



Liverpool City Region All Party Parliamentary Group

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Secretary
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Alison McGovern MP
Lord Alton of Liverpool, Lord Heseltine
and Marie Rimmer MP
Conor McGinn MP
Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION APPG

Showcasing Arts in the LCR: unlocking culture and talent

TIME AND DATE: 14:00-15:00, Friday 19th July

(Lunch: 13:30 and an optional museum tour from 15:00-15:30)

VENUE: Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AQ

Non-Verbatim Minutes

Musical performance

Singer-songwriter Michael Aldag gives a guitar performance of As of Yet.

Introduction and opening remarks

Alison McGovern thanks Michael for brilliant performance and introduces herself and the APPG.

Welcome to LCR

Laura Pye, Director of National Museums Liverpool welcomes all to Liverpool. The Merseyside Maritime Museum, the location of the meeting, houses three museums including the International Slavery Museum. She highlights the great year that the National Museums Liverpool (NML) has had, citing the Terracotta Warriors, and how Liverpool is the home of three of the for top museums outside of London. Liverpool National Museums have had their best year in business, commercial ventures, exhibitions and profile, which begs the question of where they will go next. NML has been able to attract 4 million visitors a year, and a key aim for the future is the development of the waterfront, with the development of the International Slavery Museum being a cornerstone of this.

Reflecting a city

Alison McGovern MP introduces poet Roger McGough.

Roger McGough reads 10 poems. This includes a poem on fame, reflecting on how it may have come too early, a poem called survival, one on the comfort found in reading books, a poem on global affairs, 'Of Protestants', 'Full English', 'Leader', 'Home Truths' and finally a poem written for the Radio Times on Jodie Comer of Killing Eve.

Unlocking our future talent and culture panel

Alison McGovern introduces the Culture Panel, discussing where we are in terms of culture in LCR, and invites all three to speak for five minutes each.



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Sarah Lovell, Culture Lead at LCRC, talks about LCR's emerging priorities, and how they can be reflected in the development of the local industrial strategy. Liverpool has an incredible cultural offer, which is internationally recognised. Lovell explains that the central reason for this is the warmth of people, a sense of identity and place, and that these are recognised as an asset, and points out that Steve Rotheram echoes these reasons.

Culture and creativity are highly important to the region and something that is being developed to create an evidence base to identify the core strengths of LCR. Although the city has recognised the strength of computer science, work on infectious diseases, life sciences and clean growth, the digital and creative sector – including film music, gaming – is a core growth sector, and not always as visible as some of our other strengths and assets. Lovell goes on to point out the strong cultural and sports heritage of the city as a driver of business and economy, ensuring it is an attractive place with lots to offer.

However, she highlights challenges that LCR faces. This includes the high number of people classified as economically inactive (such as long-term sickness, students, benefits claimants) which impacts upon productivity. She questions how we can move these people into more productive roles and use culture and creativity to achieve that.

Lovell states that working through art is a powerful medium to unlock this potential, particularly with the ageing community, those who are disabled or have mental health concerns. Liverpool underperforms and has a skills gap (22.9% qualified to Level 4 degree equivalent, with the national average being 39%) and health inequality, and these are areas that need to be addressed in the strategy. A challenge for the cultural sector is how to utilise the strengths and assets that LCR currently has, and using drama and music to help address and deal with some of these issues, however we need to create these opportunities and find a way to knit these agendas together and scale up, through things such as wellbeing enterprises and socially prescribing the arts. Lovell finishes by saying that the distinctive culture and creativity as well as community spirit are a key narrative to better tell a story through the business industrial strategy. She wishes to work with stakeholders across LCR to amplify and platform these key strengths, so that when the social and cultural strategy comes online in 2020, it has a distinctly Liverpudlian impact.

Alison McGovern introduces Claire McColgan, director of Culture Liverpool.

McColgan begins by pointing out how far LCR has come over the last 15 years, and that in 2003 the city did not have the confidence to be shortlisted, let alone win, the City of Culture. Liverpool has done successfully and is perhaps the only city that has kept the legacy and grown it.

However, 60% of the budget has been cut despite the city keeping culture as a core driver for regeneration, through things such as huge events that bring national and international attention to LCR, such as the Giants event in Wirral. However, LCR needs to think about the next big thing. McColgan has been working on the next five years and wants to create a sense of place that is uniquely Liverpudlian when creating a programme. She explains how there is an opportunity to tell



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a different story about each community, and then Culture Liverpool would join this story up, with people wanting to tell the story about the community they come from. McColgan wants to give these untold histories and stories a heart and international platform, and it would be an honour for Culture Liverpool to have this opportunity. She finishes by saying the next steps are for MPs to ask what culture in Liverpool will look like in the next 10 years, and begin to talk to the government about this, to ensure that Liverpoolian cultural institutions are able to lobby government on cultural development.

Alison McGovern introduces Richard Benjamin, the head of the International Slavery Museum. Benjamin offers tours to the attendees for the museum at the close of the meeting. He gives an overview of the museum, including its opening in 2007 as a unique museum that focuses on transatlantic slavery, which has thousands of visits per year. He speaks about how the museum needs support and interest to ensure its longevity.

Historically, Liverpool was the heart of transatlantic slavery, and the museum is not solely exhibitions, but to be of benefit to the area and the black community to have ownership of. The museum has spent 10 years cultivating relationships with NGOs and the government to examine contemporary slavery (both for professionals and victims) and has facilities to work with people in creative industries. 10 million pounds of funding has been put into policy and research, and the museum is able to bid and be involved in this research.

The museum is the only museum in the country, with the Museum of Liverpool, that is a hate crime reporting centre, and this needs to be advertised more. Benjamin also speaks about the Slavery Remembrance Day, on 12th August, and how he needs people from this event to be advocates for changing the future, alongside the museum.

Interactive discussion and Q&A

Alison McGovern opens the floor to the attending MPs for question and comment.

Marie Rimmer MP comments on how she has always been engaged in the arts, craft and writing world, as it helps young people to stay out of trouble, assists with the disenfranchised (particularly those with mental health and learning difficulties). She goes on to say that these young people in particular find it difficult to get into employment, and that much can be done for these people in need help those into employment.

Louise Ellman MP speaks about the successful application for Liverpool to become the European City of Culture. She explains that Liverpool had the edge in the application process due to its potential, and that the bid connected with the people of the city and its communities. She explains how LCR has maximised and will continue to do that through opportunities such as creative arts for individuals in the community, to develop as individuals, as well as promoting the arts in their own



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right to enjoy. She points out the economic importance of the arts in the future of the city, and questions how we are maximising potential, how we are achieving on these fronts.

Alison McGovern opens the floor to questions from stakeholders.

A number of items were raised from attendees from cultural organisations such as Writing on the Wall, Bluecoat, Open Eye, Corke Art Gallery and more.

- *More pathways into creativity for the young, concerns over cuts to arts curriculum in schools*
- *Art should occur for the sake of art and the development of communities*
- *How activity on the ground be embedded and protected*
- *How can LCR pull together to reinvest and bid for Arts Council Funding*
- *Health partnerships and partnerships with other stakeholders need to be brokered and navigated*
- *Liverpool already has its own fantastic talent which needs to be developed and protected*
- *LCR could position itself as the place to go with further partnership development*

Observations, actions and closing remarks

Alison McGovern explains role of APPG and invites Sarah Lovell and Roger McGough to provide some closing remarks.

Sarah Lovell encourages the attending cultural stakeholders to be part of a consultation into the next phase of development in the local industrial strategy. She says that the cultural organisations are a fundamental voice that must come through, and we must find ways to strengthen the existing provision and support for culture, as LCR must continue to promote the attractiveness of the place through this.

Alison McGovern encourages people to help and get in touch with Sarah Lovell to be a part of the industrial strategy and passes on to Roger McGough to provide some final closing remarks.

Roger McGough speaks about cultural and arts provision in schools and what we are doing about it, and that it always comes back to the lack of provision and pathways into the arts.