik

# A NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

'One of the best places to visit in 2024.'

**The New York Times**

For Manchester, culture is as much infrastructure as it is activity. Take away our culture and there would be no city, just bricks, tarmac and empty chairs. Culture and creativity bring happiness into everyday Mancunian life, and attract visitors from all over the world. Critically, culture is valued at the most fundamental level by the people who call this city home, also generating a wide array of jobs for thousands of Mancunians.

Modern-day Manchester is a place underpinned by diversity, vibrancy and creativity. We are a city with values – a welcoming city of sanctuary. Our city has championed social justice and equality for generations and prides

itself on being diverse and welcoming; it's a place that aspires to be a city for all, where everyone can achieve their potential, everyone is valued, and success is celebrated. These are characteristics we are proud of, and themes we want to bring to the fore.

When we talk about culture in this Framework, we include the publicly supported and commercial forms of culture, such as theatre, the visual arts, music and film. As we outline below, we also recognise in this framework a wider 'ecosystem' of culture beyond this, particularly at a grass-roots and neighbourhood level.

Our scope for culture does not include the creative industries directly, although they are closely related to culture in many ways.

Manchester has considerable cultural momentum, which this Framework has been drawn up to sustain, accelerate and widen. At a grass-roots level in community centres, libraries, schools and wherever people come together, culture is being celebrated and created. Across the cultural sector more generally, a brief snapshot of very recent developments gives a sense of just how much is going on and how critical investments are being made.

Cultural and creative activity takes place across the city in lots of different ways and in lots of different places, including many local arts groups and venues, as well as community centres, schools, youth centres, places of faith,

libraries, and parks – in fact wherever people come together. The research for this Framework also showed just how much people love to be creative at home.

Band on the Wall has grown through a multimillion-pound project to take a pivotal performance venue on a journey to also be a place where local talent is nurtured and where communities can come together to explore global musical legacies and new musical futures. Aviva Studios is a landmark new international cultural centre, providing a home for the Manchester International Festival and an ongoing programme of original modern work. Manchester Jewish Museum has created a beautiful new award-winning extension within which to tell the story of the city's migrants.

In 2023, Chanel chose Manchester as the latest city in the world to host their Métiers d'Art fashion show, and the English National Opera announced plans to make Manchester its home by 2029. Manchester Museum reopened after a £15million redevelopment that is anchored by a new South Asia Gallery; this is a partnership with the British Museum that has been co-curated by the South Asia Gallery Collective, a group of 30 people, including community leaders, educators, artists, historians, journalists and musicians.

In 2024, the MTV European Music Awards in Manchester, mark one of the opening events for Co-op Live, the biggest indoor arena in the UK with a capacity of 23,500. Also, the Portico Library – Manchester's oldest co-working space, founded in 1806 as a centre of learning and free thought right in the heart of the city – is starting work on a £7million plan to transform its building and preserve its historic book collection.

Our challenge for culture in this ten-year Framework (2024–2034) is to take our city's incredible cultural energy and success to a new and higher level: to widen our impact and footprint; to increase involvement, relevance and ownership as we broaden our cultural storyline; and to be more accessible to all our richly varied and diverse communities.

It's about **everyone, everything** and **everywhere**.

We want culture in our city to be of a global standard, and relevant to the global diversity we celebrate in a city that speaks more than two hundred languages. We want this Framework to help us establish a stronger connection with people, making culture more of a visible presence across the city, and more distributed at a neighbourhood level.

In this Framework, the focus is on the quality and huge variety of our publicly supported cultural sector; however, we also celebrate and connect to the commercial small and large-scale cultural, leisure and sporting events that matter so much to our citizens and visitors alike.

As this Framework sets out, part of our challenge is also to make more culture, arts, events and entertainment happen, but with a diversified funding base at the heart of that wider vision. We want to sustain and strengthen current support, but we recognise the unprecedented financial pressures cultural organisations face, and that new funding models and resources are needed to realise it.

Culture in Manchester (and beyond) has always shown a very healthy return on the investment we've all made in it, and so we'd like to see investment levels grow and reap even greater rewards.

This Framework guides culture in the city over the next ten years and has been designed to be regularly reviewed; it connects to and is supported by other city strategies, and it includes some areas of cultural activity that already have a huge amount of momentum. It is also a reference point and tool for all those working across the very widest sense of the cultural sector, as we can deliver so much more if we work as a collective.

Finally, the Framework has been co-designed by over a thousand people taking part in surveys, workshops, interviews and engagement events across the city. It has been shaped by the sector, by stakeholders, by audiences and, importantly, by those we know we have to work harder to connect with in the future. The Framework is in that sense owned by this wider partnership, as is its delivery. When we talk about 'we' throughout this Framework, it is this wider, citywide collective that is being referenced.

Together we have cast a strong but simple vision: culture is for everyone, everywhere, and touches upon everything.





Photo by David Levene. Installation from Manchester International Festival 2023 exhibition 'Yayoi Kusama - You, Me and the Balloons'

'Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts... Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.'

**Article 31, UN Declaration of Human Rights**



Photo by Mark Waugh, Central Library Art Workshop



# ABOUT THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This Framework is clearly laid out in sections that make our strategic direction over the ten-year period simple and easy to follow.

The introductory section above is a summary of the high-level themes in our Framework and what our key objectives are as a city. This section is followed by a summary of how we co-designed this Framework with local people, a section underlining why culture matters and is such an important factor in the success of our city, and then some highlights from recent cultural activity to re-emphasise the position of strength we are building upon.

The Cultural Focus section sets out the priority areas of impact for culture over the next ten years, how we intend to work to continuously improve our cultural

activity and output, where we will focus and diversify our investments in culture, and the inspiration we think culture can bring into all our lives.

This section is followed by our three key strategic pillars, where we set out our overall objectives for action.

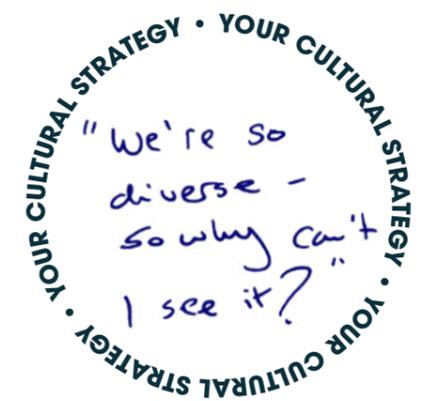
**Everyone** is our first pillar, which is about widening access to culture for all, recognising the people who make culture happen, and creating a 'cultural welcome' to the city.

The second pillar is **Everything**, where we make clear our increased scope for culture, to take in much more of everyday Mancunian cultural life and make sure culture really does connect with the issues that matter.

Finally, pillar three is **Everywhere**, where we look at creating more spaces and places where culture happens, and delivering a distributed and more equitable cultural life for everyone, everywhere.

We then have a short section on the connections between this Framework and other key regional and national strategies, before a final section covering the delivery of this Framework, its governance and how we plan to explore more innovative models of cultural investment.

Throughout this document you'll see a sample of some of the partnerships, people, organisations and initiatives that are giving Manchester its cultural momentum





# CO-DESIGNING OUR FRAMEWORK

## Headlines from our programme of consultation and co-design

From the outset, we wanted this to be a highly inclusive process. Our consultation activity for this Framework took place from September 2023 to March 2024 and has seen:

- **250,000** residents reached via social media
- **60,000** people reached through bulletins and newsletters
- **10,000** visits to the consultation website
- Around **1,300** survey responses sent to us; we have spoken in person to hundreds of local people in neighbourhood

- **52** groups engaged with, representing **807** community voices (A full list of the organisations that have helped to shape this Framework can be found on **page 100**)
- **11** media pieces promoting the strategy consultation.

From this engagement, we gained a deep understanding of what culture means to our residents, and where everyone can play their part in delivering another ten years of cultural success for Manchester.

We will continue to listen to children and young people, ensuring their views help to shape the city's cultural offer, as we embark on our journey to becoming an internationally recognised Child Friendly City. This is in line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 'taking children and young people's views seriously and treating them as equal partners'.

## What have we heard?

We asked people if culture and creativity were important to them; of people responding to our survey, **97% said 'yes'**.

When we asked people what they love to see, do or make, the most popular activities were visiting museums and heritage sites (73%), closely followed by the theatre (67%) and attending music events (63%). Even in those activities chosen a little less, we discovered that Mancunians are a cultural bunch, with just under 30% making music and 19% writing poetry!

"It empowers, it holds up a mirror to what's going on, it innovates and stimulates – it is **powerful!**"

– Manchester resident

People told us they feel most creative at home (50%) followed by during group activities (34%), or in a leisure setting (30%).

When we asked people what would make them take part in culture more, we heard that affordability and the local location of activities are the primary drivers to increase attendance and involvement in cultural activities in Manchester. Around 15% of our residents stated improved accessibility, while nearly 20% want to see increased representation in the sector.

“Spark of life – some things just make you feel more alive and vital!”

– Manchester resident



Reform Radio's Soundcamp Bootcamp, Reform Radio



Child Friendly Cities Mother and Baby Activity, Mark Waugh

One of the most compelling findings of our survey was when we asked people what was important to them about culture. Overwhelmingly, people said that the emotional benefits of culture mattered most; bringing happiness (82%) and enjoyment (81%) were identified as the most important. Culture also provides a social opportunity for people and provides new skills. This was valued by both the younger and older people we spoke to.

In particular, when we spoke to young people, we heard very similar motivations and issues mentioned, as well as the point that culture could play a bigger role in improving mental health and wellbeing and provide an outlet for fun, enjoyment and shared experiences with their peers.

“It crosses boundaries, brings people together and helps them open up; it brings joy and grows communities.”

– Manchester resident

Representation is a key motivator for young people, 70% telling us that seeing people within culture that look like them, sound like them, with activities/events based on topics that are relevant to them would increase their engagement with culture.



Central Library

# WHY CULTURE MATTERS

## Measuring the social and economic impact of culture for Manchester

Each year, Manchester City Council carries out a Cultural Impact Survey. This not only shows the positive impact culture has on the city, but also highlights where more could be done to bring culture to everyone. Our latest analysis, research, and results from the cultural strategy consultation show that:

- **82%** of our residents feel culture brings happiness into their lives.
- **98%** of Manchester's schools engage with cultural organisations in the city.

- Over **200** organisations large and small are part of our cultural sector, from well-established cultural institutions to small charities.
- Culture connects to the city's wider creative industries sector, which is recognised as one of Europe's largest with around **21,000** direct jobs.
- Culture was worth at least **£280million** in direct economic activity for Manchester in our 2022/23 review.
- Music brings around **800,000** tourists to the city each year and is worth **£308million** and supports **6,800** jobs.

- Aviva Studios is predicted to add **£1.1billion** to the economy over ten years, underpinning **1,500** direct and indirect jobs.
- Each year Manchester City Council directly invests around **£7.5million** in culture, which generates over **£80million** in additional revenue for our cultural partners.

Sources for above: Cultural Strategy Research (Creative Concern 2023), Cultural Impact Survey (MCC 2019/20), MCC Cultural Database, Cultural Impact Survey (MCC 2022/23), Manchester Music Economy (Sound Diplomacy and Nordicity 2021)

Art galleries aren't targeted toward young people. An art gallery/museum/library with the same demographic as 'factory'.



Cap & Dove, Joshua Sofaer, Manchester Premiere 2021. Photo by Jonathan Keenan



Manchester Pride Sunday. Photo by McGill Productions



Z Arts. Lizzie Henshaw Photography

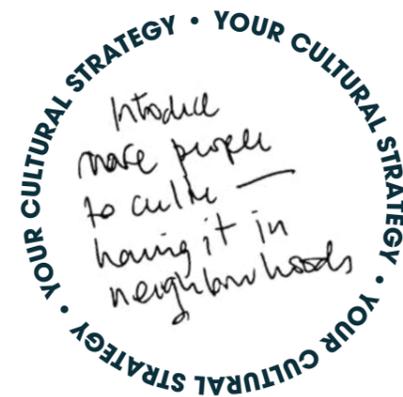
# OUR CULTURAL FOCUS

## Working for impact, improvement, investment and inspiration

There are three main pillars of strategic activity set out in this Framework that deliver against our vision: Everyone, Everywhere and Everything.

That activity will be regularly reviewed and refreshed against our four key measures and points of focus for cultural activity in the city:

1. Its **impact** and relevance
2. Its commitment to continued **improvement**
3. The level at which it **inspires** others
4. The need to ensure strong and sustained levels of **investment**.



## Impact

- Investing in culture that delivers measurable and investible economic and social impact
- Capturing the positive impact culture has on our mental and physical health, and how it can combat social isolation and aid community cohesion
- Delivering continued and inclusive growth in Greater Manchester's economy
- Supporting Making Manchester Fairer in tackling poverty and its consequences
- Helping deliver our 2038 target to be zero carbon for our direct emissions, and having a positive impact on the natural world
- Capitalising on our city's heritage and cultural economy to enhance our national and international profile and brand to attract more creativity, investment and jobs to the city
- Creating jobs, pathways into employment and developing skills
- Supporting Manchester's strategic work to be a WW Friendly City with UNICEF UK
- Driving innovation in the cultural sector for local, national and international impact.

## Improvement

- From places, to people, to programmes: delivering the next step change in our cultural offer and, importantly, improving our connections and collaborations with diverse communities across the city
- Benchmarking ourselves against international comparators, including a stronger and peer-reviewed gap analysis of our cultural offer; what are we missing and how do we address that?
- Introducing a regular programme of health checks for the sector; looking across the offer, art forms and ecology to ensure we have a strong, vibrant and diverse cultural infrastructure.

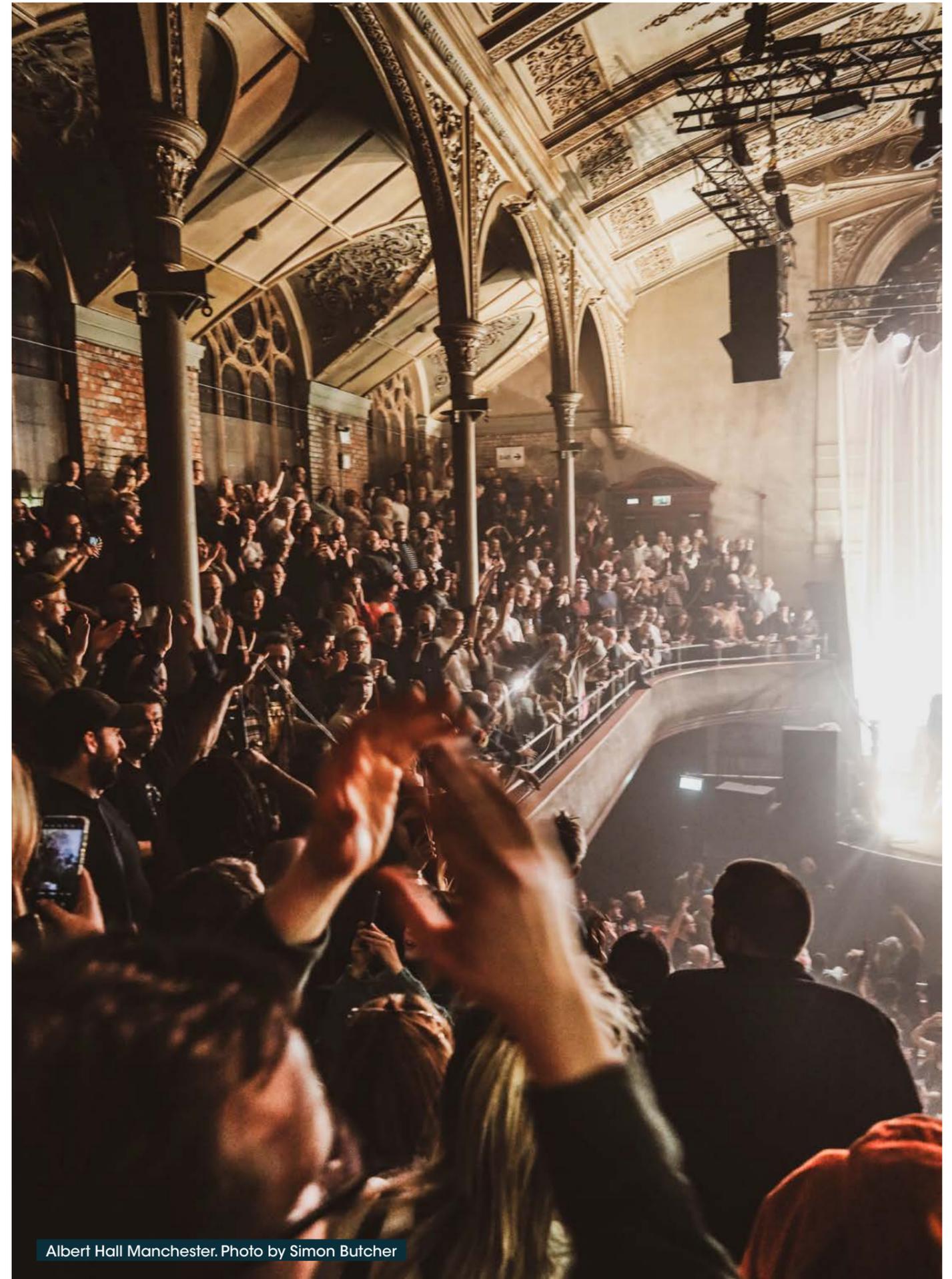
## Inspiration

- Fostering a lifelong love of culture, creativity and ideas
- Ensuring that people everywhere can unlock their own ability to do, create and make, offering opportunities to develop skills and progress to employment
- Encouraging people to volunteer for cultural activities and become more active members of society, nurturing a desire to help others and the wider world
- Building a culture of entrepreneurship, both within the sector and beyond
- Inspiring diverse and innovative cultural expression and programming
- Inducing in people a sense of personal motivation, civic pride and belonging
- Supporting action on sustainability and the need to address the climate emergency



## Investment

- Continuing to see culture as integral to our city's success, while drawing in greater and more diverse levels of investment; exploring new or innovative funding streams in addition to the traditional routes pursued for arts funding
- Ensuring that investment is being deployed where it is needed most and that it has the greatest impact, both thematically and geographically; also ensuring that those who make investment decisions reflect our diverse communities and that we listen to the voices usually not heard in making those decisions
- Embedding cultural provision as an integral part of physical development and regeneration programmes, and securing the wider placemaking, social cohesion, skills and job outcomes that come from cultural-led regeneration
- Exploring other public funding sources, in innovative areas such as social prescribing, commissioning, green investment and establishing 'payback' mechanisms for sectors that make a considerable profit out of our city's cultural success, such as in music. We believe higher-education research funding could also have a part to play here
- Continuing to pursue and celebrate philanthropic foundations and private sector support, which is already a strong feature of the city's cultural success
- Supporting greater commercialism in the sector and making the most of the major investments coming online, such as Aviva Studios and Co-op Live
- Developing and attracting more large-scale events that attract high-spending overnight visitors supported by a forthcoming Major Events Commission for the city
- Integrating culture into our international investment and trade work more extensively, in partnership with others across Greater Manchester.



Albert Hall Manchester. Photo by Simon Butcher

## MADE: CULTURAL EDUCATION

MADE is Manchester's Local Cultural Education Partnership. It supports educators by producing meaningful creative learning experiences, connecting our children and young people to the arts and culture in our city. MADE wants Manchester to be a beacon for creative education and a city where the arts can add magic to life experiences and learning for everyone. MADE also wants the city's young people to be engaged, confident and excited about creativity.

Launched in 2020, MADE has worked with hundreds of teachers, over 35 arts and cultural organisations, and more than 10,000 children and young people. MADE's young creative influencers are undertaking leadership training, shadowing and learning from senior arts professionals. They are creating their own strategic plan to take a lead in influencing MADE's core delivery plan, and to involve more young people in MADE's creative programme.



MADE, Art of Resilience project, Manchester Art Gallery with students from Burnage High Schoolroom

## OUR LIBRARIES

Manchester is a city of libraries, including those that are visitor destinations of truly international standard. Chetham's Library is the oldest public library in Britain; it houses the famous chained books collection, the Marx and Engels connection, and much more. It is a major resource, along with the Portico Library on Mosley Street, John Rylands Library on Deansgate, the iconic Central Library in St Peter's Square, and the wonderful new Poetry Library at Manchester Metropolitan University. Manchester's Libraries Service is an important part of the city's cultural and creative infrastructure, often providing access to a first cultural experience. Central Library, currently celebrating its 90th anniversary, is the most visited public library in the country and

hosts its cultural programme, Library Live. The neighbourhood libraries are cultural venues on people's doorsteps, and there is an extensive programme at the three Creative Space libraries: North City, Longsight, and Wythenshawe Forum. Alongside a busy events calendar delivered by library staff – such as cultural festival days, Sunday Fundays, school holiday activity, crafting and author events – the cultural programme provides access to other high-quality creative experiences and opportunities on residents' doorsteps. The programme is delivered in partnership with the city's cultural organisations, artists, community groups and volunteers, and is supported and informed by library staff and residents.



Portico Library reading room

## TIPP: THE POWER OF PARTICIPATORY ARTS

Resident in The University of Manchester, TiPP has been working with people in the Criminal Justice System since 1991, delivering participatory arts projects to develop practical and social skills. It provides participants with a challenge, offering people new perspectives and a changed focus.

TiPP's work with young people is participant-led, providing positive strength-based activities that encourage participants to raise their aspirations for their future as part of a restorative justice approach. While committed to the idea that the arts have the power to transform lives for the better, TiPP also believes that activities should be fun and that play and laughter are essential to learning and creativity.

TiPP's work with Manchester Youth Justice Service forms a part of a suite of projects with youth justice services across the north west, offering high-quality creative music-making activities. A major element of the programme is to support young people in gaining a nationally recognised arts award,

the first qualification many of the participants will achieve. Having worked with Manchester Youth Justice Service for 13 years, TIPP's creativity is embedded within the service. It is a first-choice intervention that allows some of Manchester's most underserved young people to express themselves, gain confidence and elevate their voice.

With music at the core of the offer, young people create and record their own tracks, develop skills and perform live, including at the Manchester Care Leavers Awards, and at Andy Burnham's launch of the Bee Connected app for care leavers, which was a tremendous achievement. TiPP's work includes use of photography, and there is now an archive of incredible images that capture young people's perspective of their city. Some of these images are displayed in Deansgate railway station, spreading positive messages about young people and showing them that they have a valued place in society.

## WRITING THE CITY

Words matter in Manchester. We have world-famous publishing houses for poetry, literature and non-fiction such as Commonword, Carcanet and Comma Press, as well as hugely successful university writing schools (Manchester Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University, and the Centre for New Writing at The University of Manchester). We also boast unique institutions such as the Manchester Poetry Library, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, and world-class historic libraries such as John Rylands Library, Chetham's Library and The Portico Library. The strength of the city's live literature scene, particularly the work of Manchester Literature Festival, builds on a vibrant writing scene that stretches back centuries.

This backdrop helps to explain why Manchester won the UNESCO designation as a City of Literature,

which recognises excellence and places an obligation on cities to nurture and support their art form. There are 53 Cities of Literature across six continents, part of a wider UNESCO Creative Cities Network currently made up of 350 UNESCO Creative Cities globally.

Since we became recognised as a global literary city in 2017, Manchester has been bringing together the city's literary partners to showcase its work to local and international audiences. This includes the delivery of the annual Festival of Libraries, which attracts tens of thousands of visitors every year, and support for literacy and creative expression across the city's neighbourhoods.



A UNESCO City of Literature



Manchester Literature Festival, Maxine Peake, Coruttia Newland and Kit de Waal.

## MANCHESTER MUSEUM

A cultural high point for Manchester in 2023 was the reopening of Manchester Museum after a £15million makeover that started out as a gallery extension but soon turned into an ambitious programme of transformation across the entire institution.

The new exhibition hall is host to blockbusters like the Golden Mummies of Egypt, while the new extension also includes the South Asia Gallery, which has been created through a unique and powerful partnership with local communities (as well as the British Museum). It is the UK's first permanent space dedicated to exploring the lived experience of the South Asian diaspora communities. In addition, the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery also draws from historical and contemporary links between Manchester and China.

A good example of what inclusivity looks like in practice is Manchester Museum's hosting of the PINC College. The Museum offers one of a number of hubs for the College in the north west, delivering creative education and complementary studies for neurodivergent young people. PINC supports 16 to 25-year-olds with their greater wellbeing, attainment, sustained engagement and employment, and the programme has flourished.

While all the old favourites are still in play (dinosaurs, the Vivarium, rocks and fossils), Manchester Museum could well be the institution that is setting the benchmark not just for the visitor experience but also for partnerships, diversity and accessibility.



South Asia Gallery at Manchester Museum

## #HEREFORCULTUREMCR CAMPAIGN

A post-pandemic consortium of Manchester arts organisations joined forces in 2021 to launch the #HereforCultureMCR campaign, with the aim of encouraging audiences from all walks of life back into the city's cultural venues.

Supported by Manchester City Council and the UK Government's Culture Recovery Fund, and powered by prominent organisations such as HOME, The Lowry, and Manchester Art Gallery, the campaign reminded residents of Manchester's cultural offer, reassured the public about venue safety, and emphasised the positive impact of cultural experiences on wellbeing.

As part of a sector that has perhaps been among the hardest hit by COVID-19, there is still a great deal of work for arts organisations to do to understand the long-term impact of the pandemic on culture. There is also much that needs to be done to see a sectoral 'bounce back', whether that be reclaiming audiences to numbers seen pre-pandemic, restoring financial reserves, or supporting many freelance or micro business supply chains that felt the impact of lockdown particularly harshly



#HereforCultureMCR campaign. Photo by John Owens

## MANCHESTER ART GALLERY

Manchester Art Gallery is Manchester's civic art museum, housing some 50,000 exhibits that belong to the people of Manchester. It delivers a programme of exhibitions, displays and public participation that connects people with art, helping them to expand their knowledge of the world and our place within it.

The gallery has three buildings: Manchester Art Gallery in the heart of the city, Platt Hall to the south of the city centre, and Queens Park Conservation Centre to the north, and is working with Manchester residents to shape the future development and use of the collections across all sites.

The gallery's changing programme of displays, exhibitions and participative activity brings together people and collections in diverse ways. A re-display masterplan will shape the permanent galleries to explore

themes that resonate with Manchester people, mixing genres, time periods, and media (paintings, sculpture, dress and fashion, design and applied art). Engaging with other services across the Council (including work and skills, Early Years, youth, and education) as well as UK-wide further and higher education establishments, the gallery continues to push the boundaries of a civic art museum within the context of a diverse and vibrant city tackling issues of severe social inequality.

The gallery has a national reputation for its Early Years family programmes, hosting the launches for the Council's Start Well weeks for every child born in the city that year. The Families of the World programme has become a national model for working with refugee families to improve lives, and an ongoing research project exploring the experience of under-three-year-olds at exhibitions and displays provides vital evidence and ideas for our public programme. Activities at Platt Hall provide a connection between people, collections and place, to create a sector-leading community-led project delivered through strong hyperlocal partnerships across Rusholme, Moss Side, Fallowfield and Longsight.



Manchester Art Gallery, Families of the World

## MANCHESTER'S CULTURE AWARDS

Our distinctive, dynamic and creative cultural scene, with major institutions sitting alongside a rich mix of smaller organisations and grass-roots activity, is celebrated every year at a dedicated awards event.

The Manchester Culture Awards highlight the artistic achievements and international and national reputation of arts and culture in the city, as well as the positive contributions made to economic and social benefits, education, health and wellbeing, and environmental sustainability.



Manchester Culture Awards, Talent & Leadership winners, Photo by Mark Waugh

With nearly 400 nominations, the awards celebrate our distinctive, dynamic creative scene and history of cultural innovation and collaboration.



Manchester Culture Awards, Yandass Ndlovu. Photo by Mark Waugh

# PILLAR ONE

Widening access to culture for all, recognising the people that make culture happen, and creating a 'cultural welcome' to the city

Illustration by Zineb Berrais





# EVERYONE

‘Cultural democracy... is when everyone has the power (whether or not they choose to exercise it) to pursue and realise cultural creativity.’

Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for everyone, King's College London

## 1.1 Cultural democracy

Our last ten-year strategy for culture set out an objective for Manchester to be the UK's most culturally democratic city, engaging a greater number and diversity of people across Greater Manchester.

This commitment to cultural democracy and wider ownership, leadership and access to culture across all communities is one that we want to strengthen in this new ten-year Framework. We intend it to cover ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ+, class and disability. It is an ambition and commitment that was strongly endorsed in our stakeholder conversations and engagement; this is a conversation that needs to continue, so that we have a shared vision of what cultural democracy in Manchester looks like.

We want to recognise the rich cultural lives that people lead, whether that be organised activity with a group, attending a cultural event, or simply being cultural and creative at home.

We would like to see a renewed and prioritised focus on equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector, with a proactive plan to deliver measurable progress against a core set of goals. Our existing annual Cultural Impact Survey provides a good starting point for this, with a dataset of the least engaged wards in terms of cultural participation and a picture of the ethnicity of Manchester's cultural audiences, workforce and leadership.

What does inclusivity look like in practice? Some strong examples include:

- Contact has a governance and operation model where young people have decision-making powers
- Community Arts North West has an approach to working with and celebrating the creative talents of artists at the margins of society, and supporting their development through to leadership in the cultural sector
- Z-arts has a board development programme for people less traditionally represented at board level
- Manchester Libraries participates in Fun Palaces – Everyone an artist, Everyone a scientist – this is linked to a national initiative with cultural democracy at its heart.

# EVERYONE

Our scope for greater inclusion takes in more than just long-term residents, and we need to recognise that from our many thousands of students, refugees and those seeking asylum, there are people we should connect with who are very welcome, but who may be in the city temporarily.

For many groups these days, and in particular younger audiences, how venues and organisations perform socially and environmentally is of great importance. For issues like the climate crisis, they are more likely to engage with an organisation that's taken a strong stance on something they really care about.

We've heard from our conversations with people in local communities that safety concerns are still an issue for some; the city centre events and the night-time economy are being perceived as too risky, even though statistically this is not the case. In our communications with local people this is a concern we will need to continually address to ensure that everyone, young and old, feels welcome and at home, in the centre of the city.

Post-pandemic, our cultural sector has been working hard to re-establish its audiences, but the evidence base shows that some arts organisations and art forms are yet to regain the audience numbers they had pre-pandemic. This challenge has been compounded by the cost-of-living crisis, which has followed hard on the heels of the pandemic. This double hit on attendance makes diversifying our audience base even more critical, while we work hard to win back those visitors that have been lost.

Opening up more affordable cultural opportunities unlocks many co-benefits of course, in addition to ensuring that our great arts and culture offer has a healthy audience to enjoy it. There are proven health and wellbeing outcomes from cultural participation, as well as an uplift in community cohesion. There is also the potential of opening routes into employment in the cultural or creative sectors, which in turn connects to our strategic need to ensure good talent for the sector itself.

In addition, increasing access to culture includes recognising Manchester's work to become a more digitally inclusive city, which is one of the key objectives in the Our Manchester Strategy. We will work under this Framework to ensure that there are no major areas of cultural activity that are impossible to access or book tickets for if you are not able to get online.

Cultural partnerships with education, such as our MADE partnership, have an important role to play in this last point of focus. Teachers can help us to get young people engaged in culture and creativity before they leave school, and they are best placed to help students understand their opportunities within the sector.

Being able to access venues, performances and workspaces comfortably and easily is crucial to being able to actively participate. We recognise that inclusive environments need to accommodate differences in the way people use the built environment. Our spaces and activities should welcome diverse needs – from childhood to adulthood, across all abilities and disabilities.

## 1.1 Headline objectives

- We will launch a renewed and prioritised focus on equality, diversity and inclusion in culture with a proactive plan with measurable goals.
- We will open up more affordable and varied cultural opportunities for the enjoyment of residents, unlocking a host of co-benefits, including health and wellbeing, community cohesion, and the potential of opening routes into employment in the sector.
- We will work across the sector to collaborate on widening access for leadership, audiences, participants, artists and creatives with disabilities.
- We will ensure that all our communities feel welcome as audience members, participants, artists, and within the workforce.



# EVERYONE

## 1.2 People shape culture

Manchester wouldn't have a strong cultural and creative scene without its dynamic community of artists, producers, technicians, marketers, staff and freelancers in venues – people on stage, in the gallery, and everyone behind the scenes.

We want to support a range of talent and progression 'pipelines' that enrich the diversity of people working in our sector from all backgrounds, providing visible role models and succession planning to make sure the next generation have the skills to lead the cultural and creative sector in the future.

We are proposing to draw up a cultural workforce development plan. This would create a platform for recruitment and improvements in progression routes and training at all levels, from apprentices, via university qualifications, to continued development for the leaders of cultural organisations.

At a grass-roots level, MADE and other initiatives can help bring new talent into the workforce, starting in schools and working upwards. Greater Manchester's devolution deal hands the city region greater power over post-16 education, making this a genuine opportunity to be grasped.

There could be a great role for mentors, peer-support programmes and pan-sector initiatives, where cultural workers could interact across institutions and disciplines to create more opportunities for skill-sharing and development.

For leaders within the sector, there is just as much a need for support and development, given the fast-changing nature of the cultural sector and the importance of building greater resilience. There is also a commitment to ongoing improvement, particularly if we want our cultural offer across all practices to be of a global standard. We can't just label ourselves world class – it needs to be worked at.

Wellbeing and the mental resilience of our cultural workforce is also something we need to be mindful of. How can we ensure that employees are nurtured and supported? Can we get all our cultural institutions signed up to the Good Employment Charter?

A factor that's relatively new to our sector is that there are a very high number of freelancers in the cultural sector who can work longer and harder than would normally be the case and whose employment status is short term and precarious. We will draw up a charter for freelancers that will seek to give artists and cultural freelancers greater support and protection as part of the workforce and a greater sense of stability.

## 1.2 Headline objectives

- We will draw up a cultural workforce development plan for all levels, from apprentices, to leaders of cultural organisations.
- We will work at a grass-roots level to bring new talent into the workforce, starting with children and young people; we will promote awareness of jobs in the sector for young people and their parents, and work to enrich the diversity of people working in our sector from all backgrounds.
- We want our cultural institutions to be exemplary employers and to improve how they support artists and freelancers.



My Festival Social at Moston Miners MIF19.  
Photo by Jason Lock

# EVERYONE



Manchester Museum Volunteers

### 1.3 Welcome to (Cultural) Manchester

When The New York Times named Manchester as one of 2024's best places in the world to visit, it was culture (and specifically music) that helped our city to make the cut. Manchester is the third most visited city in the UK after London and Edinburgh, attracting over 1.2million people to the city every year. Culture is a critical part of our global appeal, and our continued cultural success will help to secure ongoing economic returns for other sectors too, such as cafes, bars, hotels and transport services.

This means we must be committed to listening to and looking after the needs of our visitors just as much as we are for residents to create an age and family friendly experience of visiting cultural venues. In tandem with Greater Manchester's Visitor Economy Strategy, we need to be constantly asking ourselves 'do we have the right bookable products?' Are we doing well enough with the promotion of our venues? Are our opening times optimised to increase visitor audiences?

It's a critical checklist. Cracking the code on this will mean working across institutions and sectors, understanding all the touchpoints for a visitor before, during and, ideally, after their stay. Once again, crafting a daisy chain of cultural experiences with partners across Greater Manchester can extend someone's stay; importantly, it is overnight visitors who spend more and so support an even wider local economy of hotels, restaurants and shops.

Our collaborative work presenting Manchester as a cultural destination has already been successful in some key areas. For example, we've had a successful 'cultural concierge' programme, which included training and induction for hotel workers and cultural venues on the wider cultural/ visitor offer, and weekly itineraries were supplied to those involved.



# EVERYONE

At its simplest, it is proposed that the aim should be to strengthen Greater Manchester's brand as a city with a significant cultural pulse. In doing so, we will attract more culturally motivated visitors to Manchester, which will expand the market, increase arts attendance and support the city region's wider economic objectives. We can do this by influencing and embedding partnership working across Greater Manchester's tourism and cultural sectors.

This impetus for a better cultural welcome to the city reflects our objective of making culture more visible and more legible as people experience the city. For visitors, the gateway visibility of our cultural offer and sector at railway stations and Manchester Airport needs to be as impactful as possible.

Finally, this is an important area to increase our ability to measure the capital investment and return on that investment that culture is bringing into the city and wider region through our proposed impact dashboard.



Manchester Day Tiger. Photo by Mark Waugh



Manchester Craft & Design Centre, Autumn Fun Day 2022. Photo by Anneka Morley

### 1.3 Headline objectives

- We will ensure that our cultural offer is on a par with our international peer cities through an ongoing programme of benchmarking, inspiration and improvement.
- We will work to curate a compelling major events programme that can be supported by the narrative and branding to excite and attract visitors and promote the city.
- We will extend the model for cross-city cultural tourism partnership working on prioritised markets nationally and internationally.
- We will work across our partnerships to improve the range of attractions and events for visitors to book in advance to encourage them to stay longer and visit the city again.

- We will work through a pan-sector partnership to improve the experience of visiting for residents and visitors, considering the needs of children, young people and families, creating an age-friendly offer and providing better information on 'what's on'. We will explore how we can improve the visibility of our cultural offer and sector at railway and bus stations and at Manchester Airport.



## VENTURE ARTS

Venture Arts are an award-winning visual arts organisation working with learning-disabled and neurodiverse artists. Through their studio programmes, exhibitions and collaborative projects, they remove barriers to the arts, put artists in the lead, champion neurodiversity, and provide pathways for every individual to develop their creative identity. Venture Arts equip people to succeed as artists, advocates, cultural workers, educators, curators and critics.

Venture Arts have a profound impact on the lives of the artists they work with, as well as partners, audiences and young people. In 2022/23, Venture Arts reached more people and delivered more work than ever before:

- They delivered over 1,850 in-house sessions, and many more through outreach
- They worked with over 190 artists
- 120 young people engaged in their school projects
- 33 learning-disabled artists were employed or sold work
- £10,500 was generated from artwork sales
- 30 partnerships were developed with other organisations
- 19 partners collaborated on their Cultural Enrichment Programme, providing 20 placements for learning-disabled artists
- Audiences of 110,922 (physical) and 721,474 (digital) saw their work.

Work created by artists supported by Venture Arts has been exhibited locally, nationally and internationally, and they continue to lead the way for learning-disabled and neurodiverse artists who produce new, contemporary art through a range of mediums.



Artist Horace Lindezey at Venture Arts.  
Rachel Bywater Photography

## WITHINGTON WALLS

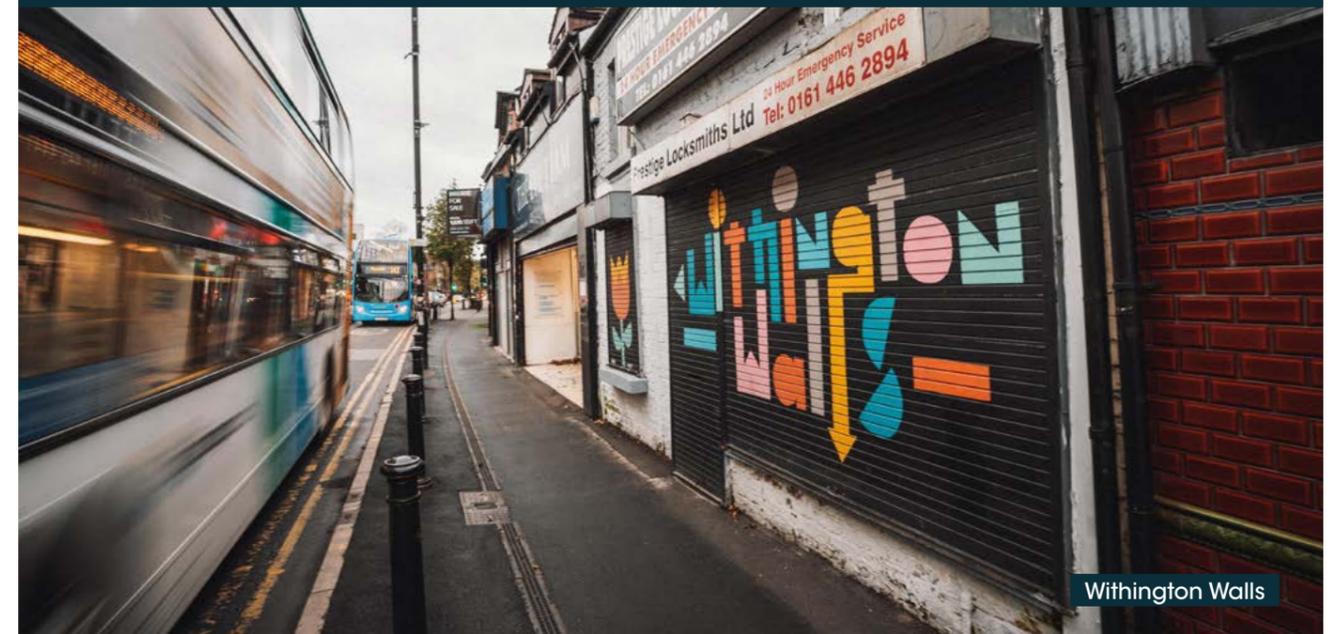
Withington Walls is a community-led art project that has been changing the face of the south Manchester suburb through powerful and vibrant creative commissions that have transformed the streetscape. The project works with local groups, businesses, housing associations, volunteers and local artists, and has delivered over 100 beautiful artistic interventions on walls, shop shutters, street cabinets, and even lampposts.

Several of the artworks celebrate local figures, one of the most famous being the mural of footballer Marcus Rashford, created by leading street artist Akse P19 to celebrate his work campaigning against child food poverty.

Following the defacement of the mural and attacks on Rashford and other England players following the UEFA European Championships in 2021, hundreds of people participated in an anti-racism demonstration. Thousands covered the mural with messages of respect for the young Mancunian role model in an unprecedented outpouring of love and message of hope that was heard around the world.

The mural was repaired, and the public's messages were saved from the Mancunian rain and archived by Manchester Art Gallery Archives+ at Manchester Central Library.

Withington Walls continues to commission new vibrant public artworks and organise creative events, as a catalyst for change and building a closer community.



Withington Walls

## CULTURE IN ACTION

### REFORM RADIO

Reform Radio is a multi-award-winning arts organisation and radio station that broadcasts the best in independent music, arts and culture from Manchester to the world. It uses the radio station as a tool to help young adults from across the North into high-quality creative training, supporting them to build meaningful careers and helping them to realise their full potential.

Reform Radio is based in the heart of the city in a Grade-I listed warehouse, the oldest in Manchester. It includes two high-end studios, a small cap, live-to-air event space with custom sound installation, and modular workshop and office spaces.

Reform Radio's main focus is to engage young people who are looking for new opportunities, working creatively with them over a sustained period so they can develop new skills, providing them with pastoral support, and helping 80% of them into employment.



## MANCHESTER INDEPENDENTS

Artists and creatives are central to Manchester's cultural scene, creating the city's dynamic atmosphere that makes it a hub for the arts. During the pandemic, cultural partners pooled their resources to initiate a programme of commissioned work from Manchester and Greater Manchester artists, generating employment and contributing to the reinvigoration of Manchester's creative scene.

Supported by more than thirty organisations with cash and resources, it features new commissions selected by an artist panel alongside an open platform for artists in Greater Manchester to profile their work. Outside the showcase period, Manchester Independents remains open as a year-round listings opportunity.

Manchester Independents aims to extend legacy, boost careers and develop artists' roles in decision-making. It is supported by 32 partners: 53Two, Arc Stockport, Breaking Barriers, Brighter Sound, Community Arts North West, Company Chameleon, Contact, Elizabeth Gaskell House, Factory International, Future Everything, Global Grooves, GM Artist Hub, GMCA, hÅb, HOME, Hope Mill Theatre, Manchester Camerata, Manchester Central, Manchester City of Literature, Manchester Museum, National Football Museum, Oxford Road Corridor, Paradise Works, Royal Exchange Theatre, Stoller Hall, The Bridge, The Edge, The Lowry, The Met Bury, The Turnpike, The Vale, The Whitworth, Z-arts.

Manchester Independents is a biennial showcase for independent Greater Manchester artists which, since 2021, has commissioned 35 new works. A dynamic and uniquely artist-led democratic initiative to elevate artists, it offers exceptional showcase opportunities with global producers via partners MIF, WOMEX + City of Literature.

Manchester Independents SEEME. Photo by Chris Payne



## Z-ARTS

Z-arts has an Artist Development strategy and policy to ensure that a diverse range of artists are supported to make new, exciting and relevant children and family work. The offer includes time and space in a new Artist Development Studio, one-to-one mentoring with artists, sharing events to test and receive feedback on work, seed funding to support the exploration of new ideas, and facilitating co-creation with children's voices in the room.

During 2023/4, Z-arts supported more than seventy artists with over 180 days of space and time, ensuring they had the support and resources needed to create amazing new work for children and families.

"Thank you once again for your incredible help during our creation and rehearsal process. It has been an incredible experience working with you and we feel incredibly honoured and inspired."  
Ayesha Fazal, Co-Director, Move Manchester

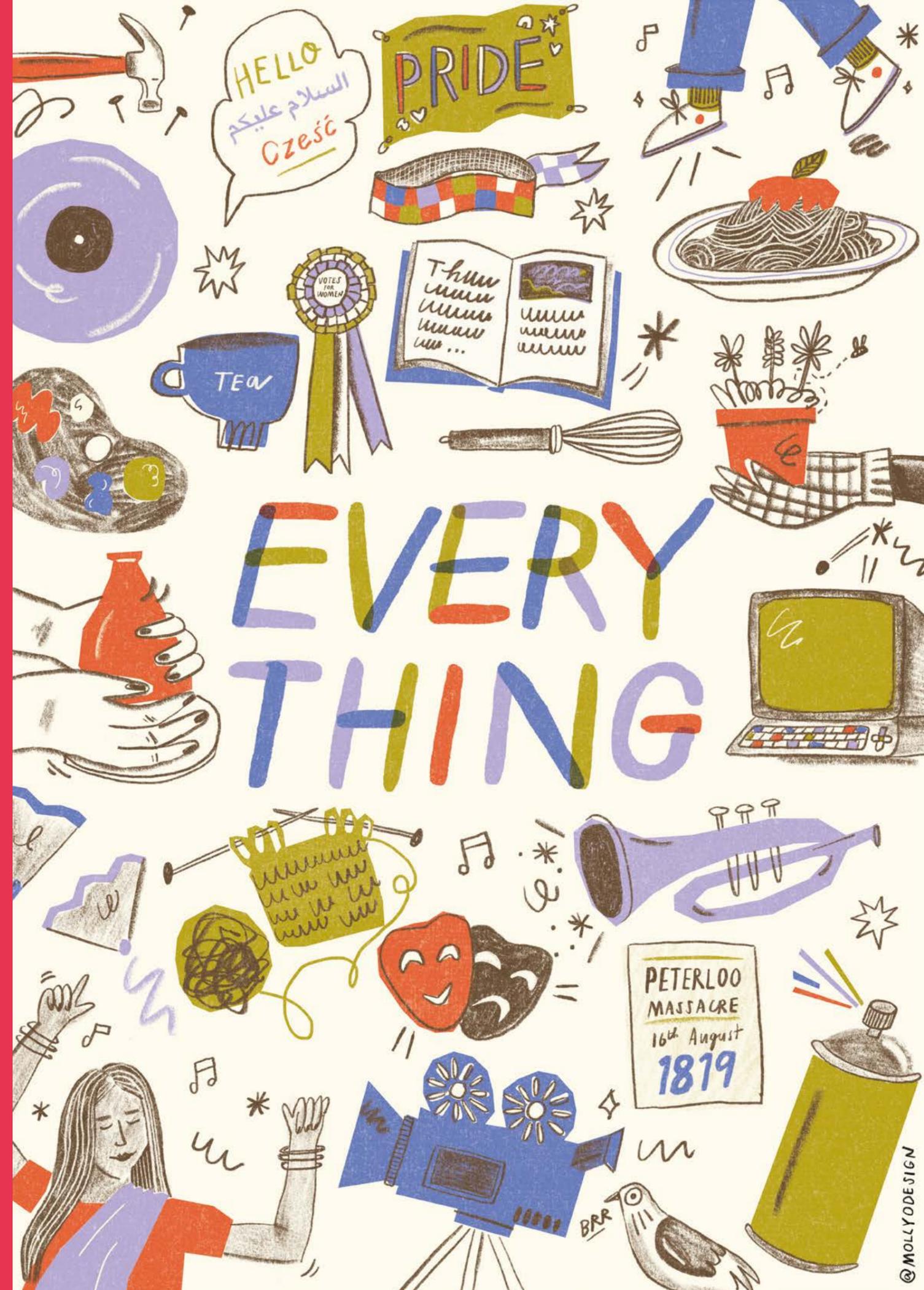
"First, I want to extend my gratitude for the invaluable time I had in your studio. The one-week experience was truly impactful for me, as it provided dedicated time for exploration and experimentation – a luxury I haven't had since I left."  
Tolulope Ami-Williams, artist

Luna Loves Library Day, Zarts. Photo by Darren Robinson



# PILLAR TWO

Rethinking our scope for culture to take in much more of everyday Mancunian cultural and creative life and making sure culture really does connect with the issues that matter



‘Excellence in the cultural programme is strengthened by the diversity in our city and nationally, and we want to see this in the work we produce and who it is produced by. Culture can help us find our universality and connections, as well as the challenges we face. Our definition of diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage.’

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### What culture means to us

Culture is part of how we live and breathe as a city.

This Framework sees us moving away from the idea that culture is just a single sector or a narrowly defined set of disciplines. It is all around us and relevant to all: an ecosystem.

This ecosystem has at its heart many of the cultural forms you would instantly recognise and of which our residents are hugely proud, such as the visual arts, performance, music, museums and the written word, many publicly funded and with good reason, given the wide range of benefits they deliver. Beyond that it includes a wider culture of major events and festivals, craft and design, reading, community-based activities, and even sports. There are high levels of connectivity to the creative industries in the city, but also to education, health and civil society.

Culture is also universal in that it connects with the lived experiences of our very diverse communities, cutting across disability, sexuality, gender and ethnicity.

In this Framework we strongly celebrate our cultural output, which is of a truly global standard; but we also recognise the equal value of everyday culture – the heritage that's part of every Mancunian's life.

We believe this is the key to ensuring our cultural offer is genuinely representative of the people of the city. Part of our vision in this Framework is to bring these threads together, making globally impactful art and culture here in Manchester that is representative of and made by our own diverse communities.

### 2.1 Headline objectives

- We will ensure our cultural offer is genuinely representative of the people of Manchester and their experiences, while being of a truly global standard.
- We will reframe our definition of culture to capture a wider set of activities and to connect meaningfully with other sectors.
- We will ensure that our cultural framework and plans help to deliver wider city priorities and connect to a number of critical strategies at a city, regional and national level.

# EVERYTHING

## 2.2 The makers of culture

If someone tells you they're not creative, feel free to roll your eyes and tell them they're doing themselves a massive disservice. One belief that runs through this Framework is that all of us express an aspect of creativity, and in that sense we are all producers, as well as consumers, of culture.

Sometimes this is as simple as our response to the culture we experience, how we decode it and respond to it, and in so doing become part of the very same experience; or it's in the things we do in our own time: curated photography on our Instagram feed, comedy TikToks, or the pot we throw in pottery class.

This is all culture. This is all relevant.

We have an extraordinary wealth of creative professionals and emerging artists, and if all of us can be producers of culture, Manchester needs to recognise that and celebrate it. This could be a genuine search for hidden art and creativity in our communities

(actually, it probably isn't hidden - we just weren't looking hard enough). It could mean encouraging residents to consider turning their passion into a new career path in the creative or cultural industries, enabling people to meet, share their skills and showcase their work.

For the future creative class, we need to grow our own and create the perfect place for artists to relocate to. Having access to studios and workspaces, places where new work can be developed and showcased, a range of opportunities, networks, commissions and access to professional development support are all key ingredients needed for a city where artists can flourish.

## 2.2 Headline objectives

- In the action plan emerging from this Framework, we will recognise the creativity in everyone, regardless of background. We will celebrate what people do, make and create.
- We will make better connections between grass-roots everyday culture and the potential to progress pathways into a cultural sector career.
- We will ensure that Manchester is a place where artists and creatives can be successful, relocate to, call home, and flourish.



Manchester Histories. History of Climate Change Festival 2021, Climate Machine

# EVERYTHING

## 2.3 Making connections

Culture makes you think, and it inspires action. This means culture has an impact far beyond the sector itself. As part of our Framework we want to recognise the incredible connections culture has with a wide range of other sectors, such as the creative industries, health, education, digital, and the city's emerging cyber industry. We would like to start building a network of cultural ambassadors in these symbiotic sectors, whose role would be to strengthen those connections and build on them with programmes, activities and shared resources where possible.

There is a large and vital leisure and entertainment sector that all our visitors and residents access and value, and which we should start to see strategically

as being aligned with, and a potential gateway to, our cultural offer. For example, sports – whether you're a spectator or a participant – have a part to play, and musicals, gigs, films and festivals all bring people together with a shared cultural experience.

Another critical connection for culture in Manchester is our city's commitment to a more sustainable future. Manchester has committed to a science-based target to be zero carbon by 2038, and cultural organisations and activities can support that mission in a number of ways. These include reducing the carbon footprint of their own activities, supporting more sustainable transport to and between cultural events, and making carbon awareness and literacy part of their everyday programming.

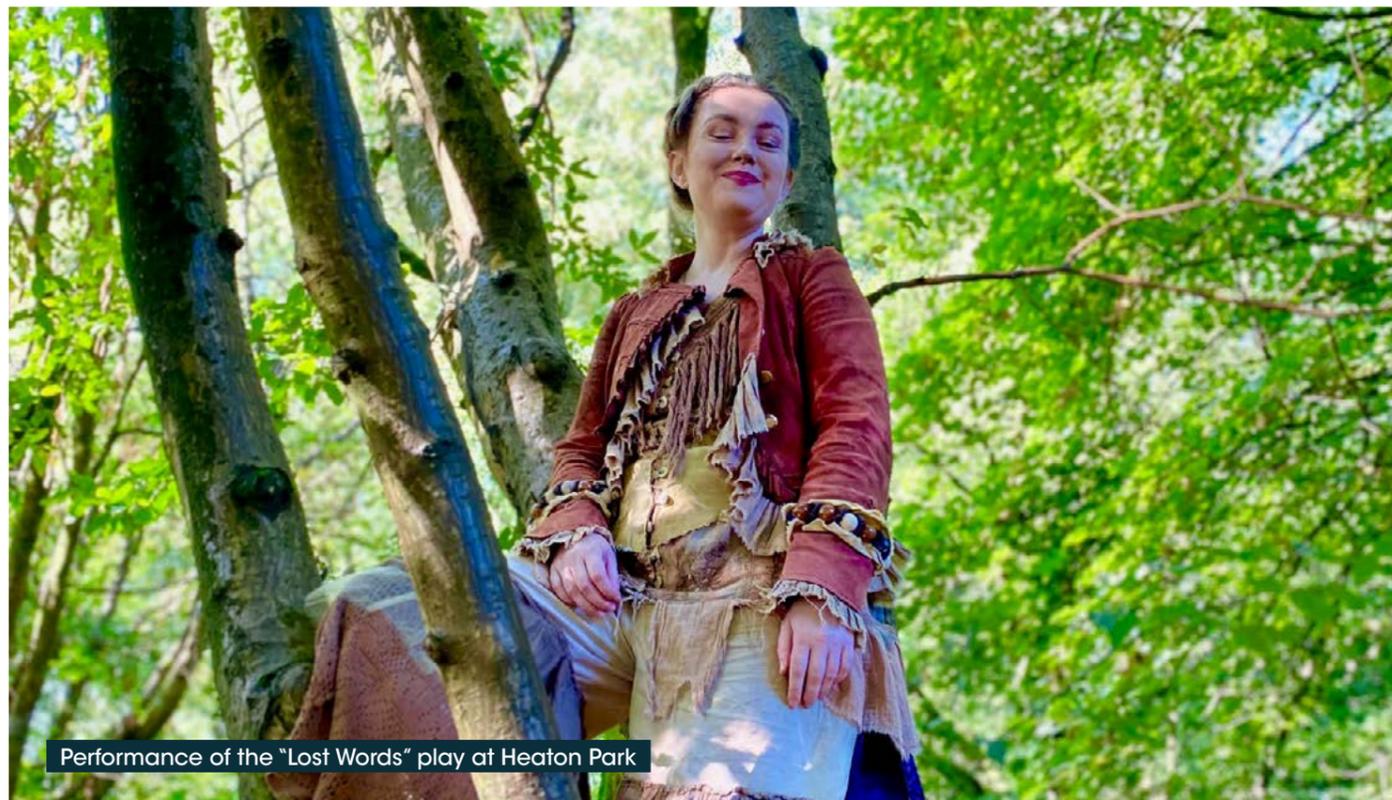
Manchester has already made strong progress in this area through the long-standing cultural partnership GMAST, which supports all arts and culture organisations in the city region on their journey to sustainability. The Council has also developed a sustainable events and zero carbon culture guide.

Importantly, culture can do more than just help us cut carbon. There is an advocacy role for the sector, encouraging residents to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Culture can also support nature recovery and help reduce waste too, including food waste. Here there are a huge range of organisations that the cultural sector can connect to, support and partner with, such as the Greater Manchester Environment Fund, City of Trees, Fareshare, Groundwork, and many others.

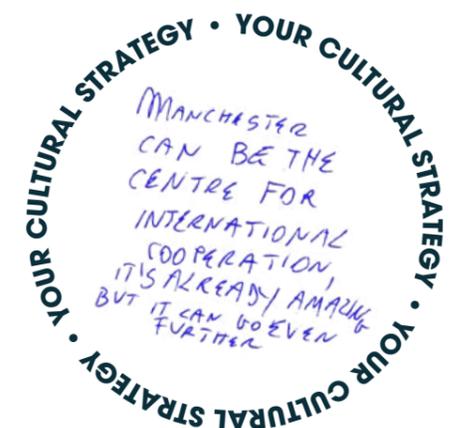
Connections, impact and relevance need to be recognised and valued, so under this Framework we plan to build on our annual survey of the city's cultural sector and craft a 'dashboard' to bring together all the data and information for leaders across the city, in the sector, and beyond. This will enable us to see at a glance the significant value being generated by our cultural activity, and where further impact and action are required.

## 2.3 Headline objectives

- Part of our cultural activity under this new ten-year Framework should be to recognise and connect with our wider cultural world, to cross-programme and utilise to promote our publicly supported cultural programmes.
- We will develop a new network of cultural champions in key growth sectors to strengthen connections with culture.
- We will recognise that in some areas, eg. music, our cultural educational work is actually generating the future talent for these economically important areas.
- We will craft a 'dashboard' to show the significant value being generated by our cultural activity.



Performance of the "Lost Words" play at Heaton Park





Little Amal at Manchester Day Parade. Photo by Mark Waugh

# EVERYTHING

## 2.4 Telling the story

It's been said that 'what Manchester does today, the rest of the world does tomorrow', and it really is the case that our astounding history and our contemporary relevance are just some of the stories we'd like to tell, alongside tales of invention, tolerance and justice.

That sense of how culture and the stories we tell are relevant is another aspect of this Framework – relevance to the people of the city, to other local and global strategies, sectors and agendas. We believe that culture is key to opening doors and addressing wider issues such as social justice, diversity and inclusion, and climate change.

It is also the case that our cultural narrative under this Framework will mean telling Manchester's varied-origins story with honesty. That includes the fact that workers of all nationalities and cultures have always been attracted to the city, and openly recognising our economy's post-colonial legacy, including the rise and fall of Cottonopolis. We want to respect our past while celebrating our future, and that includes a true reflection of the fabric of our city.

As the first industrial (and original modern) city, Manchester had a leading global role in defining a 20th-century industrial model that led directly to a climate and biodiversity emergency.



Manchester Jewish Museum. Photo by Chris Payne



Manchester Histories Peterloo 2019. Jonathan Keenan Photography

Telling the story of Manchester honestly is vital, but we also believe we could tell it more and in greater depth at many levels. We need to broaden our cultural story so it brings in every aspect of our heritage: music, free trade, industrial innovation, gay liberation, women's suffrage, computing, and mass trespass. Not least, is our great sporting heritage, which is powerfully celebrated in our National Football Museum.

This storytelling should put our new and established diverse communities centre stage; many of us have 'newly arrived' in the past 200 years or so.

## 2.4 Headline objectives

- Celebrate the story of the city more inclusively, truthfully and powerfully through culture, politics, industry, society and innovation.
- Tell Manchester's varied-origin stories, including celebrating and acknowledging that the city has always been a quintessentially migrant city and openly recognising our economy's post-colonial legacy.
- We will strive in this Framework to ensure culture is an inclusive and brave way to explore such an important and wide range of issues as social justice, diversity and inclusion, and climate change in a city where artists enjoy freedom of expression.

## BLACK GOLD ARTS

Black Gold Arts, founded in 2015, is a unique Manchester-based arts organisation working predominantly with working-class people of colour, the LGBTQ+ community and their allies. Their biannual Black Gold Arts Festival delivers exceptional film, dance, spoken word, music and theatre experiences. In 2023, the company was commissioned by Culture Liverpool's EuroFestival for the Eurovision Song Contest to stage a city centre takeover, featuring 50 queer artists and allies from the Global Majority\* performing drag, cabaret, circus, live music, fierce choreography and more.

Black Gold Arts x Whitworth Takeover won Best Event in Manchester Culture Awards 2023 for a free outdoor music and arts festival staged in the grounds of Whitworth Art Gallery, serving the best live music, catwalk extravaganzas, DJs, strollers, dance, fashion and street food! Think of your favourite outdoor festival, and then make it even more fabulous!

\*Global Majority = African, Caribbean, Southeast, South, East Asian, Middle Eastern Diaspora communities, as well as indigenous communities



Black Gold Arts Festival at The Whitworth

## MANCHESTER MUSIC CITY

According to French fashion house Chanel, the reason they chose Manchester for their signature fashion show was because the city 'changed the history of music'. Music is in the lifeblood of the city and continues, unabated, to be its key cultural claim to fame.

Manchester Music City is a network of people and organisations that represents the full breadth of that music landscape. From venues to promoters, education partners to independent artists, Manchester Music City exists to connect and support the city's music ecosystem and showcase Manchester's music sector on the world stage. The partnership sprang into being after Manchester joined the global Music Cities Network in 2019, which takes in cities like Aarhus, Bergen, Berlin, Gothenburg, Groningen, Hamburg, Reykjavik, Sydney and Valencia.

Most recently, Manchester Music City led the bid to host WOMEX (Worldwide Music Expo) on behalf of the UK and Ireland. The biggest music conference of the global music scene, each year WOMEX takes place in a different European city and features a huge trade fair, talks, films and showcase concerts.

Manchester's winning bid was led by Manchester City Council with Brighter Sound, English Folk Expo, Marketing Manchester, the hub, Factory International, Horizons, British Council and Arts Council England. Hosting WOMEX will put Manchester firmly front and centre of the international music scene, and the event is expected to attract over 2,600 music professionals and performing artists from around ninety countries.



Manchester Collective with Abel Selaoe - The Oracle at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Photo by Gaelle Beri

## AVIVA STUDIOS

Opening in 2023, Aviva Studios lived up to its claim to be an international cultural landmark building and initiative. Sited appropriately on the former Granada Studios site, it opened to acclaim with Free Your Mind, an immersive dance production based on The Matrix and directed by Danny Boyle alongside Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy, Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, Es Devlin, Sabrina Mahfouz and Gareth Pugh.

As part of the opening season, The Welcome took place over nine days. This was a programme of cultural events and celebrations to invite Manchester residents through the doors of Aviva Studios to experience and explore the building and activities ranging from live performances to immersive installations. It was curated by Factory Assembly, a group of Greater Manchester residents who worked for two years on the programme.

The venue and new long-term home of Manchester International Festival has a flexible 1,600-seat hall and an open industrial warehouse-like performance space with a capacity for 5,000 people. The idea behind the venue is for artists to be able to create ambitious works of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. The 13,350 square metre building will add £1.1 billion to the economy of Manchester and the surrounding region over the next decade. It will also create or support an additional 1,500 jobs in the cultural economy.

Aviva Studios is run by Factory International, which also runs the festival, and Factory Academy, which trains Manchester residents for jobs in the Creative industries. Community engagement is a major priority, and partnerships with community groups throughout Manchester are key to Factory International's work.



Aviva Studios. Photo by Marco Cappelletti, courtesy of OMA and Factory International

## BRIGHTER SOUND

Brighter Sound have a 25-year track record of supporting young people through music in the Manchester area and the wider region, developing talent and opening career paths. They've worked in many settings, but are committed to working with marginalised and underrepresented young people who are living in challenging circumstances.

The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of young people led Brighter Sound to recognise the need to understand the science of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and implement trauma-informed practices into their work.

Supported by MADE and other organisations, including Kazzum

Arts, Headspace Bolton and 42nd Street, Brighter Sound are providing training for practitioners and working with local music services across Greater Manchester to deliver co-created trauma-informed projects with young people in schools and those outside of formal education. Sessions are based on the five principles of trauma-informed practice: safety (physical and emotional), trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

Brighter Sound are committed to implementing trauma-informed practices more widely, offering ongoing training and supervision to their workforce as well as the workforces of partner organisations and music services.



Brighter Sound, project for young people. Rachel Bywater Photography

# PILLAR THREE

Creating more spaces and places where culture happens; delivering a distributed and equitable cultural life for everyone, everywhere





# EVERYWHERE

## 3.1 Making space for culture

In the widespread and extensive consultation that's taken place to shape this Framework, we've heard time and time again that there is a need for more spaces and places for culture. This includes affordable rehearsal and working spaces for artists, neighbourhood cultural activities, as well as programmable spaces where the city's cultural offer can be designed to bring art and creativity to people's doorsteps.

From that starting point, working with partners and residents alike, the Council plans to develop a more innovative approach to cultural provision and public art by embedding it into other areas of strategic importance for the city. Its objective is to make culture and heritage integral parts of all our major city development plans and regeneration frameworks, and work with private sector partners to make cultural workspaces a potential part of street-level animation.



This approach will see Manchester fully integrate culture into new large-scale urban renewal programmes, including pipeline projects around Strangeways and across the 74-acre brownfield regeneration site, Holt Town.

Culture and creativity can also boost the vibrancy and viability of all areas of Manchester, including those in continued need of regeneration, and so the Council will undertake a review of the city's assets to explore their becoming part of our cultural infrastructure. We will also explore the adaptive, cultural reuse of heritage and underutilised buildings across Manchester to ensure they are conserved for the future and used more effectively.

Our efforts to increase opportunities for people to share and engage with culture will see the Council continue to use its libraries as neighbourhood beacons for culture. Manchester's libraries are made up of a network of 15 neighbourhood libraries, six community partnership libraries, and the award-winning Central Library – the most visited public library in the country. This network already delivers many public services (including cultural activities!), but it's also perfectly placed to help us work even harder to bring more cultural access to all our neighbourhoods.



# EVERYWHERE

Libraries are seen by many as 'safe havens' and they can teach other venues a great deal about how to create a warm and open welcome for those who might feel uncomfortable about entering formal cultural venues. They can also offer a connection with culture and the arts that could lead to more engagement with art, performance, museums and galleries.

Under this ten-year Framework, one key aspiration is to see the activity outlined above lead to a series of neighbourhood hubs for creative production and access to culture. These can then become key to delivering against our objective to broaden cultural engagement and ensure that all our residents are connected to, create, and are inspired by culture and creativity.

Our pilot for this network of neighbourhood hubs is already in development through the regeneration of Wythenshawe Civic Centre, plans for which recently won backing from the Levelling Up Fund and also include the development of a cultural hub. The proposed hub would provide facilities and creative spaces for artists, creative businesses, local people and community groups to develop their creative potential in a supportive environment

### 3.1 Headline objectives

- In making space for culture, we will integrate it into major urban renewal programmes and undertake a review of the city's underutilised assets with a view to cultural use.
- We will optimise use of our network of libraries to increase opportunities to engage in culture.
- We will develop a network of neighbourhood hubs for culture.
- We will use public art to enhance our city centre and neighbourhoods, commissioning high-quality artworks and design features that are inspiring and distinctive, and make space for outdoor performance and murals.



SICK! Festival: Witness this. Photo by Claire Angel

# EVERYWHERE



Manchester Day. Mark Waugh Photography

## 3.2 Manchester – the global city

Our city is outward looking and determinedly internationalist, with strong global ties to other cities, particularly in South Asia, China and across Europe. Our city's diversity gets stronger and deeper as the city continues to grow, and now our richly varied population includes large Chinese, South Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Jewish communities, to name just a few. Our global reach, our global connections and our diverse community combine to make Manchester a proudly international cultural city.

We are a city of global (and progressive) firsts, celebrating our LGBTQ+ community through an ever-popular Manchester Pride and marking our leading role in women's suffrage through International Women's Day, and notably through the recent commissioning of a statue of Emmeline Pankhurst.

All our diverse communities add to our rich cultural ecosystem through a wide range of festivals and events, including:

- Eid – including 'Eid in the Park'
- International Mother Language Day
- Chinese New Year, featuring red lanterns, live performances, and the legendary Dragon Parade
- MACFEST – the annual Muslim Arts and Culture Festival
- Manchester Day Parade
- Manchester Mega Mela – the largest celebration of south-east Asian culture in the North, back in 2024 after a year's break
- Caribbean Carnival – two-days of soca, calypso and much more
- Manchester Irish Festival – one of Europe's biggest celebrations of Irish culture
- UK Jewish Film Festival – an annual celebration
- ¡Viva! – Spanish and Latin American Film Festival at HOME
- The Italian Procession from the neighbourhood of Ancoats to the city's Town Hall
- Africa Day at Manchester Museum.

# EVERYWHERE



The Portico Library and the Weird As Folk exhibition. Credit Weird as Folk

We believe that reaching the world starts in our own communities. With a diverse and globally connected population, Manchester is very well placed to create a globally relevant cultural offer.

Our city is one of the most multicultural in the UK, with nearly 200 languages spoken here. It also ranks among the world's best international student cities.

Little surprise then that our UNESCO designation as a City of Literature has led to Manchester celebrating International Mother Language Day, working with partners, including our universities, to put our linguistic diversity front and centre.

We know we can work closely with Greater Manchester's partners to raise awareness of Manchester's cultural offer in key international markets. We also know we can identify more opportunities to collaborate internationally to boost the export and touring of work made in Manchester, and to attract international visitors in return.

Our global outlook:

- We foster and celebrate city-to-city collaborations right across the world through bilateral agreements, the membership of important European and international networks, and hosting key international events and trade events that promote exports, boost the tourism and visitor economy, and contribute to and celebrate the multicultural diversity that is represented within our resident population.

- Our UNESCO Manchester City of Literature designation builds connections and collaborations with cities across the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and Manchester's membership of the Music Cities Network has been a key driver in our efforts to recognise the impact and to support our local music economy.
- The city promotes artist and cultural exchange opportunities, which have been driven by our Danish cities collaboration with Aarhus and Aalborg, Manchester's long-standing sister-city relationships with Chemnitz and Wuhan, the Manchester Network for Cultural Collaboration with China (MANCCC) and relationships with other cities, including Barcelona.

- We strive to have top-quality global venues and producers; we have arts and music of an international quality, and our cornerstone institutions like the Hallé and Aviva Studios regularly tour their work across the world.
- It's all about bringing Manchester to the world and the world to us. Culture helps us reach out – to everywhere.



Manchester Day Parade. Photo by Mark Waugh



Always, Everywhere. Manchester's Cultural Ambition Launch Event. Manchester International Roots Orchestra Performance. Photo by Mark Waugh

### 3.2 Headline objectives

- We will work to create an internationally recognised and globally connected cultural offer in Manchester that is as diverse as our own community, utilising creative talents from all over the world and prioritising international collaborations where there is strong cultural representation within our city.
- We will make culture a key part of our continued efforts to reach a truly global visitor economy through sustainable cultural tourism.
- We will raise the skills, export capacity and aspirations of creative producers in Manchester so they can tour and export more of their work, reach new international audiences, and attract international industry events to the city.

YOUR CULTURAL STRATEGY • YOUR CULTURAL STRATEGY • YOUR CULTURAL STRATEGY

*Why does it have to be in a building? Make it come to people.*

# EVERYWHERE

## 3.3 Reaching across the North and cultural connections

Manchester is one of ten boroughs making up Greater Manchester, a city region of three million people that is a trailblazer for devolution. Manchester is a cultural magnet at the heart of that region, and our shared strategy for the visitor economy, our common goal for net zero, our efforts to promote Greater Manchester to international markets, and our Framework for culture all have to be shared and connected to partners across the wider region.

This means continued collaboration with other cultural organisations and clusters to more widely disperse our audiences and deliver a positive impact. A broader cultural offer across Greater Manchester helps extend visitor stays and enriches our connections to other sectors, such as health and education. In very practical terms, our audiences, the talented and skilled workforce that makes culture happen in our city, and the supply chains that support culture and the arts, are all drawn from across Greater Manchester and beyond.

Ensuring connectivity across the city region relies on good transport choices, and there are a number of ways in which transport is a factor in delivering our cultural vision. This Framework has been informed by extensive community sessions and interviews, and by surveying Manchester residents and the sector workforce, and transport has emerged as a key theme.

Almost half the people in our survey for this Framework said that better transport links would increase their likelihood of getting involved in cultural events and activities. Meanwhile, in our face-to-face consultations, young people keen to visit central Manchester were dissuaded by the perceived risks associated with public transport (personal safety), and claimed that parents were not happy for them to be on public transport in the evenings.

Transport availability is also an issue for our cultural workforce, many of whom may work to a more varied timetable. So there is an opportunity to work together to cross-check the availability of public transport against cultural programming, the late finish of gigs, theatre productions and live events etc in the evening, and how this could potentially be acting as an impediment to accessing cultural events and the jobs they create.

With Greater Manchester taking ever-greater control over its transport via the Bee Network, some of the important issues raised in our consultation for this Framework are already being addressed. The Bee Network app now has a new journey planner that makes it much easier for all residents to plan any trip using public transport – bus, tram or train – and to plan walking, wheeling and cycling routes. The app will also make it easier for passengers to report crime and antisocial behaviour to the police.

There are also plans for a night-transport pilot connecting Leigh, Bolton, Salford and Manchester. The pilot will provide 24-hour transport for around 135,000 residents living along the route and will help those working in the night-time economy.

Finally, we recognise that connecting people to culture is underpinned by good urban design, safer pedestrian routes, easy drop-off points, disabled access, and disabled parking at cultural venues, all of which are to be encouraged.

## 3.3 Headline objectives

If we want to broaden access to culture for all residents and connect to the rest of Greater Manchester, our transport challenge is threefold:

- Where a lack of transport provision and disabled parking is blocking access to culture, we will work with TfGM and other partners to address the issue.
- We will work with partners to reassure local residents about the safety levels on our public transport network, which has been an ongoing focus of work (and improvement) for TfGM and Metrolink.
- We will promote the newly established Bee Network as a low-carbon, affordable and much more reliable public transport system and a great alternative to using the car.



# EVERYWHERE



Frankie goes to Bollywood: HOME



Company Chameleon Push. Photo by Joel Chester Fildes

### 3.4 Seeing is believing

Manchester is in the unique position of being home to two of the most popular universities in the UK by level of application, and we are widely acknowledged as the city that attracts students more than any other. The city's night-time and cultural offer (as well as the high standards of the universities themselves) is often cited as a key factor in this magnetism.

Each year, we see over five million people engage with culture and the arts, and if you add the cultural economy and music together, the economic activity is worth over half a billion pounds.

With culture being such a critical aspect of everyday life in our city, and as it runs through the core of our brand proposition like red sticky letters through

a piece of rock, could we do more to make culture a visible, standout factor across the city?

The visibility challenge can be tackled if we celebrate publicly supported, commercial cultural activity, and DIY culture created by the city's artists and creative communities at a street level. In doing so, we increase ownership of and engagement in culture, heritage and the arts.

This challenge has emerged through our workshops with cultural players across the city; it's the challenge of making our culture seen, heard and embraced. A reference point from our continental neighbours are the pillars in Germany that provide cultural poster sites showing what's on across the city, with a highlight on public support and accessibility.

### 3.4 Headline objectives

- We will do more to celebrate publicly supported, commercial cultural activity, and culture created by the city's artists and creative communities at a street level across our city. This will raise the visibility of what's on to increase ownership of and engagement in culture.
- We will ensure that this programme of enhanced visibility is delivered in an innovative way.
- We will also build a better understanding of what's on across Manchester from social networks, DIY artists, and community-led culture.





Manchester Histories Festival. Jonathan Keenan Photography



Manchester Craft and Design Centre Workshop. Photo by Dan Eden

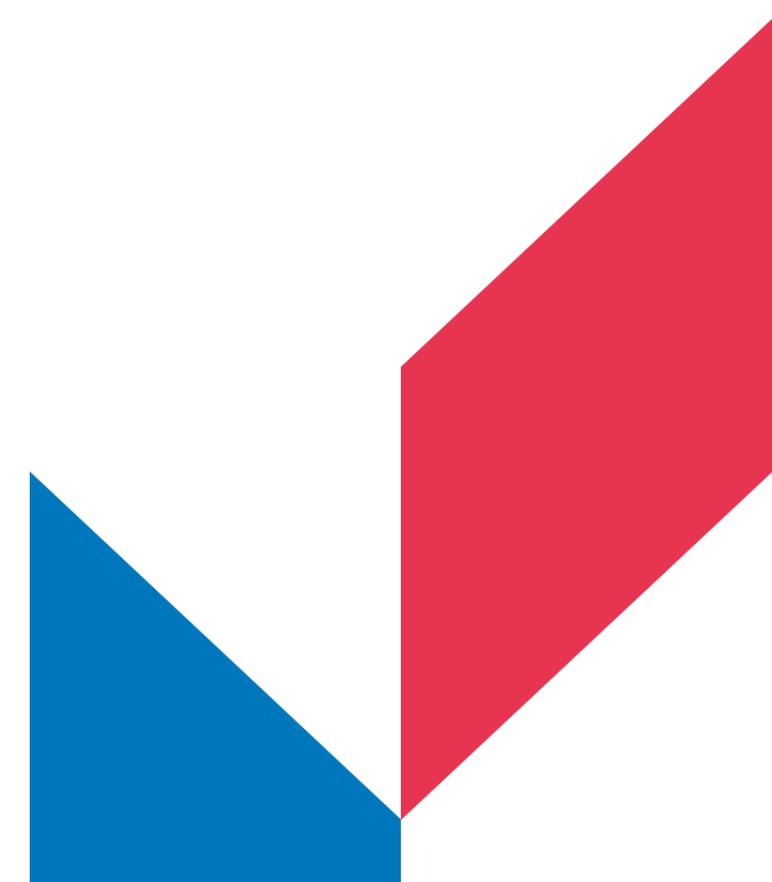
# STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

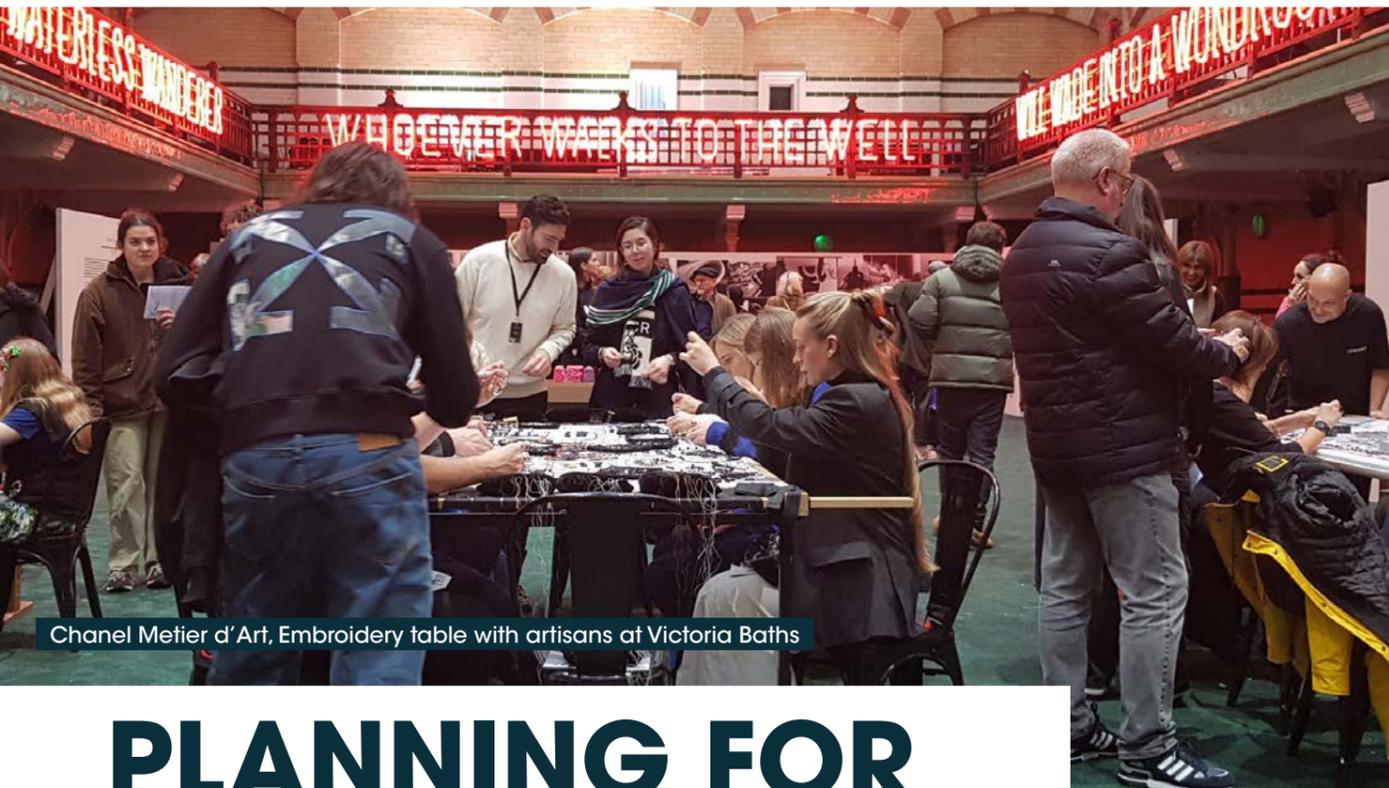
**Understanding the contribution of culture to other regional and national strategies, and in return placing culture into the mainstream of those strategies too**

## Key strategies

Our cultural framework is informed by and connects to a number of critical strategies at a city, regional, or national level, including:

- The Manchester Economic Strategy
  - Our Manchester Strategy: Forward to 2035
  - Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023–2027
  - Manchester's Climate
- Change Framework
  - Manchester's Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Manchester Child Friendly City
  - Manchester's Cultural Ambition 2016–2026
  - The city's Digital Strategy (especially on inclusivity)
  - Heritage 2033: a ten-year strategy
  - Key Regeneration Frameworks (eg. Holt Town, IDM)
  - Greater Manchester Visitor Economy Strategy (in progress)
  - A New Local Industrial Strategy for Greater Manchester
- Manchester Health Population Plan
  - Age Friendly Manchester Refreshed Strategy 2023–2028
  - Arts Council England Let's Create (national)
  - Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy
  - Cultural strategies of our Greater Manchester local authority neighbours
  - Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Plan + LTP refresh
  - Manchester Education Strategy 2024–2034.





Chanel Metier d'Art, Embroidery table with artisans at Victoria Baths

# PLANNING FOR ACTION

## How we will deliver, fund and oversee the action plan to support our Framework

This Framework sets out the strategic objectives for culture, the arts and creativity in Manchester. It is designed to be co-owned with the sector and delivered in partnership with cultural organisations, commissioners, funders, supporters and, of course, audiences.

Once this Framework is published, work will start on an action plan with smart, measurable and time-framed targets. Set into that action plan will be annual review points for this Framework, which as we've stated, is designed to grow and evolve as we continue to make progress, support culture and widen access.

The Framework above sets out a broad range of objectives that we believe represent a holistic but bold future direction for culture; however, the level of ambition is high, and so one aspect of our resulting action plan will be prioritisation of our objectives to ensure that we are not stretching our delivery capacity too far.

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

As part of our commitment to being a globally relevant and internationalist city, we have benchmarked ourselves with partner cities in other countries, and as we draw up our cultural action plan we will also cross-check our activity with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where we know that our cultural Framework can support a number of the goals.

- SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing
- SDG 4: Good-quality education
- SDG 5: Gender equality
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 13: Climate action

## Diversifying funding

A specific task will be to examine diversified funding models for culture, given the widely acknowledged pressures on public finances.

The scope of this review will include philanthropy, social value contributions through procurement, greater commercialism in the sector, new funding schemes levied from those who benefit from cultural activation, and support through partnerships, in particular where culture can support delivery against the strategic objectives of others. Civic philanthropy, including subscription models and 'micro' giving, will also be explored.

We also plan to examine the idea of an endowment or fund to provide a sustained income source for music education in Manchester. If music is in our DNA and so critical to our brand and success as a destination, then it deserves some payback support, particularly from those whose careers or businesses have flourished in the sector.

Diversification of funding sources is already emerging in the city. In 2023, Manchester launched the first Accommodation Business Improvement District in the UK to raise funds on the basis of room occupancy. The initiative, managed by Marketing Manchester and CityCo, will raise more than £3million per year and is designed to provide additional funds for marketing of the city and development of current and future events.



### Partnerships and engagement

Manchester is a place where partnerships are pivotal to making things happen. We pride ourselves on working across partner organisations, charities, businesses, public bodies and stakeholders that all get behind the vision of the city that moves us forwards to create an energetic and successful place where inclusive growth is a shared priority.

The cultural sector in Manchester is truly collaborative, dedicated to joining up the cultural offer and pathways for talent, as well as finding shared solutions to challenges, such as responding to the erosion of cultural education, and working towards zero carbon.

This Framework has been co-created with partners across the sector, through workshops and by surveying local people and community groups. We will continue to meet and have further engagement with the sector, as well as commercial cultural partners (eg. Palace Theatre, Opera House, Co-op Live) and our existing cultural leadership group to oversee our emerging action plan and the regular reviews of the Framework itself.

At a strategic level we also recognise the critical importance of our partnerships with Heritage Lottery, Arts Council England, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and a number of regional and national agencies.

We will seek to establish ongoing resident and neighbourhood engagement through our existing teams and programmes, in particular to further shape our plans for neighbourhood hubs and a more distributed 'everywhere' model for culture. It's also been recognised that we could do more to nurture a greater level of civic pride in the globally recognised cultural offer that Manchester has become famous for.

In addition, we will work with Manchester Business Sounding Board to convene a specific summit of business leaders and partners to continue the city's excellent track record of nurturing Public Private Partnerships as an acknowledged Manchester model for cultural development.





Manchester Central Library



Factory Academy Film and Broadcast Dec 22. Photo by Chris Payne

**Governance, accountability and transparency**

This Framework has been co-designed with residents and partners, and its delivery will be a shared commitment on the part of the Council, cultural organisations, funders, the business community and the third sector.

For the sector itself, the Manchester Cultural Consortium will have a clear role in the ownership and monitoring of our Framework. The Consortium is an independent, member-led group whose purpose is to represent the interests of Manchester's diverse cultural sector and the communities it serves.

It is a collective force for arts and culture in Manchester. The group will work collaboratively to address issues of common concern within the sector, and these are highlighted throughout this Framework.

The Cultural Consortium is a lobbying and consultative body concerning local, regional and national agendas, as well as all aspects of policy that impact on the cultural sector. It is arranged in two parts: a Steering Group, and a wider Manchester Cultural Consortium Assembly.

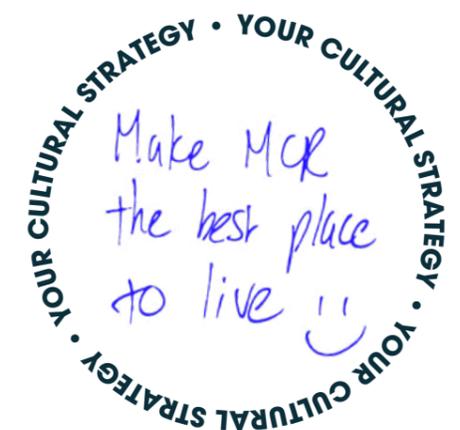
Within Manchester City Council, the support of the Consortium and the delivery of this Framework are both supported by an officer team and reviewed through the authority's scrutiny committee process. We propose to carry out an annual review of the Framework's action plan, led by Manchester City Council, which will share the highlights of what has been achieved in the plan to ensure people are kept up to date on progress.

**Sustaining the sector**

From continued funding cuts, the pandemic, to the cost-of-living crisis, the cultural sector has been subject to a number of shocks and challenges over the past ten years; it is testament to the resolve and ingenuity of the sector that so many have continued to deliver the very best creative cultural output in spite of these setbacks.

Under this Framework we want to pay specific attention to ensuring high levels of organisational resilience for partners across the culture and heritage sectors, and supporting a more diverse income base. Manchester's annual Cultural Impact Survey, a proposed 'asset mapping' exercise, along with biennial health checks will assess the offer to ensure we have a strong, vibrant and diverse cultural ecology and infrastructure.

This mapping and resilience exercise will also involve continued work with GMAST and other partners to examine the sustainability and carbon footprint of our cultural estate and events. It will also put in place a co-ordinated plan to support maintenance and retrofit to preserve assets, protect heritage, implement event strategies, and dramatically lower our carbon emissions.



**From culture, to creativity**

It is common practice for cultural strategies to conflate and confuse the cultural sector with the creative industries and media sector. Consequently, a strategic plan – even at a national scale – can quickly change from a discussion of opera or ballet to an examination of Britain's excellence in industrial design. We have avoided that pitfall with this Framework, but we do recognise a substantial level of synergy between the creative and digital industries and a thriving cultural sector. There are many shared skills, as some creative industries are critical parts of the cultural supply chain, but perhaps most importantly, there would be no creative sector in a city without culture.

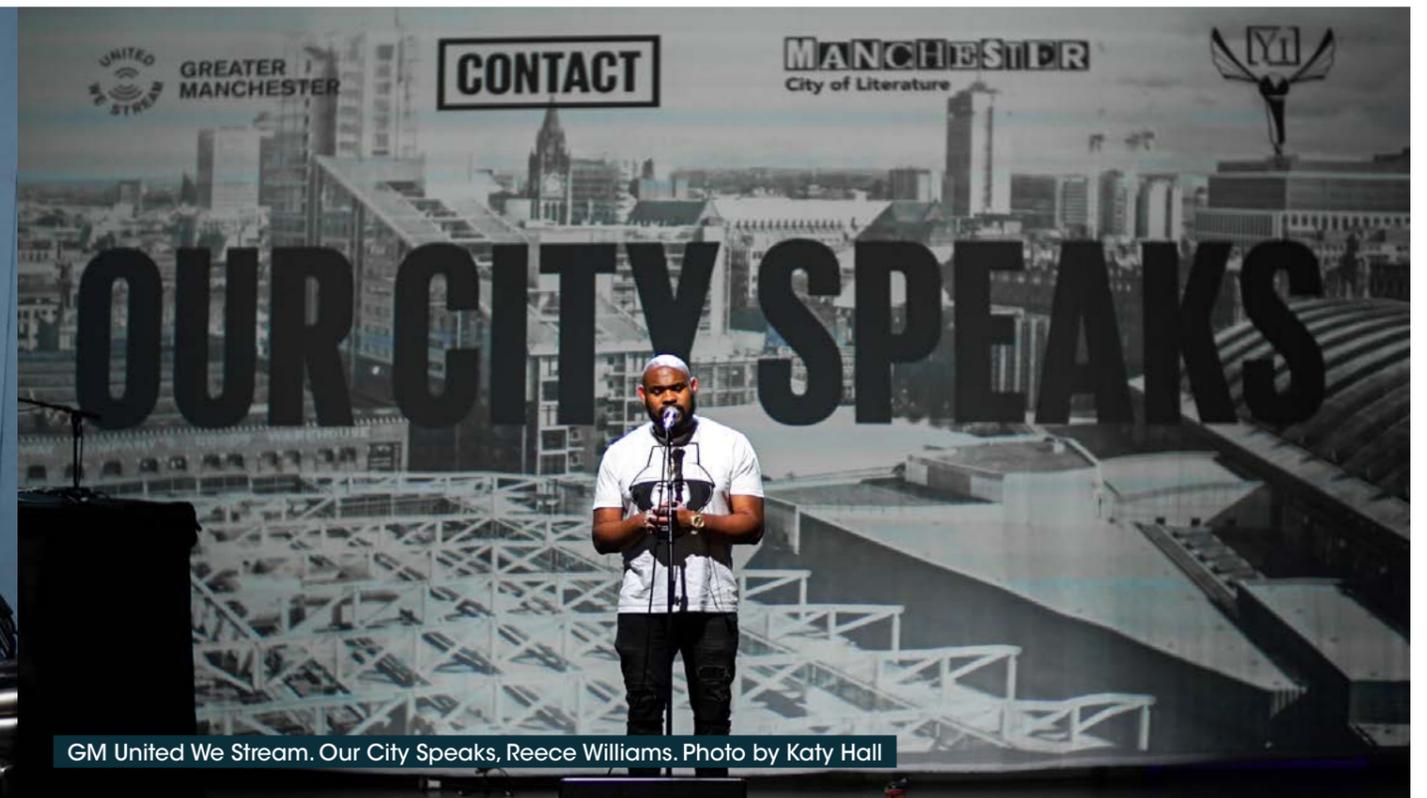
From the starting point of this Framework and its action plan we will carry out a follow-up conversation with the creative industries to examine their interdependency with culture; we will also discuss what more we can do as a city to ensure that creativity and culture are two twin strengths of our Original Modern city.



Manchester Histories Festival, Universally Manchester. Face Paint Reading



Reform Radio Training. Credit Reform Radio



GM United We Stream. Our City Speaks, Reece Williams. Photo by Katy Hall



Home Arches. Photo by Barrie Leach

# MADE BY US

**This Framework has been shaped, co-designed and refined by a large number of interviewees, consultation participants, workshop attendees and survey respondents, including the following people and organisations:**

## Workshop participants

### Organisations

ALL FM, Beat Bazaar, Castlefield Gallery, Chorlton Arts Festival, Community Arts North West, Company Chameleon, Curious Minds, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, Europa, Factory International, FutureEverything, GMCA, hÅb, Hallé/Chetham's, HOME, Manchester Animation Festival, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester City of Literature, Manchester Craft and Design Centre, Manchester Film Festival, Manchester Histories, Manchester Literature Festival, Manchester Palace and Opera House, Manchester Poetry Library, Manchester Transport Museum Society Ltd, Music Venue Trust, My Hub, National Football

Museum, Odd Arts, Omid Asadi Art, One Education Music/MyHub, Our Room, Out of Africa, Paradise Works, People's History Museum, PROFORMA Arts Limited, Reform Radio, Rogue Artists' Studios, Salaam Festival, Science Museum Group, SEEN, Something To Aim For, Submerge, The Bridgewater Hall, The Edge, The University of Manchester, The Whitworth, The Writing Squad, The Yard Mcr, TiPP/MiF, UCEN Manchester, University of Salford, Venture Arts, Walk the Plank, Women in Comedy Festival, Wordsmith Awards, Z-arts.

### Artists, freelancers and individuals

Suraj Adekola, Kelan Andrews, Karol Kochanowski, David Macfarlane, Lena Munday, Tian Ramos.

## Where we have been and who we have spoken to

Manchester Cultural Consortium  
 Contact Theatre, Afrocats  
 Abraham Moss School  
 Green House Café  
 Moss Side Powerhouse  
 Moss Side Leisure Centre  
 Wythenshawe Forum  
 Newton Heath Library  
 422 Longsight, Burnage Good Neighbours, Z-arts  
 Chorlton High School  
 Longsight Market vendors and customers  
 Manchester Libraires Age Friendly  
 Chatter Box Project  
 Gorton Hub  
 Health Equality Sounding Board  
 Manchester Youth Board  
 CDM UK Women textile Project  
 Breakthrough UK  
 Rainbow Haven  
 North Manchester Inclusion Partnership  
 Caribbean and African Health Network  
 Health Equality Sounding Board  
 City Co  
 Cultural Corridor, Manchester Youth Council.

## Steering Group

Neil MacInnes, Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth Services, Manchester City Council (Chair)  
 Dave Moutrey, Director of Culture, Manchester City Council  
 Liz O'Neil, Z-arts and MADE Network  
 Joanne Sliwa, Abraham Moss Community School and MADE Network  
 Samina Ali, Freelance Producer and Project Manager and Manchester Cultural Consortium  
 Magdalen Bartlett, Afrocats and Manchester Cultural Consortium  
 Sam Kalubowila, Arts Council England  
 Sherelle Fairweather, Digital Lead, Manchester City Council  
 Sarah Whitlock, Communications, Manchester City Council  
 Rick Plant, Neighbourhoods, Manchester City Council  
 Ruth Denton, Child Friendly Cities, Manchester City Council  
 Creative Concern Team - Steve Connor, Charlotte Griffin-Jones, Jillian Griffiths, Martha Gilmartin, Faith Bulleyment  
 Manchester City Council Team - Sarah Elderkin, Craig Neate, Kai Daley, Mark Duncan, Zoe Williams, Thorsten Mayer, Louise Lanigan, Rebecca Wignall, Mike Parrott, Yvonne O'Malley.

## Interviewees

Vaughan Allen, Chief Executive, CityCo

Vimla Appledoo, Co-Founder and Chief Culture Officer, Honey Badger and EDI lead, Greater Manchester Business Board

Nick Brook-Sykes, Director of Tourism, Marketing Manchester

Esteve Caramés, Director of Cultural Programmes, City of Barcelona

Jennifer Cleary, Regional Director, Arts Council England

Councillor Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council

Katie Duffy, Senior Programmes and Projects Manager, Glasgow Life

Jess Edwards, Head of English, Manchester Metropolitan University

Martyn Evans, Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor Arts and Humanities, Manchester Metropolitan University

Becca Heron, Strategic Director Growth and Development, Manchester City Council

Luthfur Rahman, Former Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council

Neil MacInnes, Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth Services, Manchester City Council

John McAulife, Creative Manchester Director, The University of Manchester

Dave Moutrey, Director of Culture, Manchester City Council

Liz O'Neil, Z-arts and MADE Network

Joanne Roney, Chief Executive, Manchester City Council

Joëlle Spérano, Planning Consultant – Culture, Ville de Montréal

Joanne Sliwa, MADE Network

Louise Sutherland, Head of Engagement (North), National Lottery Heritage Fund

Ivan Wadeson, Manchester City of Literature

Esme Ward, Director, Manchester Museum



Manchester Museum Volunteer

## ONE EDUCATION MUSIC - MAKING MUSIC IN MANCHESTER

One Education Music has a team of 60 skilled music instructors who provide a broad and diverse range of music services to children and young people in Manchester. Inspiring generations of children through one-to-one sessions, in small groups as well as whole class ensembles, the team works across all genres. By reaching 98% of schools in Manchester, One Education enables over 27,000 children and young people have access to music-making with progression routes for all genres and abilities.

The city boasts having the largest metropolitan music service in England, reaching more schools and pupils than any other single provider. Through its network of schools and teaching professionals, One Education Music also supports curriculum delivery, professional development and runs an instrumental loan service. Its six

Music Centres across the city are free to join, open to all and are attended by more than 900 pupils annually. As the commissioned partner for music education hub activity the service leads on the delivery of the National Plan for Music for the city with schools and music partners across the city and nationally.

The genre-busting breadth of music instructors means One Education can cover Irish, Eastern-European kalinka, folk, Afro Caribbean steel pans, rock, jazz, big band, and western classical styles as well as teach skills in music technology and production. The team works collaboratively with Manchester's music organisations and has an extensive programme of performance opportunities in many of the city's major venues, often introducing children and young people to their very first experience of the city's cultural life.



Band on the Wall rock event. One Education

## CONTACT

Contact's Studio School is an eight-week course designed to re-engage young people aged 11–16 who are at risk or have been at risk of being excluded from mainstream education. Participants may be in alternative education settings such as Pupil Referral Units, Inclusion Centres within mainstream settings, or specialist schools.

As an organisation with an established expertise in empowering young people to learn, and with a newly expanded professional media studio, Contact has the experience and

infrastructure to support young people in AP to reach their full potential through creativity. Studio School was designed to combat the lack of face-to-face engagement and the subsequent reduction in aspiration, confidence and mental health experienced by young people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The course comprises weekly sessions led by Contact's resident Nordoff and Robbins music therapist, where students explore skills around the production and composition of live and electronic music



Contact Theatre, The Agency Community Day. Photo by Victor Oderinde

## HIP HOP ARCHIVE

The Manchester Hip Hop Archive, the UK's foremost hip hop repository and education resource, is homed at Archives+ and is dedicated to telling the untold story of hip hop in Manchester.

Established by Unity Radio 92.8FM, the region's leading Black music radio station, the Hip Hop Archive is committed to collecting and sharing verbal, visual, audio and physical documents, to help curate a rich collection of artifacts and ephemera. These include recordings, photographs, sketchbooks and clothing representing the city's diverse and multicultural creative community.

The Archive and its projects highlight the events, groups and individuals that contributed to the social and cultural phenomenon known as hip hop. The team

shares the roots of hip hop culture, celebrating the local MCs, DJs, graffiti artists, breakers and fashion entrepreneurs who shaped our city and contributed to the global impact of hip hop culture.

The Manchester Hip Hop Archive online platform, in partnership with Manchester Digital Music Archive, creates a space where Manchester's hip hop heritage, history and global influence are celebrated through the collection of objects. The Manchester Hip Hop Academy is an education programme that links with schools and communities to enable young people to access creative workshops and performance camps covering the breadth of the hip hop genre.



Manchester Hip Hop Archive

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS AT THE ROYAL EXCHANGE THEATRE

In an effort to encourage new audiences in Manchester, the Royal Exchange Theatre worked with freelance audience development specialist Samina Ali to produce an exclusive interactive taster session for Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, adapted by Tanika Gupta and directed by Pooja Ghai. The session specifically targeted members of the South Asian community and provided them with a unique behind-the-scenes experience for them to then share across social media and within their community networks.

The taster sessions proved to be highly successful, contributing to a 42% increase in new audiences from the South Asian community for this performance. This significant growth demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted, interactive engagement efforts in attracting underrepresented audiences to the theatre.

It is crucial that programming is reflective for the community and audiences, and in this case it was important to ensure that the production resonated with South Asian communities. The adaptation of Great Expectations incorporated themes and elements that were culturally relevant and engaging for the target audience, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and representation.

Arts and cultural organisations in the city often benefit from engaging freelance audience development consultants with relevant expertise and networks to invite new people into their building, the ultimate aim being to diversify their audiences. These consultants can provide valuable strategic guidance to inform future planning and improve accessibility for a wider range of people.



A Royal Exchange Theatre & Tamasha co-production. Photo © Ellie Kurtz

## FACTORY ACADEMY

The Factory Academy was set up by Factory International in 2018 to train the creative workforce of the future, providing local people with opportunities to develop careers in the creative industries without having to leave the region. Working in partnership with a consortium of cultural and creative organisations, Factory Academy has delivered hundreds of training and employment opportunities, including paid internships, apprenticeships, work experience programmes, and routes to full-time and part-time roles. A core aim of the Factory Academy is to diversify the workforce in an increasingly important sector for the region – annually, the creative industries are worth more than £100billion to the economy.

The Factory Academy team takes account of current and future skill gaps in business and administration, venue technicians and production, and event management to develop training and employment programmes that provide an introduction to boost industry knowledge, awareness, confidence and practical skills. Courses are bespoke and developed with industry experts with specialist knowledge and experience in a range of sectors, from event managers, musicians and teachers, to production managers and technicians. Many of the programmes lead to

accredited qualifications such as BTECs, or guaranteed interviews with hiring organisations.

Regular courses include Future 15, a three-week course giving people behind-the-scenes access to a major creative organisation, and eight-week sector-specific programmes such as Broadcast and Film Production and Live Events Crew, which blend online learning, masterclasses delivered by industry professionals from creative organisations, and hands-on training to boost practical skills and employability in the area.

Factory Academy is also responding to industry-wide needs such as workforce shortages in technical roles as a result of the pandemic. Since 2023, a technical trainer has been employed directly by Factory International to deliver venue-based training, providing a pipeline for technical roles at a range of levels at Aviva Studios and across the region.

Working with housing associations and hosting ‘pop up’ stalls in local districts, as well as their network of neighbourhood organisers, the Factory Academy team has a powerful outreach approach, proactivity raising awareness of careers in the creative and cultural sector so that Manchester can embrace and deploy the skills and talents of all our residents.

## AFROCATS

Afrocats is an award-winning Black and female-led charity that supports people who face social exclusion in Greater Manchester. The charity works with schools, groups and organisations to address inequality and achieve meaningful social change by identifying and breaking down barriers. Through its inspiring creative workshops, Afrocats helps young people and adults discover culture, creativity and resilience. Its consistently high-quality work is engaging and artistically exciting.

Afrocats was founded by Magdalen Bartlett in 2003 as a community to channel her lived experience and skills into empowering others who experience exclusion, culture shock and trauma. She now leads an all-female team of creative producers and freelancers. Established as a registered charity in 2017, Afrocats is now a powerful platform for people at risk of social exclusion across Greater Manchester to have their voices heard.



Afrocats

## THE HALLÉ

The Hallé Orchestra is a Manchester cultural brand of genuine global significance. Founded in 1858 by Sir Charles Hallé, his pioneering spirit and fundamental belief that music should be for everyone has remained central to the Hallé's vision and work.

Led by renowned conductors such as Hans Richter, Sir Hamilton Harty, Sir John Barbirolli and Sir Mark Elder, the orchestra was originally based in Manchester's Free Trade Hall until 1996, when it moved to become resident at the specially built Bridgewater Hall – one of the world's great concert venues. From September 2024, internationally acclaimed conductor Kahchun Wong will take up the role of Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser.

Drawing exceptional players from more than 14 countries, the Hallé performs to over 170,000 people every year, at concerts at The Bridgewater Hall, residencies in the UK, international festivals such as Edinburgh and the BBC Proms, and tours overseas. The programme is inclusive and diverse, including family concerts, relaxed concerts, unique artist collaborations and a Chamber Series.

In 2013, Hallé St Peter's opened in Ancoats, heralding a new chapter for the organisation. Following renovation and extension, this

stunning 18th-century venue, including the triple RIBA award-winning Oglesby Centre, is now a home for the orchestra to rehearse, record and perform. It is also a base for Hallé Connect – one of the biggest initiatives of its kind in the world, offering education and outreach projects that bring music in its broadest sense to over 76,000 people a year across a wide range of communities.

The Hallé's spirit of innovation ensures it is a connected, relevant and accessible member of the Manchester cultural family, working across the whole community, nurturing young talent and embedding music into the heart of the city.



Halle. Bruckner Symphony No8 Concert Feb 2024.  
Photo by Bill Lam

## HOME: ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Since HOME opened in 2015, millions of people have visited this cultural magnet in the heart of the city to enjoy theatre and dance shows, great independent films, new art, or to catch up with friends in the café.

HOME works with artists from across the world to produce thought-provoking film, art, drama, dance, and festivals, with a strong focus on new commissions and artist development. HOME is an organisation and venue that contributes to the cultural economy of the city, but also works closely with local people and communities.

HOME's creative development programme supports the professional and creative development of artists from all backgrounds, levels of experience and art forms. Its creative development activity makes

space for people to be creative in schools, community centres, on the street and in the building itself. The team at HOME uses creativity to improve health, education and social challenges for people in and around Manchester through artist-led participatory projects, workshops, study sessions, courses, QandAs, fresh interpretation, residencies, commissions, and work-based learning.

Situated between the HOME building and Whitworth Street West is the new HOME Arches space, a £3.5million project to attract, nurture and retain creative talent in Manchester by providing high-quality, low-cost rehearsal and training space. It will enable the team at HOME to support artists across a variety of disciplines to build skills, knowledge and experiences, and will offer specific artist development studio space.



## ROGUE ARTISTS' STUDIOS AND COMPANY CHAMELEON

A successful new artistic workspace has located leading creative activities in the heart of Openshaw.

Since 1995, Rogue Artists' Studios has been the epicentre of an incredibly important and impactful community of artists that have earned a national and international reputation. In 2017 the group relocated to a former Victorian primary school

in Openshaw and has created a vibrant new home for over 90 artists and cultural organisations with a successful programme of exhibitions, events and opens. Rogue continues to develop its offer, hosting international residencies and exchanges with artists from the UK and countries as far afield as France, Germany and Lithuania.

Company Chameleon has created a dance performance and training space in the former nursery building, supporting dance artists and emerging companies such as Kapow Dance Circus Theatre, Damae Dance and Tangled Dance Company. They all use the studio to develop their practice, rehearse and test ideas, as well as share thoughts and conversations about their work. Chameleon Youth

is a young company offering Saturday sessions and weekly classes for budding young dancers aged 4–16. Company Chameleon has built a dynamic and affordable dance offer for children and young people at its Openshaw studio.



Rogue Artist Studios, Jen Orpin Studio. Photo by Raz McNulty



Company Chameleon



Maker Images. Photo by Joel C Fildes

# LINKS AND RESOURCES

Always, Everywhere, Manchester's Cultural Ambition  
[www.manchester.gov.uk/cultural-ambition](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/cultural-ambition)



Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy  
[greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/culture/greater-manchester-culture-strategy/](http://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/culture/greater-manchester-culture-strategy/)



Visit Manchester  
[www.visitmanchester.com](http://www.visitmanchester.com)

Zero Carbon Culture Guide  
[manchester.gov.uk/ZeroCarbonCulture](http://manchester.gov.uk/ZeroCarbonCulture)

## WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture and Creativity is deeply rooted in our history. It is a defining characteristic of what it means to be human and access to culture is enshrined in UN Article 27 as a human right. For this strategy, Culture describes our artistic and creative lives, the arts in all its forms, history and heritage, activities like watching films, reading, attending festivals and events, and the creative things we love to do, make and experience. Culture is also about behaviours, shared traditions and beliefs. Through our consultation we know that language, food and dress are important to people's cultural lives and acknowledging and including these things will make a difference to people's interest in activities and events.

