



LIVERPOOL FIRST: *Global ambitions for a global City*

We believe that Liverpool's people are the most ambitious and entrepreneurial. We want to give them a council that matches that ambition.



Leader's Note

We all know that Liverpool is a place of huge talent, creativity and resilience. It is in harnessing those fantastic traits that we can make Liverpool one of the most dynamic city economies. Not only in this country, but the world. That should be the scale of our ambition. Our people have never been short of ideas or ambition, but for too long, the leadership of this city has failed to match that ambition.

When you speak to businesses, entrepreneurs, universities, or community groups, a pattern emerges: Liverpool doesn't lack potential. What we lack is a council that delivers consistently, listens properly, and plans for the long term. The Liverpool Liberal Democrats propose a bold strategy that restores purpose, drives innovation, and embraces global partnerships. Our plan positions Liverpool as the UK's most dynamic and outward-looking city. A city revered by the world.

So how do we do that? First, our people need to see that they have leaders who aren't afraid to be bold, who won't shy away from big ideas. Having a powerful voice and being ambitious for this great City is the key. It's those big voices, it's those ambitious ideas that capture the attention of Government, that capture the attention of private investors, and that inspire a population.

When we ran Liverpool, we understood that the driving force of the City's growth and regeneration was the City Centre. That is why we had a clear masterplan for the likes of Liverpool ONE, which transformed the City forever. Now, more than ever, Liverpool needs a clear plan of where it is going, and we need to work with private sector experts to plan out how to get there. People have got to look at Liverpool and believe that it is a place that is moving forward, that is growing, that wants to give its young people good opportunities, good transport, good homes and good jobs.



Carl Cashman
Leader, Liverpool Liberal Democrats

OUR PRIORITIES

- 01 Recreate Liverpool Vision, hold regular meetings with Businesses, and ensure their voices are heard.
- 02 Make Liverpool the Entrepreneur Capital of the UK and open a Liverpool Investment Bank to support start-ups to scale their businesses.
- 03 Create a Dragons Den style board with the Universities where graduates can pitch for advice and support.
- 04 Create the world in one city with distinct cultural districts. Masterplan Chinatown and other districts to regenerate key City areas.
- 05 Regenerate our High Streets, strengthen independents and begin work on creating a Liverpool food and produce market in the City Centre.
- 06 Expand international flight routes and Liverpool Airport and get our city more connected to the world.
- 07 Make Liverpool the UK's Maritime superpower and expand green shipping corridors beyond the Liverpool-Belfast route
- 08 Create a Liverpool First Team with successful scouse People and businesses as Global ambassadors to sell our city.
- 09 Create a Liverpool Land Unlocking Partnership with the private sector. Unlock stalled sites and deliver new homes, jobs and regeneration.
- 10 Create a Liverpool Music Quarter around the 051, Mount Pleasant and the Adelphi, using this as a catalyst for regeneration.

MAKE LIVERPOOL THE ENTREPRENEUR CAPITAL OF THE UK

Liverpool is full of the most creative and intuitive people in the world, but quite often they aren't supported to get their ideas off the ground or to scale up. The massive success of scouse brands such as Monterex is testament to how brilliant and successful scousers can be.

Quite often, if there's an innovation hub or a business briefing, it is in the City Centre, and it can feel distant from those looking to start with a great idea. We must embed business hubs within local communities through partnership working with places such as the Kumba Imani Centre or the Vauxhall Law Centre.

Access to finance is also an issue for many startups and small to medium-sized businesses. We will create a Liverpool Entrepreneur Bank which will give out grants and low-cost loans to Liverpool startups if they meet a set of criteria which will also include providing social value to the City.

We must also enhance areas of huge innovation in the city. The Baltic Triangle is a strategic economic asset that requires active stewardship and protection.

We will treat the Baltic Triangle as Liverpool's primary innovation district. By providing affordable, AI-enabled creative spaces, we will ensure that the next generation of global tech and gaming giants start - and stay - in Liverpool. We are creating a city where the 'City of Firsts' spirit is applied to the digital age.

We will also work with developers to ask for commercial space in new developments to be provided to startups at free rent or a low cost for the first 2 years of them opening their business.

We will also work with our fantastic Universities to enhance their support for future entrepreneurs and provide the support needed to scale up small businesses. We will help small but successful entrepreneurs expand from a one to three-person operation to a bigger and more successful one, rooted in Liverpool where it can grow and expand.

We will create a 'Dragons Den' style board with the Universities to help expanding businesses pitch for not only finance but meaningful long-term advice and support from experts.

Entrepreneur Capital *In Summary*

Open a Liverpool Investment Bank to support start-ups

Provide accessible business and innovation hubs
throughout the city

Create a Dragons Den style board with the Universities

Showcase the Baltic area globally to sell Liverpool's
Entrepreneurial spirit

MASTERPLAN DISTRICTS TO CREATE 'THE WORLD IN ONE CITY'

When the Liberal Democrats won control of Liverpool in 1998, we proudly declared that we would make Liverpool a premier European City... and we did.

The Council under our stewardship saw the creation of Liverpool ONE - a premier shopping centre, the Arena and Convention Centre - a space for major events and won Capital of Culture - showcasing Liverpool to the world.

During our term of office, we said that Liverpool was 'the world in one City' in reference to the many amazing cultures

show around Liverpool. We want to take that further by master planning distinct districts.

Two good examples of this already are Chinatown and Lodge Lane. We are home to the oldest Chinatown in Europe and a very proud Scouse Chinese community. However, the community there has been let down badly, with the stalled development next to Chinatown and the lack of investment in the area itself. We must bring this area to life again.

Lodge Lane is a bustling hive of activity, which is completely to the credit of local businesses and the local community there. They have created their own distinct district without the help of the Council, which demonstrates the liberal instinct that people and businesses quite often have the best ideas when they are set free to pursue them.

In Singapore, they have distinct cultural neighbourhoods such as Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Glam, which is the historic Malay and Arab quarter. There's no reason why Liverpool can't emulate this model but in a uniquely scouse way. A great example of this could be the creation of a cultural district around Williamson Square - a beautiful area of the city left to the wild west of betting and vape shops. We will use the new powers from the forthcoming planning and infrastructure bill to achieve this aim and also aim to leverage pride in place funding to support the creation of these districts.

The World in One City *In Summary*

Create distinct cultural districts across the City.

Masterplan Chinatown and other districts to regenerate key City areas.

Regenerate our High Streets and strengthen independents in our city.

Begin the work of creating a state-of-the-art food and produce market in Liverpool City Centre, giving people access to cheaper, healthier food produced locally

Leverage new cultural districts to increase tourism in our city and boost our hospitality industry

LIVERPOOL VISION REIMAGINED

There's a common thread often repeated by the Liverpool developer, business and entrepreneur community... Liverpool's businesses have the power and knowledge. They also have the ambition and determination, but they are badly let down by the Council. Too often, the Council are slow to respond or perhaps doesn't respond at all. In the fast-paced setting of the private sector, that is not acceptable, and for Carl Cashman - a Financial Advisor by trade - it is also unacceptable. That is why, under Carl's and the Liberal Democrats' leadership of Liverpool, that will change, and it will change fast.

Many developers and investors tell us that they can't get straight answers from the planning department. Most think that they're held in contempt by the Council.

Liverpool went through a debilitating time because of all the scandals exposed through the Caller Report. The Liberal Democrats believe that the blame for these failures should lie squarely at the feet of the Labour politicians.

However, it seems to be the private sector that is suffering and being

treated with suspicion by the same Council involved in those scandals.

Liverpool's brand was tarnished by those years, and it needs a fresh start. The brand damage should not extend to the good developers and businesses in the City that have always put Liverpool First.

Liverpool needs to not only recognise the good work of established and trustworthy developers and businesses in the City but also work in close partnership with them. The approach should be joint decision-making for the betterment of our great City. This was the model adopted by Liverpool Vision – an organisation set up under the Liberal Democrats when we ran the City. A new reimagined Liverpool Vision, made up of top business people in the city, would begin to bridge the gaps in communication between the Council and the private sector by bringing in private sector partners and advisors to work closely with the Political Leadership. This partnership would broadly mirror the previously successful board and would include businesses, developers, the football clubs, the Universities and the Philharmonic.

Regular meetings and a business hotline would be established in order to fast-track queries and ensure that business partners are kept up to date with Council decisions and aspirations. The creation of a hotline will unblock many pipeline issues that businesses face with the Council that lead to relationship breakdowns and investors pulling out of key projects.

We will also hire more planning officers and link the regeneration department to the Leader and Chief Executive's Office, so that investors have confidence in the Council and the City. We will lobby the Government for greater control over building fees so that we can reduce them to get homes and offices built and cranes in the sky.

Liverpool Vision *In Summary*

Hire more Planning Officers and use AI and new tech to streamline the planning process

Link the Regeneration Department directly to the Leader and CEO's Office

Create a business hotline to unblock planning and business pipeline issues

Hold regular meetings with Businesses and ensure their voices are heard

LIVERPOOL FIRST: Brand Liverpool

Liverpool's brand power is immense, but it must be used for more than just tourism. We will establish Liverpool as Britain's most internationally recognised regional city - a global gateway for export, talent, and ideas.

At home, we will put on the footing to be a leader in AI. Liverpool must recognise the huge potential of AI, and its ability to level up places with high deprivation. It is important to be at the forefront of this revolution and not playing catch-up to other cities. We will work with businesses and the Universities at home to provide space and infrastructure for them to lead in this field.

Liverpool John Moores University is already leading in the field of Maritime innovation, but we will work with them to accelerate this. We will also bring together the Council, the University and local businesses to help push us further ahead on Maritime innovation, jobs and decarbonisation.

We will recruit successful Liverpool business people to be 'brand ambassadors' for our great city both at home and abroad. They will act as ambition accelerators for our home-grown talent and entrepreneurs and also as a conduit through which to impress the world and bring in inward investment.

Nowhere does culture and major events like Liverpool. However, more and more Artists are missing Liverpool as a touring spot. We will connect with big artists and utilise our two amazing football stadiums to bring big events into the city and to ensure that we're on every tour list.

We will partner with our most successful business leaders on trade missions around the world, selling brand Liverpool and supercharging inward investment. When we welcome people from around the world, we will meet them with our best and brightest in the private sector and Liverpool royalty, not public sector bureaucrats.

When we welcome these people to Liverpool, we want them to have a seamless and comfortable stay. To do that, we must do two things. Firstly, enhance Liverpool John Lennon Airport so that it provides more direct and one-stop flights from countries around the world. Secondly, push for more five-star hotels in our city following the success of The Municipal.

Liverpool First *In Summary*

Facilitate more five-star hotels in the city and enhance routes through John Lennon Airport

Assert leadership in AI, gaming, health innovation, and maritime decarbonisation

Attract large events and ensure that international artists use Liverpool as a key tour venue

Recruit successful Scouse People and businesses as Global ambassadors and use their influence on our trade missions around the world

LIVERPOOL LAND UNLOCKING PARTNERSHIP

Liverpool has no shortage of land; however, much of it is stalled or locked away. Brownfield sites have sat idle for a decade due to complex ownership, remediation costs, or planning uncertainty. The Liberal Democrats believe in a model based on working with the private sector to turn stalled land into thriving places.

The Land Unlocking Partnership will bring experienced developers and regeneration specialists alongside council leadership to identify stalled sites and actively intervene. This is about using land intelligently, securing affordable housing, and supporting local jobs.

Land Unlocking *In Summary*

Utilise private sector expertise to speed up and enhance site delivery

Unlock stalled sites and under-used land to deliver new homes and jobs

Have developers sign up to a Liverpool Developers Code of Conduct

Deliver development that benefits the people and communities of Liverpool and work in partnership to provide social infrastructure in new developments

BRITAIN'S GLOBAL MARITIME CAPITAL

Liverpool was built by the sea, and the numbers now prove that our future can be too. The Liverpool City Region's maritime sector has grown from a £5.6bn industry in 2023 to a £9bn industry today, employing 48,000 people at its broadest and growing at more than four times the rate of the wider UK economy. The Port of Liverpool alone now handles £11.5bn of exports and £16.9bn of imports a year, both rising fast while UK trade as a whole has stagnated. We must be clear that Maritime in Liverpool is not a heritage industry living off the past. This is one of the fastest growing, best paid sectors in our economy.

Mersey Maritime's 'Navigating Maritime Innovation' report, launched this year with the Department for Transport, mapped 188 live projects and identified a £1.9bn innovation pipeline already under way across the City Region – positioning us as one of the most innovation-dense maritime clusters anywhere in the UK. Liverpool John Moores University's new Global Centre for Maritime Innovation, and the University of Liverpool alongside it, are already delivering world-class work on green shipping corridors, autonomous vessels, port digitisation and the doctoral pipeline of engineers who will build the zero-carbon fleets of the

Future. The pipeline of engineers who will build the zero-carbon fleets of the future. The ambition of our universities and our industry is enormous. The ambition of this Council has not matched it. We will change that.

We will establish a Liverpool Maritime Enterprise Zone along the waterfront from the Northern Docks to Cammell Laird, with fast-tracked planning and dedicated Council planning officers, so that every one of those 188 innovation projects has a reason to build, test and scale here rather than anywhere else. We will back the Global Centre for Maritime Innovation to go further and faster, co-funding new berths for green fuel and autonomous vessel trials and championing the Liverpool-Belfast Green Shipping Corridor as the first of a family of zero-carbon shipping routes linking Liverpool to Ireland, the Isle of Man, Glasgow and beyond.

We will launch an annual Liverpool Global Maritime Investment Summit, building on the work already done by Mersey Maritime and the Combined Authority, and use it to put Liverpool – not London – at the centre of the conversation about where the £1.9bn pipeline of maritime innovation gets built. We will lobby Government directly for business rates relief and

for a fair share of national maritime and clean growth funding, on the simple basis that a region generating this much export growth deserves matching investment in its port infrastructure and its skills pipeline.

And we will make sure Liverpool people share in this growth. We will work with LJMU, the University of Liverpool and local schools and colleges to guarantee maritime apprenticeships and technical pathways into the sector, so that a young person growing up in our City can see a direct route from the classroom to a well-paid career building the ships, the ports and the green technology of the future. Liverpool's story has always been maritime. We intend to make sure its next chapter is written here.

Maritime Capital *In Summary*

Create a Liverpool Maritime Enterprise Zone along the waterfront with fast-tracked planning and business rate relief for green shipping and port tech firms

Back LJMU's Global Centre for Maritime Innovation to expand green shipping corridors and autonomous vessel trials beyond the Liverpool-Belfast route

Launch an annual Liverpool Global Maritime Investment Summit to convert the £1.9bn innovation pipeline into real jobs and investment

Guarantee maritime apprenticeships and skills pathways so young Liverpudlians share in a sector growing at over 9% a year

MUSIC-LED REGENERATION

Liverpool's music heritage is a living industry that still packs venues out. The recent reopening of Club 051 on Mount Pleasant – the legendary superclub that helped invent Scouse House and went toe-to-toe with Cream in the 90s, shuttered since 2005 and brought back this year as a 2,000-capacity venue – proves that Liverpool's clubbing and music heritage still commands real loyalty, and that it can be commercially revived when someone is bold enough to back it. That is exactly the spirit we want the Council to bring to the rest of the city's music scene, not just admire it once it has already happened.

But heritage alone won't build the next generation of venues, and Mount Pleasant shows why. The streets around 051, the Blue Angel and the State sit right next to a wave of new tall buildings already coming forward under the Council's tall buildings framework, including proposals for towers of fourteen to sixteen storeys on the Mount Pleasant car park site.

Too often schemes like this are negotiated in isolation: maximum height agreed, with minimum thought given to protecting the cultural fabric that makes the area worth building in in the first place. Many developers are willing to engage early and share their thinking, and we should meet that

willingness with a proper plan rather than leaving it to chance. Often schemes like this are negotiated in isolation: maximum height agreed, with minimum thought given to protecting the cultural fabric that makes the area worth building in in the first place. Many developers are willing to engage early and share their thinking, and we should meet that willingness with a proper plan rather than leaving it to chance.

We will insist that developers bringing forward major residential, student and commercial schemes in and around our established music and nightlife quarters contribute directly to protecting and growing that quarter, not just adding footfall to it. That means financial contributions towards new grassroots music space and providing opportunities for new and upcoming musicians in Liverpool.

We will create a Liverpool Music Quarter designation covering Mount Pleasant, Seel Street and the surrounding streets, giving this cluster of venues the same planning status and promotional backing that the Baltic Triangle now gets for tech and gaming. We will work with venue owners, promoters and artists, not just developers, so that as Liverpool grows upwards, its music scene grows with it rather than being squeezed out by it.

Music-Led Regeneration *In Summary*

Create a Liverpool Music Quarter around the 051, Mount Pleasant and the Adelphi, using this as a catalyst to regenerate the area

Show that regeneration in a major city can be spearheaded by creators and musicians in partnership with the Council and developers

Require developers of major towers near music venues to contribute directly to grassroots music and culture space

Champion the return of iconic venues like Club 051 as proof that Liverpool's music heritage can be commercially revived, not just memorialised

