



Eurovision 2023

Delivering a Eurovision legacy for Liverpool's music sector

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Key takeaways

1. The Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) is a sector-led independent body that advises Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) on strategy and policy issues related to music in Liverpool City Region (LCR). Several members of the Board were instrumental in bringing Eurovision to Liverpool, and all members are involved in the delivery of Eurovision and ensuring a lasting legacy of the event for the city and the region.
2. Liverpool has been a UNESCO City of Music since 2015, and it is the city's only current UNESCO designation. The LCRMB aims to capitalise on and maximise Liverpool's UNESCO status, through branding the city's transport gateways, the launch of an online hub, and conference activities during and after Eurovision.
3. During the Eurovision fortnight there will be access to post-midnight public transport, but the need for these special services has exposed the lack of night buses across the region throughout the rest of the year. A key legacy aim for the Combined Authority, Merseytravel and Music Board is to see the return of night buses to the region, which are essential to support workers in and consumers of the LCR's live music sector and wider night-time economy.
4. With numerous international and national companies acting as corporate sponsors of Eurovision, and with their representatives visiting Liverpool as part of the event, there is an opportunity to demonstrate how companies already investing in music can commit to delivering long-term investment in the region's music education programmes and wider sector.
5. Music is the catalyst to get people to Liverpool City Region, and through coordinated post-Eurovision marketing Liverpool can capitalise upon its Eurovision moment to drive increased and sustained engagement with the region's 400 live music spaces for many years to come.

1. Introduction

The Eurovision Song Contest, hosted by the UK on behalf of Ukraine in May 2023, will take place in Liverpool in part due to the efforts of members of the [Liverpool City Region Music Board](#). Established in December 2018, the LCRMB is an independent sector-led body appointed by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Charged with cementing the LCR's position as one of the world's music capitals, the Board's 22 volunteer members - who work across and represent the region's music industry - are responsible for creating and overseeing a strategy to grow the sector and develop its economic and social impact in the

Liverpool City Region. Several LCRMB members played key roles in devising and pitching the proposal to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and BBC that enabled Liverpool to beat Glasgow for the honour of hosting the 67th edition of the world's longest running televised music competition.

With the UK's last Eurovision victory coming courtesy of Katrina and the Waves in 1997, and with only Sweden and Denmark (twice) and current victors Ukraine (three times) having won Eurovision more than once this century, the EBU's long-established 'victors as hosts' model suggests it could be a while before the UK stage another Eurovision

event. Led by Liverpool City Council and LCRCA, a huge amount of work has gone into delivering the event on behalf of Ukraine. Many members of the LCRMB, through their primary industry roles, are actively engaged in devising and delivering the Eurovision events at the M&S Bank Arena, other official events, such as [Eurofest](#) and [Euroclub](#), and a host of other fringe events and Eurovision-associated activities.

As has been detailed in previous policy briefings in this [Heseltine Eurovision series](#), tourism data for recent Eurovision host cities suggests Liverpool can expect a considerable boost to its visitor economy, which fulfils one of the LCRMB's five core priorities: *To support the growth and development of a sustainable music tourism offer across the city region*. However, the rarity of the opportunity of Liverpool 2023 means the LCRMB's attention has turned to securing a lasting legacy of Eurovision. To achieve this, in collaboration with representatives from [Marketing Liverpool](#), the LCRMB has formed a specific Eurovision Legacy Group (ELG). This report identifies and explains the ELG's four key legacy aims and the recommendations for LCRCA, LCC and LCRMB to deliver them.

2. The Eurovision Legacy Group's Four Key Aims

The ELG's aims have evolved to explore the new and distinctive opportunities presented by Eurovision, but also as a way of harnessing this period of intense focus on music and culture as a catalyst to accelerate a range of ongoing LCRMB initiatives.

2.1. Maximise Liverpool's UNESCO City of Music Status

Liverpool has been designated as [England's UNESCO City of Music \(CoM\)](#) since 2015. It shares the accolade with Glasgow and Belfast in the UK, and [currently another fifty cities around the world](#). The UNESCO programme recognises cities in the network as centres

of musical creativity with a diversity of genres, as a host of music festivals, a location of a vibrant music industry, a facilitator of music education, and an enabler of amateur to professional levels of activity. LCC employ a dedicated UNESCO City of Music officer to spearhead a Liverpool Music Office and drive forward the agenda set by the LCRMB. Scholars of music cities cite Liverpool as an exemplar of "the varying ways in which a city's music legacy and heritage can be leveraged in a present-day music city framework (Ballico and Carter, 2022:201).

Despite the progressive approach and positive external perceptions, Liverpool's UNESCO CoM status has often been conflated or confused with Liverpool's World Heritage status, which was revoked by UNESCO in 2021. As the city's only current active UNESCO designation, the Music Board considers Liverpool's CoM status an underutilised resource that offers greater opportunity to drive tourism, elevate the region's contemporary music scenes and industry, and generally promote Liverpool by proactively branding it with a music label that is already synonymous with the city.

2.2. Improve the LCR's night-time transport infrastructure to support a sustainable and strong regional live music economy

During the period from Eurovision's opening event to the final, special late night public transport is being arranged. The provision of this additional transport capacity only serves to highlight that, following the Covid-19 pandemic, bus services which previously ran between midnight and 6am have [not returned to service across the region](#). A consultation conducted by the LCRMB in March 2022 identified the need for a return of regular night-buses to service a [vibrant night-time economy](#) and the 125,889 night-time workers in Liverpool alone ([ONS 2022](#)). In

the consultation with LCR venues and promoters, respondents expressed concern that the lack of night-buses affected the ability of staff and customers to get home in a cost effective and environmentally sustainable way. This perspective was strengthened with the [LCRCA's support](#) of Unite's '[Get me home safely](#)' campaign.

Since the consultation, representatives of the Board's Venues Sub Group (VSG), in collaboration with [Liverpool Nightlife CIC](#), [Futureyard CIC](#), and researchers from University of Liverpool's (UoL) [Institute of Popular Music \(IPM\)](#) have been working with LCRCA and Merseytravel to deliver a night bus pilot project, to test the viability of returning the service permanently. The Business Improvement District (BID) supported the project in its business plan for the successful 2023-2028 Retail and Leisure ballot: "We are keen to support the night-time economy, hospitality, theatres and leisure businesses by supporting and campaigning for the return to a night bus service" ([BID 2023, p.25](#)). Securing the weekend return of the night Tunnel Bus and N86 for the initial pilot is now a key aim in supporting the region's growing night-time economy.

2.3. Secure a commitment from companies that sponsor Liverpool Eurovision 2023 to support the development and sustainability of the talent pipeline and youth music projects across the LCR

The LCRMB is currently pursuing a number of projects supported by £1.6 million of Strategic Investment Funding awarded by the Combined Authority. The funding to date has secured the operation and staffing of the Liverpool Music Office, provided [grant support for LCR music businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), delivered business support sessions, and funded a range of talent development projects such as [LIME Academy](#), [Futureyard Soundcheck](#), and

regional [PRSF funding](#) for artists and practitioners. Currently, the budget is allocated to mapping the entire sector and supporting the music ecosystem by facilitating traineeships, apprenticeships, work placements and career development, and allocating further funding toward talent, skills and business development.

These initiatives will be delivered across a range of projects that cohere around an overarching aim to improve equality, diversity and accessibility across the regional sector. However, in 2024 the Liverpool Music Office and the range of activities it supports is required to transition toward a self-funded and self-sustaining model, and will need to find ways of accessing other sources of funding. A number of options are under consideration, but the legacy of Eurovision provides a unique opportunity to drive investment into the region's music sector from the corporate sponsors of the event.

2.4. Work with Marketing/Visit Liverpool to emphasise the LCR's vibrant and diverse live music ecology as part and parcel of Eurovision visitors time in the region but also as part of package of attractions for returning or future visitors

Following research conducted by its VSG and UoL's IPM, in 2022 the LCRMB published an online map of places and spaces across the region that programme all types of live music from karaoke to orchestral concerts. Currently showcasing 400 plus music venues operational across the LCR's six local authorities, the [Live Music Map](#) highlights Liverpool's credentials as a music region, and further justifies Liverpool's selection as Eurovision host. In identifying and celebrating each and every venue that programmes live events, the LCRMB can demonstrate the strength, resilience and diversity of the region's post-pandemic live sector, and support its sustainability and growth.

3. Delivering the ELG's post-Eurovision Objectives

To celebrate Liverpool's rich musical heritage, and emphasise the region's vibrant current music industry and diverse music scenes, the ELG has identified eight post-Eurovision objectives for the LCRMB to deliver in partnership with the CA and LCC.

To *maximise Liverpool's UNESCO City of Music Status toward a sustainable music tourism offer*, Liverpool City Region partners should:

- After the event, replace the Eurovision branding that will adorn many of Liverpool's key transport gateways, including John Lennon Airport and various train / bus stations, with posters and some permanent displays that identify Liverpool as England's UNESCO City of Music. These should be designed with a logo and themes that celebrate both the region's music heritage and its current success (see the example on the Heseltine Institute website linking to this policy briefing).
- Launch an online hub called Liverpool Music City, a website that acts as a central portal that enables anyone from within or outside of the region to find out about the region's breadth and depth of music related information and activities. From gig listings, to job and funding opportunities, and news about the region's industry, the aim for the website is to become the first place anyone accesses if they are looking to enjoy the wealth of music the region has to offer, or are interested in getting involved in music in some way.
- Support the Modern Music Cities (A Eurovision Legacy) conference on Friday 14th July which will bring together international, national and local thought leaders, creatives and artists, policy makers and policy shakers, industry leaders and cultural leaders to discuss the power and purpose of music cities, and what the present and future of 'Music Cities'

looks like in this ever-evolving industry. The event will comprise of presentations, panels, discussions, debates and networking.

To *improve the LCR's night-time transport infrastructure to support the recovery of the sector from the Covid-19 pandemic*, partners should consider:

- In collaboration with project partners and working with Merseytravel and the CA, deliver and review the effectiveness of a 12-month pilot project that reinstates the Tunnel Bus and N86 to operate from midnight to 6am on Saturday and Sunday mornings from summer 2023.
- Open the currently unused taxi rank at the back of John Lewis in Liverpool One, which is planned to be operational during the two-week Eurovision period.

To *convince companies to sponsor the development and sustainability of the region's talent pipeline*, we recommend:

- Approach the range of national and international corporate sponsors and supporters of Eurovision 2023 to explore the possibility of them allocating corporate social responsibility budgets toward the sustainability of the region's music sector for forthcoming years.
- Establish a registered charity called the Liverpool Music City Foundation to receive donated monies and establish a LCRMB steering committee to agree and oversee the annual distribution of funds on region specific projects.

And, to *market the LCR's live music sector to ensure a sustainable network of regional venues*:

- In partnership with [Marketing Liverpool](#) and [Visit Liverpool](#), deliver a live music marketing campaign immediately after Eurovision highlighting the diversity and sub cultures that make up the city's and region's music scene.

4. Conclusion

In an ideal world, Ukraine not the UK would be hosting Eurovision 2023. Despite the tragic circumstances that sees Liverpool host the song contest, staging the world's largest televised non-sporting event brings with it a range of opportunities to demonstrate how people can be 'United by Music'. As the organisation responsible for the LCR's music strategy and policy, the LCRMB occupies a distinctive position in both contributing to the delivery of the event on behalf of Ukraine, and ensuring the rare emphasis on the global power of music reaches beyond the fortnight of festivities in May to deliver an enduring legacy for the city and region.

The aims and objectives outlined in this policy briefing state the LCRMB's ambitions to bolster Liverpool's UNESCO City of Music status through improving our night-time transport infrastructure, investing in future generations of musicians and practitioners, and delivering marketing and promotion campaigns that celebrate the region's rich music heritage and expansive and diverse current live music scene. Achieving any of these ambitions will ensure Eurovision's legacy across Liverpool will be one of positive change, while the legacy of the honour of staging the event will always be for the people of Ukraine.

5. References

Ballico, Christina and Carter, Dave (2022) 'Music Cities or cities of music?' in *Researching Live Music Gigs, Tours, Concerts and Festivals*, Edited by Chris Anderton and Sergio Pisfil. London: Routledge.

The Heseltine Institute is an interdisciplinary public policy research institute which brings together academic expertise from across the University of Liverpool with policy-makers and practitioners to support the development of sustainable and inclusive cities and city regions.

The Heseltine Institute is marking Liverpool's status as host city for *Eurovision 2023* with this special series of policy briefings. *Eurovision* is the subject of an increasingly rich, diverse field of research, with contributions from fields as diverse as political science, geography, history, cultural studies and social policy. This series explores the impact of *Eurovision* from a range of practitioner and academic perspectives, assessing the economic, social and cultural impacts of the event on Liverpool City Region and beyond.

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