

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY  
**ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/23**



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**METROMAYOR**  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



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## FOREWORD FROM THE METRO MAYOR

Since I was elected as Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, I've been working to build a fairer, more equitable future for the 1.6m people who call our area home – and the past 12 months have seen us move closer than ever to achieving that ambition.

From the thousands of jobs, training and skills opportunities we've created, to the vital investments we've made to support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis, I'm incredibly proud of the progress we've made to transform people's lives for the better.

At every step of this journey, our residents have been at the heart of our decision making. Because, for investment to mean anything, local people and communities have to feel its benefits.

As mayor, I am making sure that we are putting our money where our mouth is to help our people and businesses to thrive.

From the roll out of our new fleet of publicly owned £500m trains and hydrogen buses, to the launch of our £2 bus fares and the MyTicket frozen at £2.20, to the £70m we've invested in active travel and the progress we're making towards reregulating our bus network – we're well on our way towards building a London-style transport network that's faster, cheaper, cleaner and better connected.

While transport - our trains, canals and docks - made us the gateway to the First Industrial Revolution, I want our strengths in wind, tidal and hydrogen to make us the leader of the Green Industrial Revolution. We've got the potential to establish ourselves as the UK's Renewable Energy Coast, ensuring that clean, predictable energy is in bountiful supply and that we smash through our target to be net zero by 2040 at the latest – at least a decade before national targets.

Working in partnership with our outstanding local universities, we are well on our way to establishing our area as an innovation powerhouse, which is why I have pledged to invest 5% of the region's GVA in R&D over the coming years, almost double the UK government's national targets.

We're putting the infrastructure in place to provide the fastest internet speeds in the country through LCR Connect, a joint venture that is half publicly-owned. Meanwhile Mersey Tidal Power will give access to bountiful clean energy, generating enough clean, predictable power to meet local needs.

Looking to the future, I want to take advantage of our strengths – and potential - and turn them into profitable businesses, creating better, greener jobs and bringing greater prosperity to local people.

Ours is a region on the rise. As its mayor, I want to build a vibrant and inclusive Liverpool City Region that is the best place possible for the 1.6m people who live and work in our area to succeed – an area where no one is left behind.



**Steve Rotheram**  
**Mayor of the Liverpool City Region**

*Steve Rotheram*

## FOREWORD FROM COMBINED AUTHORITY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

As Portfolio Holders of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Leaders of the city region's Local Authorities, we are pleased to present the progress being made to deliver on the region's priorities during 2022-2023. We are all very proud of the places that we lead and that our collaboration is enabling our region to shape a prosperous future for our residents.

This Annual Review demonstrates what we can achieve by coming together at the regional level, making the most of devolution, and the difference it can make for the people who live here.

We want to continue to work with and listen to our communities and empower them to continue to play an important role in how we deliver for them.

Prioritising jobs, skills and fairness, improving transport, housing, delivering social value and dealing with the climate emergency are important to all of us.

That is why we will continue to work together as a team to address these issues and deliver the vision for a fairer, stronger, cleaner city region - where no one is left behind.



Councillor David Baines

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**Deputy Mayor and Leader, St Helens Council**



Councillor Mike Wharton

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**Leader, Halton Council**



Councillor Graham Morgan

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**Leader, Knowsley Council**



Councillor Liam Robinson

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**Leader, Liverpool City Council**



Councillor Ian Maher

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**Leader, Sefton Council**



Councillor Paul Stuart

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**Leader Wirral Council**

## FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In July 2021, the Combined Authority agreed its three-year Corporate Plan for 2021-2024.

This came at the beginning of a period of recovery from the pandemic, and set out bold ambitions and priorities to deliver benefits for the 1.6 million residents in the LCR.

In this, our second annual review, you will see the continued progress and momentum built during 2022-2023.

These achievements, include the first of the new, state-of-the-art trains coming in to service, progressing the reform of bus services, to creating thousands of jobs, opportunities for residents to build their skills, helping people who are homeless in to stable tenancies and people who are long-term unemployed in to work.

This Annual Review provides a snapshot of delivery across all the five key areas – to create a fairer, stronger, cleaner, connected and vibrant city region – where no-one is left behind.

We remain optimistic for the future, but many challenges remain, not least of these being the national economic picture and the impact of the cost of living on the Combined Authority, its constituent Local Authorities and the people we serve.

I am a great believer that keeping a longer-term focus whilst managing for today will help us achieve our aim of inclusive economic development and prosperity. And I know that together we will continue to strive to do the very best for this wonderful region.

**This Annual Review provides a snapshot of delivery across all the five key areas – to create a fairer, stronger, cleaner, connected and vibrant city region – where no-one is left behind.**



**Katherine Fairclough**  
**Chief Executive of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority**

*Katherine Fairclough*



## CASE STUDY: Runcorn Shopping City, Runcorn

A disused corner of Runcorn Shopping City was brought back to life this year thanks to the Liverpool City Region Town Centre Fund. Empty shop units were renovated to create a purpose-built Citizens Advice Centre and the [Halton Health Hub](#).

Developed in partnership with Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Halton Borough Council and One Halton, the Halton Health Hub was opened in a former B&M shop in February this year. It now offers three clinical services: dietetics, orthoptics and audiology, with 72 appointments each week.

Further NHS funding has been secured by the Trust to offer additional services, including sleep studies, phlebotomy and ultrasound.

In 2022 a new [Citizen's Advice](#) branch opened – replacing the town's old advice centre which closed during Covid when the building was sold for development. It now offers benefits and debt advice as well as a range of other support such as access to fuel vouchers, food vouchers, employment help and job search.

The Mayor's Town Centre Fund set aside £6m – up to £1m for each of the city region's six local authorities – to support plans to revitalise high streets and communities.



**Watch:** the official opening of Halton Health Hub



**Watch:** look inside the new Citizens Advice Centre in Runcorn Shopping City



The opening of Halton Health Hub



New Citizens Advice Centre

# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



**1.6m**

Residents in the  
Liverpool City Region



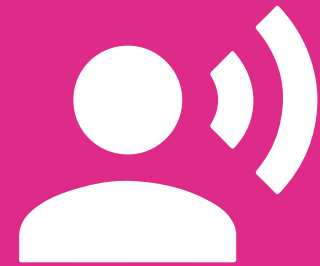
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Local Authorities – Halton,  
Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton,  
St Helens, Wirral



**£34bn**

City region economy



**ONE**

Voice to government



# FAIRER

We will be recognised as leaders in social innovation and one of the most inclusive economies in the world. We will have taken proactive action to tackle inequality, remove barriers and provide opportunities for all our residents.



Pride march in Liverpool City Centre



**£2m**

Better Off Support to help people who are economically vulnerable

**£5m**

Cost of living support package

**50**

Employers signed up to the Fair Employment Charter

**35,830**

Learners funded to do Adult Education courses

**5%**

Funding increase to support learning providers with rising costs

**10,000**

Jobs created

**7,000**

Apprenticeships created

**£2.4m**

In unused Apprenticeship Levy transferred from large to smaller firms

**£2m**

Funding for Households into Work

**2,130**

People supported by Households into Work

**£9m**

To continue Housing First until 2025

**£34,500**

Saving for taxpayers for each person helped out of Homelessness

**£2.3m**

Funding to kickstart the Race Equality Hub as part of a £3.2m investment in the Race Equality Programme

**4**

New Equality Panels established

**21,000**

Local government employees being trained in Race Equality

**£5m**

Invested in Cradle to Career programme

## A FAIRER CITY REGION

**Fairness is at the heart of the Combined Authority's work and is a guiding principle in everything it does to improve the lives of the city region's 1.6 million residents.**

The Corporate Plan committed the authority to a range of actions to underpin this commitment. Significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to embed equality and diversity into all activities and decision making, while reducing injustice and disadvantage, to deliver a fairer city region.

The pandemic followed by the cost-of-living crisis has emphasised inequalities in society and the Combined Authority and its partners have worked hard to minimise the effects and to provide support for struggling residents.

In February, a **£2m support scheme** was launched to help the city region's most vulnerable residents withstand the cost-of-living crisis. The Combined Authority joined forces with The Women's Organisation and Citizens Advice and other community providers to offer the Better Off Support (BOS) programme, part of a wider **£5m cost of living support package** unveiled in the Autumn. It aims to reach people who are economically vulnerable – including low earners and workers on zero-hours contracts – and people suffering health conditions, including long Covid, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people living in deprived areas.



**Watch:** Citizens Advice staff reveal how cost-of-living support will help hardest hit residents



**Watch:** Kitty's Laundrette explain why they signed up to the Fair Employment Charter

The Mayor launched his **Fair Employment Charter** in 2021 to encourage businesses to pay staff a Real Living Wage, working to reduce the use of zero hours contracts, provide mental health support, encourage flexible working and engage with trade unions. The need to improve pay and working practices has become even more pressing during the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

By October last year, **more than 50 employers in the public and private sector had achieved Aspiring status under the Charter** – with a further 85 organisations in talks to sign the charter.

Its success has continued with the number of Aspiring employers now approaching 100.



Mayor Steve Rotheram visits Tappers Distillery

Underpinning the city region's economic and innovation ambitions is the need to develop a highly skilled workforce tailored to meet future challenges and plug existing skills gaps.

In the last academic year, the devolved **Adult Education Budget (AEB)** supported 35,830 learners across a network of more than 30 local colleges, community learning providers and independent training providers. More than half of participants were female, over a fifth (23%) were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion of learners (21.5%) reported a disability, learning difficulty or health issue.

The Combined Authority provided a 5% funding increase in adult skills allocations to support rising delivery costs for the current academic year, both for Further Education colleges and local authority providers as well as for independent and charitable providers with devolved AEB contracts. Devolution allowed the Combined Authority to more than double the 2.2% increase by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Devolution also allowed the Combined Authority and its partners to continue its innovative **Test and Learn** approach to piloting new adult skills courses.

Demand for training increased across a number of areas including English as a second or other language (ESOL), logistics and warehousing, construction skills, health and social care and digital related provision. One innovative Test and Learn project saw 14 unemployed people trained as Qualified Retrofit Assessors, a key role within the building industry, after a provider identified a shortage in the market.



Ukulele band perform for people living with dementia at Meadowcroft Community Wellbeing Hub



**Watch:** English language learners bring festive joy to care home with ukulele concert

Wirral Met College used Test and Learn funding to create a unique curriculum of events to help refugees integrate into British life while boosting language skills. As part of the initiative, a ukulele band formed from refugee and asylum seeker ESOL students brought festive joy to people living with dementia at Meadowcroft Community Wellbeing Hub, in Bromborough, Wirral.



*Be More portal wins Technology category at LGC Awards*

The Combined Authority is also supporting the health of learners during the cost-of-living crisis through a contribution to breakfast clubs run by AEB providers. And through local authority partners, the authority is also piloting support for residents to become FE teachers - specifically to improve the recruitment and retention of community learning tutors.

In October, the **Young Person's Guarantee** – a Mayoral pledge to offer a guaranteed job, training or apprenticeship opportunity to any of the region's young people who are out of work, education or training – took another giant leap forward with the **launch of the new Be More app**, which was built using cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

Building on the success of **Be More**, the award-winning UCAS-style apprenticeship service, the app connects residents with employment and opportunities, offering real-time updates on local vacancies. AI helps users write CVs and offers personalised recommendations on relevant opportunities. Be More has now evolved into an all-in-one training and careers portal, that will offer support to businesses, training providers and residents of all ages.

More than 10,000 jobs and 7,000 apprenticeships have been created through the Combined Authority's programmes and investments, supported by initiatives such as Be More and the Young Person's Guarantee. Be More's ground-breaking work earned the Technology prize at this year's prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards.

In May, the region's larger employers were urged to help fund apprenticeships at smaller firms in the Liverpool City Region by **pledging their unspent Apprenticeship Levy funding**. This would allow the Combined Authority to act as a broker, transferring the money to smaller firms to create hundreds of new opportunities – at no extra cost to the larger employers.

The authority has already helped to transfer £2.4m of unallocated apprenticeship levy to smaller firms creating more than 560 new training roles.





Households into Work team



**Watch:** people tell how the Households Into Work programme had changed their lives

In Spring 2022, the Combined Authority agreed a £2m funding package to continue the **Households into Work** programme through to 2024. Later in 2022, seven people spoke candidly about the emotional turmoil of finding themselves unemployed - and how the ground-breaking **Households into Work** scheme delivered life-changing support.

Households into Work was launched in 2018 as a pilot project to support long-term unemployed people who have difficulty finding and sustaining employment. But the programme is not just about getting people a job; it offers 12 months of one-to-one support from an advocate helping the person to identify and overcome barriers, such as personal debt, drug and alcohol addiction, or a lack of skills and training holding them back.

Phase 2 of Households into Work began in 2020 with Phase 3 starting in January this year. During that time the programme supported more than two thousand people (2130) from across the city region with just under a quarter (524) moving either into education and training, or into work. In addition, 725 Skills Development courses (Soft Skills) were undertaken by people on the programme. The non-accredited, informal training includes confidence building, CV writing and money management. Clients also completed 216 Work Related Activities such as voluntary work and work placements.

The Combined Authority's ground-breaking Housing First programme continues to help hundreds of people out of homelessness.

One of three pilot schemes in the UK that began in 2019, in September last year it was announced the city region had **secured a further £9.9m to fund the pioneering programme until 2025.**

More good news was to follow as **two separate studies emphasised the cost effectiveness of Housing First**, which targets entrenched homelessness and people with complex needs and deviates radically from traditional homeless support by providing a tenancy as a starting point.

In February, an independent study found the city region's pilot Housing First programme saves taxpayers an average £34,500 a year for each person it helps out of homelessness after the costs of the programme are taken into account.

The study by Beyond Better monitored 20 service users being supported by the ground-breaking scheme over the course of a year – comparing the cost of the programme to the likely cost to the public purse if they had not received help.

A second independent report, commissioned by the Combined Authority, also evaluated the programme's activity. Many Housing First service users have personal histories characterised by multiple, long-term and severe trauma and evaluators Campbell Tickell found that engagement with other services, such as drug and alcohol support improved for 68% of clients. The pilot was found to be 3.5 times more effective in supporting homeless people to secure and sustain tenancies compared to traditional methods, and while Housing First costs more, it was twice as cost effective.



*Poster for Housing First - opening doors to a better future*



Over the last year, the Combined Authority continued its mission to embed **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** into all activities and decision making.

In November, £2.3m of funding was announced to kickstart the second phase of the city region's ground-breaking Race Equality Hub, part of an overall £3.2m investment. Work continues on delivering the Hub which will be one of the first of its kind in the country, focusing on training, employment support and business assistance for people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Through the Race Equality Programme, the Combined Authority also began delivering race equality training for the city region's 21,000 local government staff.

The Race Equality Programme also brought The World Reimagined, a major public art project exploring the impact of the transatlantic slave trade, to the city region.

Late last year the Combined Authority began recruiting equality champions to sit on four new **Equality Panels covering disability, race, gender, and sexuality**. The **panels met for the first time in January** and will help the city region's political leaders and policymakers tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society.

They will shape and influence all areas of work in the city region, from employment and skills, to transport and the environment, and will build on the ground-breaking work of the Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Panel.



**Watch:** the launch of the new Equality panels

In October, a pioneering £5m plan to improve life chances for children and young people in some of the city region's most deprived areas was approved.

The decision to **extend the Cradle to Career programme** to a further five areas was taken following a successful pilot in North Birkenhead.

The Wirral programme, aimed at improving educational outcomes, was delivered in partnership with Wirral Council, managed by national charity Right to Succeed and instigated and funded by the Steve Morgan Foundation and SHINE.

The first two communities to receive help under the Combined Authority programme are in Northwood (Knowsley) and Halton Lea (Halton) with pre-development work set to start in Sefton, St Helens and Liverpool in 2023.





Aerial view of Headbolt Lane Station development



CGI shot of Headbolt Lane Station

## CASE STUDY: Headbolt Lane, Knowsley

Work is due to finish on the **£80m new station** at Headbolt Lane, Kirkby, later this year marking another step towards Mayor Steve Rotheram's ambitions for a 'Merseyrail for All' that connects more of the city region to the rail network.

Work began on the scheme in April 2022 and has included re-doubling of the track between the existing Kirkby station and the site, the installation of a new bridge over County Road and construction of a ticket office and platforms.

The full site will include more than 300 car parking spaces including electric vehicle charging points, plus a bus interchange, cycle parking and links to the active travel network.

Employment and training opportunities have been created by the scheme, offering city region residents a pathway into the construction and rail industries.

The station will be served by new battery powered trains. The technological breakthrough removed the need to extend the electric 'third' rail the extra mile to Headbolt Lane and paves the way for Merseyrail to reach beyond its current boundaries.





# STRONGER

We will be recognised on the international stage as a hub of good business and innovation. We will have attracted investment to continue to develop our unique specialisms and be known for our expertise in science and innovation. There will be significantly more businesses providing good quality jobs for our residents.



Engineers at Daresbury Laboratory

**5%**

GVA Research & Development investment target – twice the national target

**£41.7bn**

Potential economic boost from Innovation with 44,000 new jobs

**23**

City Region Innovation projects funded by Innovate UK partnership... so far

**£10.5m**

Investment in LYVA Labs

**14,000**

New jobs due to be created by Liverpool City Region Freeport

**£850m**

Economic boost from Freeport - 100% of business rates to be retained by Local Authorities

**£2.3m**

High Growth Innovation Fund benefits 40 businesses

**£10m**

Funding for LCR Seed Fund, attracting £5m MSIF funding

**£1m**

Combined Authority investment in Kindred attracts £10.5m and creates 77 new jobs in the social economy

**50,000**

Jobs in the social economy, which is worth £2.9bn a year to the region's economy

**£44m**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation

**£5m**

Refurbishment attracts multinational entertainment giant to Liverpool

**£15m**

Investment in public realm around Bramley Moore Dock Everton Stadium

**£800,000**

To support a £2.2m 'not-for-profit' children's home scheme in Liverpool City Region



Mayor Steve Rotheram unveils the Innovate UK partnership at The City of Liverpool College.

## A STRONGER CITY REGION

**Innovation, social value and targeted investments helped drive economic growth in the Liverpool City Region as it recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic during 2022/23.**

The drive for economic growth through innovation, highlighted in the Combined Authority's Plan for Prosperity, continued at pace with a focus on the city region's world-leading strengths: Infection Prevention and Control, Materials Science and AI Solutions plus Emerging Technologies.

Work over the last year built on activity linked to the publication of the city region's first **Innovation Prospectus** in Spring 2022. Launched at Westminster, the prospectus showcased the city region's innovation powerhouse credentials and opportunities for billions of pounds of investment. Its publication was accompanied by intense behind the scenes activity to further the city region's innovation agenda, in partnership with the city region's Innovation Board.

Over the last year, several key developments have supported the city region's innovation ambitions as it strives towards a goal of investing 5% of GVA in Research and Development (R&D) by 2030 – nearly double the national target. Achieving the target would deliver an estimated gross economic benefit of £41.7bn GVA, plus an additional net £19.7bn GVA, 10% increase in productivity, and 44,000 new jobs.

In September, the Liverpool City Region was chosen by Innovate UK as one of only two places to pilot its new **Launchpad funding** aimed at driving innovation clusters outside south-east England. The fund offered grants of between £15,000 and £1m to projects with an emphasis on net-zero and digitalisation that would help transform the city region's advanced manufacturing innovation cluster. Nearly £5.5m was awarded to **23 Liverpool City Region innovation projects** in Round 1 – ranging from developing green energy technologies to protecting coasts. Round 2 funding was announced in February with successful projects set to be revealed in summer 2023.

Innovate UK appointed **LYVA Labs** to manage the city region's Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Cluster Launchpad. Formerly called LCR Ventures, **LYVA Labs was set up with £10.5m** from the Combined Authority as an innovation commercialisation company to turn great ideas into high-growth businesses and good-quality jobs.



Over the last year it has invested in a number of innovative city region businesses, including Daresbury Proteins and fertility technology start-up Myma Medical.

The city region's burgeoning relationship with Innovate UK was further re-enforced in November when Mayor Steve Rotheram signed a **landmark partnership agreement** with Innovate UK Chief Executive Indro Mukerjee. The deal was one of Innovate UK's first ever regional partnerships and will see even closer collaboration, particularly in the areas of policy, data sharing, business support, skills, equalities and international promotion

Last July, the Combined Authority published a second **Science and Innovation Audit (SIA)** – on the same day as major investments were announced in the city's Pandemic Institute and the city region's world-leading iiCON Consortium, which brings together industry, academia and the NHS to accelerate products and innovations linked to infection control. The SIA provides the detailed evidence underpinning the Innovation Prospectus.

It was first published in 2017 for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as a means of identifying world-leading innovation outside South East England. Of 25 places to produce an SIA, Liverpool City Region is alone in producing a second updated version, highlighting the city region's commitment to evidence-backed, place-based innovation.



Innovate UK Chief Executive Indro Mukerjee explains the collaboration between the city region and the UK's agency responsible for driving innovation.



**Watch:** the launch of Liverpool City Region's landmark partnership with Innovate UK



In May this year, the Combined Authority launched a refreshed and **updated Innovation Prospectus** at the city region's second annual Innovation Investment Summit.

The **Prospectus was also translated into Korean**, highlighting the growing innovation ties between the Liverpool City Region and South Korea's second city and largest port, Busan. The Combined Authority's efforts were praised by the British Ambassador in Seoul, Colin Crooks, as a 'standout example' of how UK authorities can develop international trade links.

In June, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Mayor Steve Rotheram and the Mayor of Busan to further strengthen innovation ties between the two city regions. It followed the signing of a memorandum late last year that paved the way for close co-operation between the Mersey Tidal Power Project and the Korean water corporation K-Water, operator of the world's largest tidal power scheme.

Senior Combined Authority delegations also attended the world's leading real estate event, MIPIM, and the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiif) to promote the city region to domestic and global investors.



Mayor Steve Rotheram and Mayor of Busan, Park Heong-joon, at the University of Liverpool's Digital Innovation Facility

The Liverpool City Region is emerging as a world leader in maritime and net-zero innovation. This complements the development of the **Liverpool City Region Freeport** which **officially opened for business in January** after Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, approved its full business case.

Once fully operational, it is estimated the freeport could create more than 14,000 new highly skilled jobs, deliver £800m of investment and generate an additional £850m of GVA for the Liverpool City Region economy.

The freeport contains designated areas covering 45km, in which a range of economic incentives are available covering customs, business rates, planning, regeneration, innovation and trade and investment support. Local councils will be able to retain 100% of business rates growth generated by the freeport tax sites.

Centred on a mix of inland and coastal infrastructure, including the deep-water container terminal at the Port of Liverpool, it is the key coastal access point to the UK's largest concentration of manufacturing. Liverpool is the UK's biggest western facing port, which already handles 45% of trade from the United States.



Liverpool City Region Freeport logo

Targeting key sectors including automotive, biomanufacturing/pharmaceuticals and maritime, the freeport will support and attract new advanced manufacturing, logistics and low carbon energy industries.

The region's leaders have chosen to pursue businesses and industries that align with the values and priorities of the Combined Authority. These include innovation in advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and green energy – with a particular focus on the region's target to be net zero carbon by 2040 or sooner.

By grouping high-productivity and innovative businesses close together, the freeport can play a role in the region's work to tackle the underlying weaknesses in the local employment market such as productivity, pay and job security.

Mayor Steve Rotheram and local leaders were clear throughout the bidding process that the region was pursuing freeport status for the opportunities it will bring for regeneration and for expanding its capacity in areas such as research and development. The Mayor has consistently said he would not accept any dilution of workers' rights, safety practices or regulatory standards.

Another crucial stage in becoming operational was ensuring the Freeport had its first customs site operator. That happened in December 2022, when [SSO International in Haydock, St Helens, were accredited as a Customs Site Operator \(CSO\)](#). A freeport customs site operator provides a secure, enclosed customs zone where some normal customs rules do not apply. Every freeport needs at least one customs site operator to become operational.



**Watch:** SSO International Customs Director Angus Hirst explain why the Freeport is good for business and the Liverpool City Region

In October 2022, the Combined Authority announced [a total of 40 businesses](#) were to benefit from its £2.3m **High Growth Innovation Fund**. Backed by the Combined Authority and the European Regional Development Fund, grants of between £25,000 and £75,000 were awarded to high growth businesses, across six city region priority areas: health innovation, digitalisation, culture, zero-carbon, sustainable industry and ‘tech for good’.

There was more good business news in November when plans were announced for a new £20m seed fund to provide equity investment in early-stage businesses to fuel growth and create good quality jobs.

The Combined Authority is investing £10m into an LCR Seed Fund in partnership with the Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF), which is providing a further £5m.



Angus Hirst, SSO International Customs Director

A fund manager will be leading on raising additional capital to [increase the total fund to at least £20m](#).

Through the fund, money is invested in companies in return for equity. The Seed Fund is designed to improve the success rate of innovative start-up companies with high growth potential, by helping them grow sustainably with an alternative to grant and debt finance.

Available to businesses across all sectors, the fund is designed to help the city region reach its ambitious R&D target.

Mayor Steve Rotheram’s commitment to add **social value** to all Combined Authority activities is benefiting communities across the Liverpool City Region through new jobs, investment, voluntary work and donations.



The Combined Authority launched its **Social Value Policy and Framework** in April 2022 to help tackle the city region's deep-rooted social, economic and environmental challenges by embedding the principle of giving something back to the community into all CA activities.

From investment into social trading organisations and job creation, to volunteering and donations to local schools, charities and foodbanks, the progress and impact of the approach has now been detailed in the [Social Value Annual Report](#), published in June.

Flagship schemes around digital infrastructure, transport, construction, investment and adult education have been refocussed - alongside a city-region-wide training programme to help employees understand the needs of communities.

Two-thirds of all contracts awarded by the Combined Authority have included measures to maximise local benefits. This emphasis has led to the creation of more than 130 full-time jobs and eight apprenticeships since the launch of the framework.



Councillor Tony Brennan and Angela Davis at the Eco Therapy Farden in Kirkby



Cycle of Life day riders

Backed by £5.5m from the Combined Authority and £1m from Power to Change, community interest company **Kindred** was established to support socially trading organisations (STOs) that set out to deliver benefits to the areas in which they operate.

In March 2023, it was revealed the first £1m of investment from the Combined Authority into **Kindred** for investment in STOs attracted [£10.5m in additional funding and generated 77 new jobs](#).

Kindred invested its first £1m in 20 STOs, also known as community businesses, across the city region in spring 2021. The evaluation found that, collectively, the 20 STOs nearly doubled their number of employees from 81 to 158 and their combined turnover doubled from £1.88m to £3.76m as they attracted a further £10.5m of additional investment.

The socially-trading sector employs 50,000 people, one in 10 of the city region's workforce, with 1,300 STOs generating £2.9bn per year for the city region economy.



Birkenhead has become an outstanding example of the impact of socially trading organisations, with a cluster of community businesses helping to transform the town.

STOs in Birkenhead were awarded £12,000 in development awards in a pre-Kindred pilot in 2017. Four years later, in spring 2021, five Birkenhead-based STOs – Make Hamilton, Future Yard, Open Door Centre, Hype Merseyside, and Grow Wellbeing – collectively received 20% of Kindred’s first round investment, around £200,000.

Those five STOs have since created 50 new jobs in the town, increased their turnover by £1.3m and attracted £9.4m in additional funds.

In October 2022 the Combined Authority approved plans for how it would invest its three-year, £44.4m **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** (UKSPF) allocation.

The UKSPF was created by central government to replace European funding following Brexit. Under UKSPF, Liverpool City Region received around £10.2m less annually compared to its previous European Union allocation.

The city region’s [UKSPF spending plan](#) targets three priority areas: Community and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills.

More than £17m is being used to support local businesses including £1.5m for town centres and nearly £4m to drive innovation. Business support plans include a combination of expert support, advice and grant funding – with the bulk of the programme earmarked for next year and beyond.



The Future is Birkenhead



Andrew and Erika -  
STO Future Yard



Kirsten Little - Make Hamilton



Mayor Steve Rotheram launches £2m support scheme to help the most vulnerable residents withstand the cost-of-living crisis



Grade II building that housed Liverpool's first public library on Duke Street

£14.5m was allocated to People and Skills projects, starting in April 2024, with nearly £11m supporting Community and Place. That includes £2.4m for culture, arts and heritage.

Local authority-led work to support town centres, culture and heritage, and activity to tackle anti-social behaviour, food poverty and to improve green spaces has been taking place through-out this first year of delivery.

In addition to the core SPF funding of £44m, the city region will receive £8.4m from the SPF - ringfenced to deliver the government's Multiply programme to improve adult numeracy skills.

In February 2023, as part of the UKSPF investment, the Combined Authority launched a £2m support scheme to help the Liverpool City Region's most vulnerable residents withstand the cost-of-living crisis.

[This is covered in more detail in the 'Fairer' section.](#)

Throughout the past year the Combined Authority has continued to **invest in high-profile projects** that are helping boost the local economy and create high-quality jobs for local people.

In February it was announced a [multinational entertainment giant had leased one of Liverpool City Region's most historic buildings](#) - after Combined Authority investment of nearly £5m into refurbishing the site. Work on the Grade II building that housed Liverpool's first public library on Duke Street was completed with the help of loans from two Liverpool City Region Combined Authority investment funds.

The money has now been repaid in full - ready for the Combined Authority to invest in other schemes that will help drive the city region's economy. The major corporate giant has taken out an 11.5-year tenancy of the entire 50,000 sq ft Duke & Parr building, which has capacity for up to 400 employees.



Work has also continued throughout the year on **Everton's new Bramley-Moore Dock stadium**, backed with a grant of up to £15m from the Combined Authority.

Combined Authority support is ensuring public realm works are delivered around the stadium site, and that training and employment opportunities are created for local people. Overall, the project will create up to 15,000 jobs including new roles at the completed stadium and employment linked to a projected increase in visitors to the city region. It will also regenerate large parts of north Liverpool and south Sefton including the area around Goodison Park and is forecast to deliver an additional £237m of social value.

In October 2022, the Combined Authority announced a transformational £2.2m plan to support the development of four 'not-for-profit' **children's homes** in the Liverpool City Region.

Over the next five years, the Combined Authority will **contribute £800,000 to the Juno** project that will see 10 new children's homes open over that period: the first two in Oxton and Wallasey with additional properties identified in Sefton and Halton. Juno plans an innovative approach to the usual model for children's homes by creating opportunities for children to stay close to their local area and by removing high profits from the system. The initiative will also create dozens of local jobs.

No review of 2022/23 would be complete without reference to **Eurovision** after the Combined Authority invested £2m to deliver the world's biggest music competition on behalf of Ukraine.



Eurovision at M&S Bank Arena



Eurovision Recruitment Fair

The economic benefit is still being evaluated however NatWest estimated that visitor spend during the event alone could be worth £40m as Eurovision attracted an estimated 500,000 people to the city region. Other estimates suggest tourism could increase by up to 5% a year – which equates to £250m extra revenue by 2026.

The Combined Authority also worked with local partners including the Department of Work and Pensions to organise a series of recruitment events aimed at ensuring the city region's tourism industry has the right people in place to provide the best possible welcome to visitors to Eurovision and other major events. With **recruitment events** in all six boroughs, including a high-profile jobs fair at ACC Liverpool, and a pop-up job centre in Liverpool One, the Combined Authority helped hundreds of local people to find jobs in the hospitality sector.

**Eurovision is featured as a case study in this review and is also referenced in the 'Vibrant' and 'Connected' sections.**

## CASE STUDY: Eurovision Song Contest, Liverpool

Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest presented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Liverpool City Region – and it was one that was grasped with both hands.

As the glitter settles on a stunning fortnight, work is underway to assess the full impact and benefits of hosting the iconic event on behalf of Ukraine. The Combined Authority and Liverpool City Council each invested £2m to help secure Eurovision – a sum that will be dwarfed by the estimated £40m direct economic boost and a further £250m over the next three years due to increased tourism.

The eyes of the world were on the city region and the city region rose to the challenge by doing what it does best - throwing a party like nowhere else.

From transporting fans safely and efficiently into the early hours to dressing ferries, bus stations, bus stops, trains and tunnels in **Eurovision colours**, the Combined Authority showed the world what the city region is all about: welcoming, warm, vibrant, beautiful and fun.

The Eurovision Festival attracted and estimated 500,000 visitors, 162 million TV viewers and billions of views on social media. Visitors were welcomed by staff that the Combined Authority helped recruit through a **series of Eurovision job fairs** that brought employers and jobseekers together to fill short and long-term vacancies in our visitor economy sector.

Through a combination of meticulous planning, hard work and boundless creativity Liverpool earned a perfect 'douze points' from ecstatic fans, event organisers and politicians alike.

In the words of Eurovision supremo Martin Osterdahl 'we should do this here every year'.







# CLEANER

We will be a net-zero carbon city region, recognised as a pioneer in sustainable approaches to living, travel and doing business. With a relentless focus on addressing the climate emergency, we will place ourselves at the forefront of the Green Industrial Revolution. We will become a UK leader in clean energy production, generating power from tidal, offshore wind and hydrogen



New Hydrogen bus at Mann Island

**£9m**

Investment in £54m  
Glass Futures facility

**20**

New zero emission  
hydrogen buses

**2040**

Net zero target

**£54m**

Glass Futures opens  
in St Helens

**£70m**

Funding for Active  
Travel routes secured

**£11m**

Investment in energy  
efficient lighting in the  
Mersey Tunnels for  
a 60% reduction in  
carbon footprint

**£710m**

Funding secured from  
the City Region  
Sustainable  
Transport Fund

**£105m**

Of housing retrofit  
funding attracted to  
reduce carbon emissions

**10,000**

Homes being retrofitted  
for energy efficiency

**600**

Homes fitted with  
solar panels

**£500,000**

Extra for Community Environment  
Fund bring total number of projects  
supported to 92

## A CLEANER CITY REGION

The last year saw no let-up in the city region's urgency to reach its ambitious goal of becoming net zero carbon by 2040, a decade ahead of national targets.

The Liverpool City Region has been leading the way – it was the first Mayoral Combined Authority to declare a Climate Emergency and progress has continued at pace on a range of major projects.

The ground-breaking £54 million [Glass Futures opened in St Helens in June 2023](#) and is expected to play a key role in decarbonising energy intensive industries.

Glass Futures is the world's first openly accessible test and trial furnace facility, which will be used to deliver industry and government-backed R&D projects focused on decarbonising glass production. It will also provide a platform for companies to test and trial their own commercial ideas on a state-of-the-art line, both collaboratively and individually.

Based in the traditional centre of the UK glass making industry in St Helens, Glass Futures is a unique, industry-backed Research and Technology Organisation, leading collaboration across some of the largest companies in the global glass industry and its supply chain, together with academia and local and central government.

The Combined Authority invested £9m in the facility, as part of a partnership including Glass Futures, St Helens Borough Council, UKRI (UK Research & Innovation) and Network Space Developments.



**Watch:** the official opening of Glass Futures



In December 2022, [Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotheram signed an agreement with South Korea's state water company](#) to co-operate and share lessons that could help the region develop the world's largest tidal power scheme on the River Mersey. K-water owns and operates the Sihwa Lake tidal range power scheme, currently the world's largest.

The **Mersey Tidal Power Project** has the potential to generate enough clean, predictable energy to power up to one million homes and create thousands of jobs in its construction and operation.

Over the last two years, the Combined Authority has undertaken early technical work to develop the potential scope of the scheme, which could be up and running within a decade, playing a huge role in the region's push to net zero carbon by 2040.

The agreement, signed with Jeong Kyeong-yun, K-water's Vice President, paved the way for close co-operation between the two tidal power projects, through reciprocal visits and information sharing.

The move is the latest stage of engagement between the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and K-water, which began with meetings at COP26 in Glasgow, in November 2021, and continued with a visit by Mersey Tidal's director to Sihwa Lake and Daejin in South Korea in May 2022.



**Watch:** Mayor Steve Rotheram sign an agreement with K-Water paving the way for close co-operation over the Mersey Tidal Power Project



Mayor Steve Rotheram with K-water's Vice President, Jeong Kyeong-yun



Liverpool is twinned with Busan – image of the Port of Busan from the Korea Tourism Organisation



New hydrogen bus at Mann Island



Queensway Tunnel at night

The Combined Authority's efforts to decarbonise travel were boosted by the entry into service of the first of the city region's new train and bus fleets.

In January, the first passenger services began on the city region's **new £500m, publicly owned train fleet** with more trains being rolled out over the coming months. The new trains have the capability to be powered using pioneering battery technology that will enable the extension of the Merseyrail network beyond lines served by an electric 'third' rail, without using polluting diesel engines.

More good news was to follow when in May **the first of the city region's new zero-emission hydrogen bus fleet entered service** on the 10A route between St Helens and Liverpool city centre. The corridor will become the region's first 'Green Bus Route', with a planned programme of upgrades aimed at making journeys faster and more reliable.

The city region's 20 hydrogen buses will augment the existing bus fleet, 70% of which is already lower emission.

Work is continuing to link all modes of public transport and active travel, along with the iconic Mersey Ferries, to create a London-style integrated transport system, to get people out of their cars and on to sustainable public transport.

**An additional £16m of funding was secured from the government's Active Travel Fund to create a network of safe, easy-to-use walking and cycling routes.** The newly unlocked funding, which will deliver new routes and improve connections between existing and planned routes, takes the total investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the region to nearly £70m.

Further initiatives to lower the city region's carbon footprint include an £11m investment in energy efficient lighting in the Queensway Tunnel and delivery of dozens of School Streets schemes to reduce traffic congestion and pollution at school gates.

The £710m available from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) will enhance opportunities to deliver a low carbon transport vision.



Around 60% of the Liverpool City Region's 700,000 homes are rated below the EPC Band C standard. To hit the city region's target of becoming net zero carbon by 2040, energy use in homes will need to be cut by 60%, so **retrofitting** energy-efficient measures is vital.

To help achieve this, the Combined Authority has **successfully attracted £105m of funding to reduce carbon emissions** in some of the region's least energy-efficient homes - while at the same time helping low-income households tackle fuel poverty during the cost-of-living crisis.

Energy efficiency measures are now being installed in 10,000 city region homes with the specific actions determined by the type of property. These may include external wall insulation, roof insulation, heat pumps and solar panels.



**Watch:** retrofitting is transforming homes and lives in Knowsley's Halsnead Garden



**Watch:** Karen describes the difference retrofitting has made to her home

The Combined Authority also encouraged households to switch to solar power through a group buying scheme that offered lower installation costs.

Around 600 homes across the Liverpool City Region have been fitted with solar panels as part of a **Solar Together** scheme to help cut energy bills and reduce carbon emissions. The **scheme was launched last year** by the Combined Authority to enable self-funding residents to cut their energy costs while also reducing their carbon emissions. A total of 7,962 residents initially registered an interest in the innovative solar scheme, which promises an average 26% discount on the installation costs, with 1,185 signing up and paying the deposit.

Solar Together Liverpool City Region was launched in August 2022, the latest in a number of successful programmes run across the UK. Nationally, the initiative has delivered more than 7,000 installations, preventing 130,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.



The Mayor's **Community Environment Fund** that previously brought wildflowers, bees, rare-breed lambs and much more to the city region (and our TV screens) returned in 2022/23 following a highly successful first year.

The £500,000 Phase 2 fund supported 34 projects ranging from a therapy garden and food growing to beekeeping, biodiversity and bike schemes.

Teenager Khan Oditā's Mulgrave Street Action Group was awarded £30,000 to realise his dream of turning a Toxteth fly-tipping hotspot into a community garden. **In April, the Mayor joined Khan to officially open the new 'Urbanscape' garden.**



**Watch:** the Mayor opens Toxteth's Urbanscape community garden



Mayor Steve Rotheram with Khan Oditā



Mayor Steve Rotheram with Halton veterans

An innovative 're-cycling' scheme for Halton veterans – many who had suffered PTSD – also received funding. **In March, the Mayor visited the scheme in which the veterans restore unclaimed bikes donated by the police.** People with mental health issues are then taught bike maintenance and skills before being handed the bike to keep.

Over two phases, the Community Environment Fund has invested £1m in nearly 100 projects, bringing environmental initiatives, education and thinking into communities across the Liverpool City Region.



**Watch:** the Mayor meets veterans at an innovative bike 're-cycling' scheme in Halton



CGI of Southport Marine Lake Events Centre by day



CGI of Southport Marine Lake Events Centre at dusk

## CASE STUDY: Southport Marine Lake Events Centre, Sefton

Southport Marine Lake Events Centre moved a major step closer in October 2022 when the Combined Authority approved a further **£17.7m towards the ambitious project**, bringing its total commitment up to £20m.

The new multi-purpose events centre in Southport will include a 1,500 capacity theatre as well as exhibition and conference facilities.

**Planning approval was granted in April** this year which will see construction work begin this summer.

The events complex will replace the existing Southport Theatre and Convention Centre, which closed in 2020 and was unable to reopen after the COVID-19 pandemic when the operator went into administration.

The new £73m centre, which will include the Light Fantastic, a water, light and sound show in the Marine Lake, is expected to bring more than half a million new visitors to Southport each year and generate an annual £18m boost for the local economy. This will, in turn lead to a significant number of job opportunities.





# CONNECTED

We will connect all our communities to opportunity, physically and digitally. Our public transport system will be reformed, fully integrated, and provide a genuine alternative to the car. We will be the most digitally connected city region in the UK.



Dazzle Ferry on the River Mersey



**61**

Merseyrail stations with  
step-free access

**12 week**

Consultation on how our  
buses are run

**10m**

Journeys using the region's  
£2 adult single bus fare

**£500m**

Investment sees first new trains  
come into service

**212km**

Full-fibre, ultrafast digital network  
installed across Liverpool  
City Region

**£11m**

Investment in Mersey  
Tunnels lighting

**£1bn**

Economic boost from LCR  
Connect ultra-fast digital network  
- with 150 local companies and  
organisations already connected

**£80m**

Investment in new  
Headbolt Lane station

**£2.00**

Adult single bus fare

**£2.20**

Young people's MyTicket

**6m**

Miles ridden on Voi scooters

## A CONNECTED CITY REGION

Liverpool City Region's public transport network underwent massive investment and modernisation during the last year including the introduction of new train and bus fleets, a commitment to build a new ferry and progress on bus reform.

Work to connect people and communities to employment and opportunities through a London-style Public Transport System was complemented by progress in installing an ultrafast, full-fibre network across the city region, opening the door for potentially huge economic benefits.

In January, after months of testing, the first of the Combined Authority's **new publicly owned trains entered service**, carrying passengers between Kirkby and Liverpool amid significant media interest. The £500m fleet was designed with help from the public and boasts a range of accessibility features including pioneering sliding step technology that meets the platform edge providing level access for all, plus digital information screens and USB charging points. The new fleet roll out will continue throughout 2023.



**Watch:** Mayor Steve Rotheram join passengers as the first of the £500m train fleet enters service



Crowds gather for launch of new Class 777 trains

The new fleet also has a starring role in the provision of rail services to the **new station at Headbolt Lane**, which is due for completion later this year. It will be the first new station to open on the city region network since Maghull North in 2017 and will include a car park with more than 300 spaces, cycle parking, a bus interchange and links to the local active travel network.

Following successful trials in 2022, game changing battery-powered trains will soon be running on the rail network for the very first time. Not only will they serve Headbolt Lane, but they will also pave the way for the expansion of the Merseyrail network. The new technology removes the need for an electric 'third rail' and brings closer the Mayor's vision of a 'Merseyrail for All' that could see services extended as far as Wrexham, Wigan, Warrington and Preston.



Leader of Liverpool City Council, Liam Robinson with passengers at the opening of the new lift at Hunts Cross station



Hunts Cross Station



Lift at Hunts Cross Station

Work to improve **accessibility** on the rail network was not restricted to trains and platform edges. In recent years, a huge effort has gone into making the whole city region rail network as accessible as possible, so that all residents and visitors can travel around without the need for extra assistance.

Part of that involves working towards making all 83 stations step-free from street to platform. At the start of 2022, 57 stations were step-free. During the year, a further four stations saw their new lift schemes completed - **Birkenhead Park** in August, **Hunts Cross** in September, **Hillside** in October and St Michael's in April 2023 - bringing the total to 61, with work starting on a scheme at Broad Green in early 2023.



**Watch:** the opening of new lifts at Hunts Cross station

The schemes were delivered thanks to funding from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Access for All programme and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Transforming Cities Fund, as part of a wider vision to make the local rail network the most accessible in the country. A further bid was submitted to DfT this year to fund step free access at 10 more stations.

The first of the city region's **new publicly owned hydrogen buses entered passenger service** during Eurovision in May. The zero emission vehicles will help to improve air quality and carry a range of special features including wireless phone charging and internet access. The buses are also more accessible, with increased capacity for wheelchairs and audio-visual announcements of next stops and onward travel connections.





**Watch:** the new hydrogen bus enter service

The 20-strong fleet will operate on the 10A route between St Helens and Liverpool city centre, the busiest on the network. The corridor will also become the city region's first 'Green Bus Route', with a planned programme of upgrades aimed at making journeys faster and more reliable. Work on the first phase of improvements at Prescot Bus Station, which serves the newly-opened Shakespeare North Playhouse, were completed last summer.



Mayor Steve Rotheram boarding a new Hydrogen Bus

In a landmark decision, the Combined Authority last year formally adopted franchising as the city region's preferred model for running bus services. This May saw bus reform take another major step forward with the **launch of the formal public consultation on bus franchising**.

Through in-person events and online engagement, the 12-week consultation will allow people from across the region to **make their voices heard on the future of bus services** whether or not they are regular users of the network.

If the public preference expressed via the consultation is for franchising to be pursued, then the Combined Authority would be able to proceed with plans to take greater control of the region's bus services, specifying bus routes and timetables as well as setting fares.



Attendees at a bus reform consultation event



*The Fairer Fare - campaign creative for £2 adult single bus fare*

The Combined Authority is already using its resources to make bus travel more affordable. Last summer saw the **introduction of a £2 adult single fare**, paid for by the city region's Bus Services Improvement Fund allocation from central government. The new fare means passengers are saving as much as 13% on the cost of single journeys.

To date more than 20 million journeys have benefited from the price cut. The cost of a MyTicket, which gives young people all day unlimited bus travel, was also frozen at £2.20 for the next three years.



Safeguarding the future of the world-famous **Mersey Ferries** as a vital cross river option and city region leisure attraction continues.

In November 2022 it was announced the **first Mersey Ferry in more than 60 years would be commissioned**. The multi-million pound project will see the building of a brand-new vessel as well as the upgrade of one of the existing Mersey Ferries to improve its performance and reliability.

The new ferry will be designed to provide passengers with greater comfort, accessibility, and an overall improved experience, in line with feedback received during a consultation in 2018.

Focusing on the Mersey Ferries' popularity as a major visitor attraction, it will be used for a variety of events and river cruises while also maintaining its role as a key part of the Liverpool City Region public transport system.





Seacombe ticket office area

In October 2022, passengers were welcomed back to [Seacombe Ferry Terminal](#) after the completion of the multi-million-pound refurbishment scheme.

The investment funded a complex engineering project that saw replacement of the 130-year-old link span bridges, the refurbishment of the landing stage (including the installation of new power gangways to help people get on and off the ferries), and the construction of a contemporary ticket office area.



**Watch:** passengers return to Seacombe Ferry Terminal after its multi-million-pound modernisation

Commuter patronage has since doubled, and the works were completed in time for the opening of the new Eureka! Science + Discovery attraction within terminal's old Spaceport Museum building which is expected to draw in nearly 200,000 visitors per year.

Attention has now turned to Wirral's **Woodside Ferry Terminal**, which is due for a major refurbishment of its infrastructure, which is closely linked to wider regeneration plans for the local area.

As part of the Seacombe Ferry Terminal revamp, the city region's first **'bee bus stop'** was introduced, one of several upgraded bus shelters on the Wirral. The shelter, designed in partnership with expert ecologists, has a living roof of native wildflowers chosen to attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators, helping improve the biodiversity of the local area.



The city region's first 'bee bus stop' at Seacombe Ferry Terminal





The roll out of video technology to replace the Fast Tag system at the Queensway and Kingsway Tunnels has been a success. These digital improvements are now being followed **by a major investment** in reducing the carbon footprint of the **Queensway Tunnel**, to match similar works carried out on the Kingsway Tunnel.

The £11m investment will see the existing lighting throughout the 2-mile tunnel replaced by an energy efficient LED system, with a lifespan of 25 years. It is part of an ongoing investment and modernisation programme to futureproof the tunnels as a key part of the city region transport network and a vital cross river travel option.

The change will result in a 60% reduction in the carbon footprint of 220 tonnes of carbon each year, as well as savings on electricity costs when the works are complete.

Plans to kickstart an **active travel** revolution in the Liverpool City Region are being progressed, with an additional £16m of funding being committed to create a network of safe, easy-to-use walking and cycling routes.

The money was secured from the government's Active Travel Fund, with a bid so persuasive the region won nearly three times its indicative allowance.

The newly unlocked funding, which will deliver new routes and improve connections between existing and planned routes, takes the total investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the region to nearly £70m.

As well as working with local authority partners to build a **600km network of new and upgraded bike lanes and footpaths**, the Combined Authority continues to invest in projects aimed at improving access to active travel and encouraging behaviour change – from backing social prescribing pilot schemes to expanding a programme of free cycle safety training to help residents of all ages to cycle safely and with confidence.

Work is also underway on delivering dozens of **School Streets** schemes – reducing traffic congestion and pollution at school gates during pick up and drop off times – as well as trials of new secure cycle parking in residential areas.



Voi scooter at Pier Head

Liverpool's **e-scooter** hire scheme is also celebrating its third anniversary this year. Delivered in partnership with Liverpool City Council and operator Voi, the trial has been one of the most successful in Europe with more than 4 million rides and over 6 million miles clocked up so far.

Meanwhile, measures to reassure passengers, especially women travelling in the city region and to increase safety on public transport were stepped up during the past 12 months. The Combined Authority continues to work with the Merseyside Police Commissioner and partners to put systems in place to help women feel safer and enable them to report concerns in confidence, including via a text service introduced last summer.

Thanks to additional national funding, the **Safer Streets campaign** continues to expand and will result in more safety measures such as enhanced high visibility CCTV coverage along key bus routes used by students and other young people to head in and out of the city centre at night, and 'safe spaces' at Travel centres.

Over the last year the Combined Authority has continued to invest money from the £710m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) that was secured from central government in late 2021.



*Safer Streets campaign poster*





Aerial shot of Aintree Racecourse

A packed 2023 events programme has provided high-profile opportunities to showcase the city region's public transport services and the success of partnership working.

Combined Authority transport and support teams co-ordinated a multi-modal response, together with partners, to ensure public transport kept running during **Eurovision** and **Aintree Festival** with **The Open Golf Championship** taking place at Hoylake this month.

An estimated 500,000 people visited the city region for Eurovision alone and robust transport plans meant people were able to travel safely and efficiently. **Extra late-night bus, rail and Mersey Ferry services** meant fans could enjoy the celebrations knowing they could return home or to their accommodation in the early hours.

With the eyes of the world on Liverpool, it was essential the city region looked at its best to encourage more tourism and investment. Ferries, buses, bus stations, bus stops, trains, train stations and tunnels were **dressed in Eurovision branding**



Mayor Steve Rotheram in front of Eurovision-wrapped bus and Class 777 train





LCR Connect wins Best Public Sector Project at the INCA awards

Connecting people with opportunity extends beyond physical transport with work continuing at pace to install a 212km full-fibre, ultrafast, gigabit-capable digital network across the Liverpool City Region.

**LCR Connect**, the Combined Authority's joint venture with partners ITS and NGE, expects to complete the £30m project this Autumn. Once finished it will equip businesses, investors, universities, schools, hospitals, residents and students across the six local authorities to access next-generation, future-proofed and cloud-enabled technologies.

It will put businesses in prime position to lead the way in a host of growing sectors, driving growth and investment and creating high-quality jobs. Connecting all six boroughs within the region, it will position Liverpool City Region as one of the most digitally connected areas in the UK.

**LCR Connect** is expected to give an initial boost to the economy of £105m, while it's estimated that, with 100% gigabit-capable fibre coverage across the city region, the economic boost could be worth up to £1bn, creating thousands of local job and training opportunities.



Mayor Steve Rotheram pictured with children from Church Drive Primary School

Around 140 people have worked on delivering the network with 15 local companies involved. More than 150 local companies, including Sci-Tech Daresbury, are now connected to the network, as well as an increasing number of local schools. The network also provided the digital highway that enabled the **successful delivery of this year's Eurovision Song Contest**.

## CASE STUDY: Glass Futures, St Helens

Innovative research and technology centre Glass Futures is on a mission to help decarbonise the global glass industry.

**Officially opened in June, the £54m Global Centre of Excellence** will feature a unique experimental furnace and other technology that will pioneer ways of making carbon neutral glass. Learning from the facility could also help decarbonise other energy-intensive, foundation industries.

The 165,000 sq. ft state-of-the-art facility in St Helens will be capable of producing up to 30 tonnes of glass per day in a purposefully designed research and development furnace, expected to fire up for the first time in January 2024.

A not-for-profit membership organisation, Glass Futures connects the global glass industry and its supply chain, with local and central government and academia, to deliver R&D and innovation, ensuring glass making's future is built on high value and fully sustainable, zero-carbon products.

Members, researchers, and industry leaders will collaborate and experiment with different energy sources, raw materials, and technologies to demonstrate solutions leading to sustainable energy usage in the glass-making process.

The facility is expected to bring investment and high-quality jobs to the area and will play its part in helping the city region hits its target of becoming net zero carbon by 2040 or sooner.



**Watch:** the official opening of Glass Futures in St Helens



Official opening of Glass Futures



Interior of Glass Futures





# VIBRANT

We will be a great place to live, visit and work. We will continue to invest in our international image brand positioning and developing a world-leading cultural offer. Our city and town centres will be creatively reimagined alongside the communities who use them, providing opportunities for business and supporting the wellbeing of all communities.



Jioni Walker - The World Reimagined



**£2m**

Investment in Eurovision, helping attract 500,000 visitors worth an immediate £40m and £250m by 2026

**4,000**

Votes cast in the Culture & Creativity Awards

**£29m**

Brownfield land investment plan to create 2,455 homes

**£20m**

Investment in Marine Lake Events Centre

**1,500**

Theatre capacity at Southport's Marine Lake Events Centre

**41**

World Reimagined globes across the city region

**2,000**

Entries to the Liverpool City Region Photo Awards

**£6m**

Investment in town centre regeneration projects

**162m**

Global TV audience for Eurovision

**£6.4m**

Investment in Eureka! Science + Discovery attraction with 200,000 visitors a year expected

**£8m**

Towards converting former Littlewoods building into film studios

**13**

Creativity and Culture Award winners

## A VIBRANT CITY REGION

**The last 12 months have been pivotal for the Liverpool City Region's cultural, tourism and creative industries as they continue to recover strongly from the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

In May the eyes of the world were firmly fixed on the city region as it hosted the Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine – delivering what many hailed the best Eurovision ever.

Eurovision will live long in the memory and its legacy is expected to be huge: elevating the city's reputation as a must-visit holiday destination and delivering economic, employment and cultural benefits.

However, creating a vibrant city region is multi-faceted and the Combined Authority together with our local authority partners have worked hard to ensure benefits are felt in all communities, increasing their desirability as places to both live and work.

With a global TV audience of 162 million viewers and attracting an estimated 500,000 visitors to the city region, **Eurovision** encapsulated vibrancy as it gripped Liverpool during the first half of May.

The Combined Authority together with Liverpool City Council each pledged £2m to help secure the once-in-a-lifetime event. However, the bidding process involved much more than financial support and the city region came together to deliver a compelling case for Liverpool to host Eurovision – in the face of stiff competition from other UK cities.

Last October's live TV announcement that Liverpool had been chosen to host Eurovision heralded six months of hard work and meticulous planning to deliver a world-class event that would make the city region, the UK and Ukraine proud. The result was a festival of sound, colour and diversity focused around Pier Head, the Arena and the city centre but reaching into schools and communities across the city region.

Studies are ongoing to assess **Eurovision economic impact along with other benefits** however the contest is predicted to be directly worth around £40m to the city region with a further £250m extra revenue by 2026 through increased tourism.



Volunteers at Eurovision Village



Crowds gather at St George's Hall for Eurovision opening event



**Watch:** Eurovision gripped Liverpool City Region in May

With such a massive global audience it was vital the city region looked at its very best. To help achieve this, the Combined Authority applied eye-catching Eurovision branding to trains, buses, ferries, the Kingsway tunnel and transport infrastructure such as bus stops and ferry terminals.

One of the authority's new publicly-owned Class 777 trains was wrapped in Eurovision livery as were new zero-emission hydrogen buses serving the 10A route between St Helens and Liverpool. With the help of the BBC and Merseyrail, the Combined Authority also ensured Eurovision fans received a showbiz welcome on the city region's train network with presenters Graham Norton, Rylan and Julia Sanina recording special announcements.

The pandemic left thousands of vacancies in the visitor economy which needed to be filled to ensure the best possible welcome for visitors to the Eurovision Festival plus other major events including the Grand National Festival and this month's Open Golf Championship at Hoylake.



Mariana Potetenko in front of her Eurovision artwork on the Lyceum building, Bold Street

The Combined Authority joined partners to organise a series of **Eurovision-themed recruitment fairs** across the city region that attracted thousands of jobseekers. A **pop-up Eurovision job centre** also opened in Liverpool ONE.

A Combined Authority-funded skills bootcamp led to one **Ukrainian artist's Eurovision design being featured on a landmark city centre building.**

Mariana Potetenko, who fled her home in Kyiv last year, answered a call-out to artists for Eurovision-themed shop window art after completing a digital design course. Officials were so impressed with the stunning artwork that they displayed it on the hoarding outside the Lyceum building on Bold Street.



**Watch:** Ukrainian refugee Mariana Potetenko talk about her Eurovision design





Sunetra Sarker presenting at Liverpool City Region's Culture and Creativity Awards

Prescot's **Shakespeare North Playhouse** opened in June last year with the help of a £10.55m investment from the Combined Authority so in March it was only fitting that the high-profile venue hosted the fourth annual **Liverpool City Region Culture and Creativity Awards**.

TV star Sunetra Sarker took to the stage to present the awards which were established as part of the Mayor's '1% for Culture' initiative - with the purpose of honouring the value and contribution the cultural and creative sector brings to the city region.

**Thirteen winners were crowned at the glittering ceremony** that celebrated the diverse creative talent and achievements of people in the city region – and for the first time included technology, innovation, and science that introduced and developed new ideas and creative approaches

Winners included World in One City, who scooped the People's Choice Award for Outstanding Contribution to Culture, after nearly 4,000 votes were cast.



*People's Choice Awards winners:  
The World In One City*



*Health and Wellbeing Award  
Winners: Liverpool Lighthouse*



**Watch:** highlights and interviews from the culture and Creativity Awards ceremony

Also in March, St Helens became the city region's **Borough of Culture** for the second time since the scheme began. Following on from Knowsley's successful year as Borough of Culture in 2022, **St Helens launched a packed programme of events** for residents to enjoy. This included the 'One Amazing Day' carnival of music, arts, crafts and street performances in April which celebrated the Borough's past and future.

The Borough of Culture title is part of Mayor Rotherham's '1% for Culture' initiative which commits 1% of the Combined Authority's core funding to culture and creativity. The title is passed on annually to the next borough in rotation. St Helens was the first borough to hold the title in 2018.



Knowsley hands over 'Borough of Culture' to St Helens



Southport Christmas market

The Mayor's £6m plan to help revitalise high streets and communities was completed during the year with a range of innovative projects opening to the public. The **Town Centre Fund** awarded up to £1m to each of the city region's six local authorities with ten centres identified for investment: Bootle, Earlestown, Halton Lea, Huyton, Liscard, Liverpool's County Road, New Ferry, Prescot, Southport and St Helens.

Projects included a 'library of the future', shopping centre-based health and advice facilities, a town centre artist space, a canalside event area, a food market, a bike track and a sculpture trail.

Empty shops in Runcorn's Shopping City were transformed to create a **first-of-its kind NHS treatment hub and a Citizen's Advice centre** that opened earlier this year. And in May, Huyton Village Centre saw a closed down Boots store transformed into an artist and maker space along with an open community space which became a warm bank during colder months.



A Shakespeare-themed sculpture trail was created in Prescot with shop fronts modernised and pop-up events enabled. Southport Market was renovated to become a magnet for independent traders and Bootle Canalside received a makeover with locally-made planters paving the way for a new public entertainment space.

Business hubs and workspaces have been created in St Helens and Earlstown alongside grants to help traders recover from Covid. A new 'pump' track for skaters and bikers arrived in Liscard's Central Park while local shop fronts were transformed.



Person using 'pump' bike track at Liscard Central Park



Official opening of Spellow Hub

And **Liverpool's Spellow Library** was transformed into a digitally connected library, advice centre and learning hub. A new policing and community safety project was established on County Road that aims to disrupt criminal gangs and connect with vulnerable young people through boxing.



**Watch:** the official opening of the new Spellow Hub





Mayor Steve Rotheram visits Moss Nook, St Helens



**Watch:** Mayor Steve Rotheram visits Moss Nook, St Helens, which is receiving £4m Brownfield Land Funding

Across the city region, the Combined Authority is using its **Brownfield Land Fund** to bring unused and often derelict industrial land back to life, creating much-needed new homes while trying to avoid building on green spaces.

As part of Mayor Rotheram's plans to tackle the housing crisis, a total of £60m from the Brownfield Land Fund will be used to remediate land so that at least 4,000 new homes can be built.

In November 2022, a **disused brickworks and a former pub in St Helens were among 15 newly identified brownfield sites** across the city region, that would share more than £23m in funding to enable more than 1,500 new homes to be built.

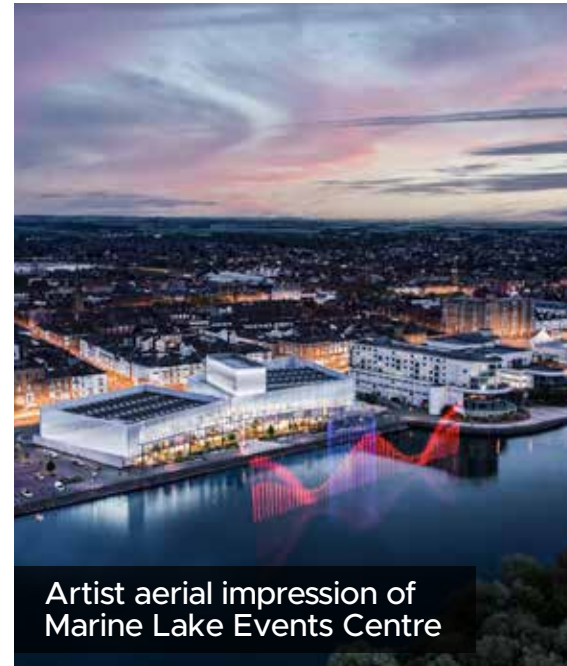
Since the original Brownfield Land Fund was announced in July 2020, the Combined Authority has agreed plans to invest £29m in 16 projects across the Liverpool City Region, which will deliver 2,445 homes.

The Combined Authority investment is being used for remediation and other measures required to make sites ready for development.

In total, 700 brownfield sites have been identified across the six local authorities of the Liverpool City Region. The updated brownfield register identifies 1,813 acres of brownfield sites which could provide space for more than 42,000 homes, if remediated.

Home to a 12-foot-tall cat and giant climbing tree **Eureka! Science + Discovery** opened on Wirral's waterfront in November.

Costing £11.4m and supported with £6.4m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Strategic Investment Fund, the attraction offers a range of interactive activities and exhibits, including sections exploring the human body, low carbon technologies and the environmental impact of fast fashion. It aims to educate young people about science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM).



Ambitious plans for Southport's new **Marine Lake Events Centre**, housing a 1,500-capacity theatre and exhibition and conference facilities, were finalised over the last 12 months with construction work due to start this summer.

In October, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority approved £17.7m funding for the scheme – bringing the authority's total investment to £20m.

**The planned £73m centre**, which includes a lakeside sound and light show, is expected to create 200 jobs and bring more than half a million additional visitors to the town each year, adding an extra £18m to the local economy.



A sunny August saw the ground-breaking, **UK-wide art education project The World Reimagined** launch, using the story of the transatlantic slave trade to promote racial justice.

The project featured ten large globe structures, created by artists, that formed a free public art trail across the Liverpool City Region. It brought the reality and impact of transatlantic slavery to life and invited the public to think about ways to make racial justice a reality.

Five large globes were placed in Liverpool city centre, with five more in prominent locations in Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. They were joined by a further 41 learning globes, created by 31 schools and ten community groups, at public locations across the Liverpool City Region.



The World Reimagined  
Caroline Daly



**Watch:** the launch of  
The World Reimagined



The World Reimagined  
Amy Bourbon



The World Reimagined  
Halton Globe





CGI of Littlewoods Studios



LCR23 Photo Awards

Liverpool City Region's ambitions to become the Hollywood of the North moved forward with **The Depot** film studio gaining its first long-term tenancy. US TV giant Paramount+ hired the site for seven months for the making of *Sexy Beasts*, which also filmed at locations around the city region.

The Depot, off Liverpool's Edge Lane, consists of two 20,000 square feet studios, including sound stages and a dedicated parking area, and was funded by the Combined Authority and is managed by Liverpool Film Office. The authority also reconfirmed £8m of funding for conversion of the neighbouring former Littlewoods building into film studios.

Meanwhile, following the success of *Time*, *Help* and *The Responder*, the LCR Production Fund continues to support TV productions in the city region including sit-com *The Family Pile* and a second series of *Time*, this time starring Jodie Bella Ramsey, Jodie Whittaker and Tamara Lawrance.

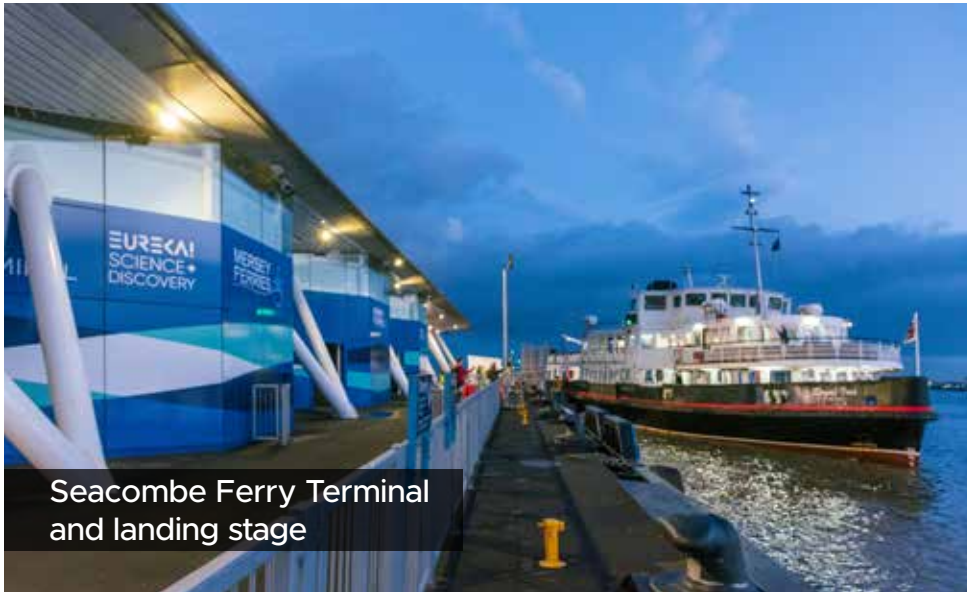
In March, winners of the inaugural **Liverpool City Region Photo Awards** were unveiled after judges whittled down nearly 2,000 entries.

Organised by the Open Eye Gallery with the support of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the awards celebrated the culture, creativity and vibrancy of photography enthusiasts from across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

**Eleven category winners were chosen** along with 33 commended submissions, with the best images displayed at a special exhibition at the Open Eye Gallery.



Children at Eureka!  
Science + Discovery



Seacombe Ferry Terminal  
and landing stage

## CASE STUDY: Eureka! Science + Discovery, and Seacombe Ferry Terminal, Wirral

Wirral received a double boost in the Autumn as **Seacombe Ferry Terminal reopened after a multi-million refurbishment** – closely followed by the opening of a new £11.4m visitor attraction on the same site.

The £11.4m Eureka! Science + Discovery opened its doors to the public in November with the aim of educating young people about science, technology, engineering, arts and maths.

It received funding from both the public and private sector, including £6.4m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Strategic Investment Fund.

Home to exhibits including a 12-foot-tall cat and giant climbing tree, Eureka! Science + Discovery opened just weeks after services resumed at Seacombe ferry terminal, which had been closed for nearly two years.

Work to modernise and upgrade the terminal included replacing its 130-year-old linkspan bridges and refurbishing the landing stage. New powered gangways were also installed to help improve access on and off the ferry.

Eureka! Science + Discovery offers a range of interactive activities and exhibits for visitors to enjoy, including sections exploring the human body, low carbon technologies and the environmental impact of fast fashion. It was co-created in close partnership with 120 children and young people from the local area.



**Watch:** the official opening of Eureka! Science + Discovery



## PORTFOLIO HOLDERS MAY 2023

Steve Rotheram

Mayor of the Liverpool  
City Region

Councillor David Baines

Deputy Mayor and  
Leader, St Helens Council

Councillor Mike Wharton

Leader, Halton Council

Councillor Graham Morgan

Leader, Knowsley Council

Councillor Liam Robinson

Leader, Liverpool City Council

Councillor Ian Maher

Leader, Sefton Council

Councillor Paul Stuart

Leader Wirral Council

Emily Spurrell

Police and Crime Commissioner

PORTFOLIO BOARD	POLICY LEAD
Net-Zero and Air Quality Portfolio Board	Councillor David Baines (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Net-Zero and Air Quality
Digital and Innovation Portfolio Board	Councillor Paul Stuart (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Digital and Innovation
Employment, Education and Skills Portfolio Board	Councillor Ian Maher (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Employment, Education and Skills
Housing and Spatial Planning Advisory Board	Councillor Graham Morgan (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Housing and Spatial Planning
Economic Development and Business Portfolio Board	Councillor Mike Wharton (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Business
Transport Portfolio Board	Councillor Liam Robinson (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Transport
Bus Franchising Sub-Group	Councillor Liam Robinson (Chair) Portfolio Holder for Transport

## DEPUTY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

During 2022-23 and continuing for 2023-24 are:

<b>PORTFOLIO BOARD</b>	<b>POLICY LEAD</b>
Business Support	Councillor Marion Atkinson
Transport & Air Quality	Councillor Steve Foulkes
Inclusive Economy & Third Sector	Councillor Kate Groucutt
Culture, Tourism and The Visitor Economy	Councillor Shelley Powell
Climate Emergency & Renewable Energy	Councillor Gill Wood
Housing & Spatial Framework	Councillor Trish Hardy
Digital Connectivity & Inclusion	Councillor Laura Robertson-Collins
Education, Skills, Equality and Diversity	Councillor Angela Ball
Policy, Reform and Resources	Councillor Carla Thomas



## PORTFOLIO HOLDERS JULY 2022 - MAY 2023

**Mayor Joanne Anderson** was the Mayor of Liverpool, and Portfolio Holder for Employment, Skills, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

**Cllr Janette Williamson** was the Leader of Wirral Council, Deputy Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, and was the Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economy and the Third Sector.

**Cllr Liam Robinson** was the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Air Quality (non-voting member).

**Asif Hamid MBE**, was Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership, and Portfolio Holder for Business Support (non-voting member).



**METROMAYOR**  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

