

# The National Archives

## Development Networks Evaluation Report: Case Study

### Civic Collaboration – linking local authority archives

Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership

In 2012, the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership (GMALSP), with Sector Sustainability Fund (SSF) support from The National Archives (TNA), commissioned a feasibility study to explore how archives in Greater Manchester could work more effectively together. Through the study, options were developed for shared, collaborative archive services between ten local authorities (listed below) in the Greater Manchester area, Archives + and Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO).

The study recommended the creation of a formal Partnership which would provide an overarching strategy and development plan for archive services in the civic region. The new partnership would build on the existing arrangement of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Statutory Functions Committee (AGMASFC) which already oversaw some connections between the Greater Manchester County Record Office and the districts. It highlighted that there were significant potential benefits to be gained from collaborating on service improvement and future sustainability. From this the Committee agreed to provide governance to the Partnership and an officer group was created to lead on strands of activity and report back to AGMASFC. To date the Partnership has been successful in the following areas:

#### Volunteering

Developing [GM1914](#), a blog which publishes weekly stories from collections about the First World War. 95 volunteers have contributed 6,000 hours across the services to research stories in collections, digitise archives and create over 90 blog entries. Joint training and volunteer recognition events were delivered. The project won the Archives and Records Association's Volunteer award in 2015.

#### Digital

The Partnership has digitised several church registers held across Greater Manchester and developed [Greater Manchester Lives](#) as a one-stop shop catalogue and digital portal for archives, local studies, and photographic collections held by archives in Greater Manchester. It now holds almost 1,000,000 catalogue entries and over 100,000 images. In 2014-2015 it received 23,592 unique visits and 101,028 page views.

#### Raising Standards

Joint training was delivered to staff on social media, working with young people, and leadership. The Partnership has also created several joint policies and procedures including a Collections Development Policy, Cataloguing and Accessioning Guidelines, Digitisation Guidelines, Access Policy and guidelines on Fees and Charges.

#### Advocacy

In 2015, the Committee recognised the need to prioritise advocacy work and it was written into the Service Development Plan for 2015-2017. There was an acknowledgement across the partners that archives in Greater Manchester needed to 'raise their profile and demonstrate how they improve and enrich lives everyday'. The committee have since been developing their advocacy work to:

- Promote the value of archive services and the contribution they can make in achieving Council priorities, to Members, Commissioners, Senior Officers and other stakeholders in Greater Manchester.
- Provide training for archive staff in advocacy skills and building a case for support.
- Create an advocacy strategy and plan for Greater Manchester archives.

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As a result, there is now:

- Greater awareness of the value of archives among decision makers.
- An advocacy model that can be used by other services.
- An advocacy document which explains the value of archives and can be used as a model by other services.
- A film showing the value volunteers make in archives across Greater Manchester.
- Strengthened leadership in archives and a more responsive, better skilled workforce.

### Ten local authorities:

- Bolton Council
- Bury Council
- Salford City Council
- Manchester City Council
- Oldham Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough
- Trafford Council
- WLCT (Wigan Council)
- Rochdale Cultural Trust

### Structure and activities: \*

