The Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Practice is the University of Liverpool’s gateway for policy makers and practitioners in the City Region to meet with academics to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest. The Institute’s ambition is to have a sustained impact on academic and policy debates about how we can develop successful, sustainable city regions in an unstable global world.

This is a challenge that the Liverpool City Region, led by a directly elected mayor, now confronts. Our Executive Director’s publication ‘The State of Liverpool City Region: making the most of devolution’ underlined some of these challenges and, importantly, highlighted opportunities. But this is new territory for all concerned and is likely to require fresh ideas, approaches and policy innovation to ensure these new governance arrangements work to stimulate and reimagine our economy, our places, public services and democracy.

With this in mind the Institute is working across a number of policy areas to harness and develop local talent and resources. We look to combine these with national and international good practice, to bring forward innovative policy and practice that can support a successful, prosperous and healthy City Region for all. Our current portfolio of work includes the following initiatives:

**Social Economy**

The formation of the Liverpool City Region Social Economy Panel is a joint initiative between the Heseltine Institute and practitioners in the sector. The aim of the Panel is to address the policy deficit in this field, specifically for the city region. The Heseltine Institute is funding primary research on the scale and scope of the city region social economy and early indications suggest an asset base for the sector of some £4 billion and over 40,000 people employed. This sector is already an important part of the city region and with targeted intervention, could become a strategic strength, supporting social inclusion and cohesion, stimulating enterprising communities and working with both public and private sector to ensure a strong institutional base for policy innovation. The work on the social economy also covers research and policy work in areas such as social housing, community assets, entrepreneurship, food poverty and social finance. Our strong links with international social economy cities through the Global Social Economy Forum offers great collaborative potential for the city region.

**Health and Well-Being**

The work of the Institute’s health and wellbeing theme concentrates on the advancement of resilient, prosocial places and community wellbeing. Working closely with Universities across the North and with high profile civic organisations, such as the New Economics Foundation, the Institute co-hosts the Community Wellbeing evidence programme of the
UK’s What Works Centre for Wellbeing. This puts the Liverpool City Region at the forefront of knowledge about how communities and neighbourhoods can provide better lived experience for their residents. With recent data analysis from this programme demonstrating Liverpool and Merseyside’s highly unequal profiles of wellbeing, it is important that the city region uses the emerging evidence about what works to make our future places better for us all.

Our complimentary Prosocial Place Programme works to understand how and why certain city areas are associated with lower wellbeing and higher levels of mental distress. In partnership with City region place-making SMEs and social enterprises, we aim to persuade regeneration initiatives to place the health and wellbeing of citizens at the core of decision-making and governance processes.

In preparation for potential devolution of health to LCR, The Institute has begun an analysis of the LCR health governance landscape, incorporating a package of activities culminating a report due in summer 2017.

Spatial Plan

The Institute is undertaking a spatial economic audit of the City Region to gain full overview of how the city region economy functions across local authority boundaries to understand how actions to support growth can be coordinated across the Region. The ultimate aim of the audit would be to assemble a fine-grained account of the levers of economic growth. This is likely to entail the relative strength of the city region’s high streets and their resilience to retail industry change; employment sites and the extent of their pull with respect to commuting patterns; housing market dynamics; the social distribution of the proceeds from growth and the catalysing effects of investment in public transport.

Civic technology

We are collaborating with the Liverpool City Mayoral lead on Smart Cities, Merseytravel, the LEP, Liverpool CCG and Hartree (SFTC) with the aim of developing a simulated (super) computer-driven decision making model for City region policymakers. This will provide a holistic view of the City Region’s policy domain allowing policymakers to virtually assess the impact of decisions taken in one policy domain across others. This model will be calibrated by geo-location data taken from a mobile App co-produced with residents. The data from this App will be banked in a co-op databank with the aim to monetise it for the benefit of residents.

Office for Civic Imagination

We are collaborating with Engage Liverpool, LUISS University Rome, Fordham Law School, New York to develop a local ‘Office for Civic Imagination’. Building upon pioneering development work in Amsterdam, New York and Bologna we aim to create an environment where active citizens, social, economic, institutional and legal innovators can explore and advance innovations in public policy.

The Institute also runs a series of public events including ‘Policy Provocations’. These are designed to bring together perspectives from leading international, UK and local thinkers to provide a platform for passionate public debate on contemporary public policy issues.