**MANCHESTER CULTURAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Manchester Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP) is a new initiative that has been established with the purpose to work collaboratively to ensure the widest possible access to and participation in meaningful, high quality cultural experiences by children and young people from Manchester. The partnership is considering activity and opportunities in and outside of school settings. The partnership recognises cultural and arts engagement as a leisure pursuit, a beneficial factor for health, wellbeing and education, as well as supporting improved pathways to employment, talent development and lifelong enjoyment of arts and culture.

Nationally, Arts Council England and the Department of Education issued the Cultural Education Challenge in 2015. The challenge asks art and cultural organisations, educational institutions, local authorities, business and other partners to come together to drive a joined-up arts and cultural offer locally, to share resources and bring about a more coherent and visible delivery of cultural education through Cultural Education Partnerships. We now have the opportunity to shape how this will happen in Manchester.

Organisations receiving Arts Council National Portfolio funding, of which there are 27 in Manchester, are required to demonstrate how they are supporting and participating in local Cultural Education Partnerships. A network of engagement and education officers from cultural organisations in the city are contributing to the development of the Manchester Cultural Education Partnership.

Whilst the original challenge to pursue Local Cultural Education Partnerships was not connected to a funding programme, it has been indicated going forward that Partnerships will be expected to function as commissioning organisations and to bid for funding. For example, more established cultural education partnerships were invited to apply to the recent Arts Council England Youth Theatre Hub funding.

At the moment MCEP has an informal governance structure with 3 groups.

1. **MCEP STRATEGIC BOARD** - a group of 20 individuals comprising of senior representatives from education, culture, local authority, youth and play, Curious Minds, the Bridge Organisation for the North West. Councillor Luthfur Rahman, Executive Member of Culture, Leisure and Skills also sits on the Board and it is currently chaired by Dave Moutrey, Director of Culture for the city and Chief Executive of HOME. This group provides strategic guidance. It reviews, challenges and endorses Working Group and Forum proposals and will play an important advocacy role for MCEP going forward.
2. **MCEP WORKING GROUP** - smaller group of individuals coming together to lead action to develop the partnership. The Chair of the Working Group is Liz O’Neill, Chief Executive of Z-arts. Liz is also a member of Manchester’s Cultural Leaders Group.
3. **MCEP FORUM** - this is a group of people interested in contributing to the cultural education partnership in the city. Individuals from this group have participated in several consultation events and are now coalescing to form a number of Task Groups to plan future action around several priority themes for MCEP.

All aspects of MCEP aims to comprise of practitioners from across the education, cultural, youth and play and business sectors. MCEP is also committed to ensuring that children, young people and their families have authentic involvement in shaping and leading the partnership at all levels - this is a priority for development.

MCEP has a working vision, but is doing further consultation work with children, young people and their families and the wider membership to make sure the final ambition and language is appropriate and that we have a shared understanding and ownership of what it means to us.

The working vision is:

Driven by Manchester’s Cultural Education Partnership, the city will become a beacon of cultural and creative excellence, where culture and creativity is truly valued and opportunities are varied and easy to access, so everybody can take part. Children and young people in Manchester will have the creative ability to flourish.

The priority development areas that the Task Groups will begin to action are:

* Communication
* Youth Voice and Leadership
* Employability
* Creative Curriculum

A fifth group will focus on future governance and business planning

Each task group, is being asked to determine what actions are required to progress each priority area - this could be the production of materials, a pilot project or a piece of research. These will be presented to the Strategic Board in January, before being taken forward.

A formal launch of MCEP is planned for March 2020.

This is an exciting time to join Manchester Cultural Education Partnership as it begins to take shape and gain momentum.