

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION MUSIC BOARD – STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN – Version 4 September 2025

INTRODUCTION

This is the Liverpool City Region Revised Music Strategy Action Plan. It has been developed by the Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) which was established in December 2018 as an independent, sector-led Board, appointed by the LCR Combined Authority Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram.

The LCR Music Board¹ was charged with both creating and overseeing a strategy to grow the sector and its economic and social impact on the City Region and is one of the first such Boards created in the UK.

The LCRMB was among the first to be established in the UK and since its formation has been the most active. It is generally recognised nationally and internationally as being a leader in this field with a dynamic range of sub-groups which support Board priorities and provide wider sector representation beyond core Board membership.

Since it was established the LCR Music Board has worked with a range of stakeholders to develop the strategy, its priorities and action plan. Representatives and individuals from the music industry across the LCR, including artists, music education, music businesses and arts organisations, independents, record labels, promoters, managers, production service providers from both the public and private/commercial sectors have all contributed to the development of the original document and revised/updated versions.

The Board's strategy is based on this local industry knowledge and upon local and national intelligence including reports from established industry bodies including the likes of UK Music, LIVE, and the Musician Union.

The original strategy was developed during the course of 2019 setting out a clear set of long-term priorities supported by a short-term action plan.

¹ See appendix for LCR Music Board membership

The Strategy priorities included: activity to support new and existing businesses; the creation of new jobs; the development of greater sector connectivity; support for talent and artist development; increase in music tourism and spend; increase in collaborative working and the development a model of good practice that can be replicable in other cities/city regions.

Central to the success of the implementation of the strategy and action plan was the creation of an independent fully operational Music Office, supported by the LCR Music Board.

The Board's strategy has evolved to reflect the needs of the industry with full strategy reviews completed in 2021 and in 2023. This reflected the impact of the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, the consequences of Brexit, and the move towards a more sustainable sector.

This review (September 2025) builds upon the previous work and recognises the need to continue to support and respond to the following:

- **Talent Development:** education, skills, careers, and the showcasing of local talent regionally, nationally and internationally. Nurturing the musical talents within our city region (from all communities and neighbourhoods) remains a pivotal goal.
- **Infrastructure Challenges:** in addition to the identification and needs of venues of specific sizes and capacities, planning issues, and mitigating noise-related concerns around venues, addressing issues of survival for small and grassroots venues is critical. Additionally, addressing transportation hurdles, especially late-night public transport.
- **Networking and Knowledge Sharing:** value of networking, knowledge sharing, and advocating for more comprehensive support and guidance for businesses and professionals within the music sector at all levels.
- **Role of AI and new technologies within the Music Industry:** Music Futures, the new Creative Cluster for the Liverpool City Region, will provide a platform for piloting new approaches to music tech, talent development, and international growth and position LCR as a national testbed for scalable creative solutions.
- **Sustainability and net zero agendas:** music has a unique ability to both deliver on its own sustainability goals and influence audience behaviour. The Board has strong local sustainability leads building on UN Accelerator City and links to national initiatives such as LIVE Green which will allow us to make progress in this space.

- **Equality and diversity:** a thriving music sector must be open to (and benefit) all across the region. That means that having EDI baked into our work as a Board. Great work has been done to date, and our ambition remains to ensure that enjoyment of, provision of, and a career in music remains accessible to all.

DELIVERY AND MONITORING

The Board will continue to have oversight of the Strategy.

Delivery will be undertaken by officers from the LCR Combined Authority and the Liverpool City Council Music Officer, supported by the Board. The aim remains to have a fully funded Music Office which will then be responsible for the delivery of the Plan, supported by a small steering group, reporting and accountable to the Board. The Board reports to the LCR Combined Authority Mayor on a quarterly basis.

Full consideration will be given to equality and diversity through the implementation of the Strategy's action plan.

PRIORITIES

- 1 To ensure the long-term development and growth of the Liverpool City Region music industry.**
- 2 To support the growth and development of a sustainable music tourism offer across the city region.**
- 3 To facilitate music and education sectors to come together with a plan to increase engagement in music and investment in and development of talent from all communities across the city region.**
- 4 To ensure a sustainable and strong network of venues and to work with local authorities across the city region to introduce and implement the Agent of Change principle.**
- 5 Equality and diversity: a thriving music sector must be open to (and benefit) all across the region. Our ambition remains to ensure that enjoyment of, provision of, and a career in music remains accessible to all.**

6 To work towards developing a model of good practice in sustainability across the LCR Music Sector developing the learning from Accelerator City.

1. To ensure the long-term development and growth of the LCR music industry

- a. Secure the future of a funded Music Office whose role will include creating a hub, virtual or physical, to help the sector network, gain information and contacts, and provide useful resources for businesses and individuals across the City Region.
- b. Establish effective employment resources – eg providing careers guidance, company placements and traineeships.
- c. Establish live data exercises to capture annual, ongoing data collection (drawing upon universities, national bodies eg PRS Foundation) to be able to monitor progress and capture changes within the City Region and its economic value, trends, including qualitative as well as quantitative information. The sector mapping work commissioned by the Board in 2024 has enabled vital progress to be made in the University of Liverpool developing a mapping model which is not only being used in the LCR but elsewhere nationally and internationally.
- d. Strengthen the Combined Authority and City Region's commitment to promoting and supporting the sector as a priority sector for the city region's economy in line with the UK Government's prioritisation of the creative industries within the Industrial Strategy.
- e. To address the ongoing challenges for artists, supply chain businesses and crew created by current EU touring arrangements through the development of the Northern Music Export Office and other work to support music exports from the region.

- f. AI and new technologies. To ensure that the LCR is equipped to take advantages in new technology, including AI. The LCR will benefit from the Music Futures programme, and this should facilitate the city region to be at the forefront of developments around music tech.

2. To support the growth and development of a sustainable music tourism offer across the city region

- a. To ensure the sustainable development of the www.liverpoolmusiccity.com central website and hub, promoting music in the city eg what's on listings.
- b. Work with the Beatles Legacy Group and the Destination Partnership to develop a strategy around Beatles based tourism and potential developments around the proposed Immersive Liverpool attraction and the ambitions around hosting a Beatles archives etc
- c. To establish a strategy with the LCR Destination Partnership to market Liverpool and the City Region as a World Music City Region.
- d. Establish a clear view, policy and plan on how to maximise the UNESCO Music City status.
- e. Support marketing campaigns that showcases the diversity of Liverpool's current music offer rather than music heritage, as exemplified by the *Discover the New Beat* campaign

3. To facilitate music and education sectors to come together with a plan to increase engagement in music and investment in and development of talent from all communities across the city region.

- a. Working with the Sound! Music Hub, establish Liverpool City Region as a place in which every child has a chance to learn an instrument (across a diverse range of instruments from orchestral to electronic).

- b. Invest in music growth from individuals and communities in lower socio-economic areas, and across our diverse population, including support for business development, facilities and access to investment funds. Enable and facilitate pathways and opportunities to connect in with the Music Futures strategic programmes.
- c. Establish effective employment resources – eg providing careers guidance, company placements, traineeships. Develop in partnership with LCRCA Careers Hub and Sound! Music Hub to support IAG provision within schools.
- d. Establish a scheme to make better and more coordinated use of existing and often underused resources in schools and other community spaces (eg equipment, studios), across the city region, with a coordinated approach to managing them, providing training in their use, and generating effective use of them.
- e. Promotion of and support for apprenticeship and traineeship programmes and other schemes that facilitate a more inclusive approach to entry into the sector.
- f. Lobby and advocate to protect music education and access to music for children and young people within the school curriculum and also within informal / grass roots settings.

4. To ensure a sustainable and strong network of venues and to work with local authorities across the city region to support the sustainability of these venues

- a. Work with venues and local authorities to ensure that venues are able to flourish under the new Licensing Policy Framework.
- b. Create an open-source information hub for venues and promoters to share resources, guidance and information.
- c. Work with Councils for a positive and cheap approach to road closures and other infrastructure help to stimulate greater and better festival activity.

- d. Work with Merseytravel, City Region Mayor and other transport providers to develop late-night transport to support use of venues both in the city centre and elsewhere across the city region. Following the success of Music Board Night Bus service the next step should be to extend the range of routes available to support the nighttime economy.
- e. Subject to the new Licencing Policy Framework and its impacts there may still be a need to encourage the active adoption by all planning authorities of Agent of Change and explore utilising Deeds of Easement of noise as an approach.
- f. Encourage recognition by all Local Authorities across the LCR of the vital importance of grassroots venues in developing a growing and inclusive music industry.
- g. Work with national industry bodies such as LIVE and Music Venues Trust to ensure that LCR venues are able to take advantage of any national support programmes.
- h. Encourage financial and other support models that enable venues to own their buildings rather than rent and be at risk to landlords wishing change of use.

5. Equality and Diversity

- a. Equality and Diversity is embedded throughout all work and initiatives implemented or supported by the Board.

6.Sustainability

- a. Promote the UN Accelerator City pilot programme as a blueprint for sustainable cultural policy and practice across the UK.
- b. Advance national dialogue on low-carbon touring, aligning with industry leaders such and supporting scalable solutions for sustainable live performance.
- c. Encourage music organisations/individuals to be part of, contribute and benefit from the net zero pledge of UN Accelerator city.