

# Economic Opportunities Framework Summary

## Liverpool City Region

A FAIRER, STRONGER, CLEANER LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

WHERE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND



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Aerial shot of Liverpool.



Glass Futures, St Helens.



Sci-Tech Daresbury, Halton.



Maghull Health Park, Sefton.



Headbolt Lane station, Knowsley.



Wirral Waters, Wirral.

# LIVERPOOL CITY REGION – A PLACE OF PIONEERS AND OPPORTUNITY

This Economic Opportunities Framework binds together the strategic strengths, opportunities and assets that will help forge the City Region's economic prosperity and resurgence on the world stage. It is a core strategic investment narrative that partners can align investment opportunities with. It provides clarity to investors and government about who we are and what we have to offer, and sets out high level priorities and actions to maximise our opportunities.

The Framework builds on the 2022 [Plan for Prosperity](#), and its aim for a 'City Region that will build up the resilience and productivity of its economy and unlock its global potential.'

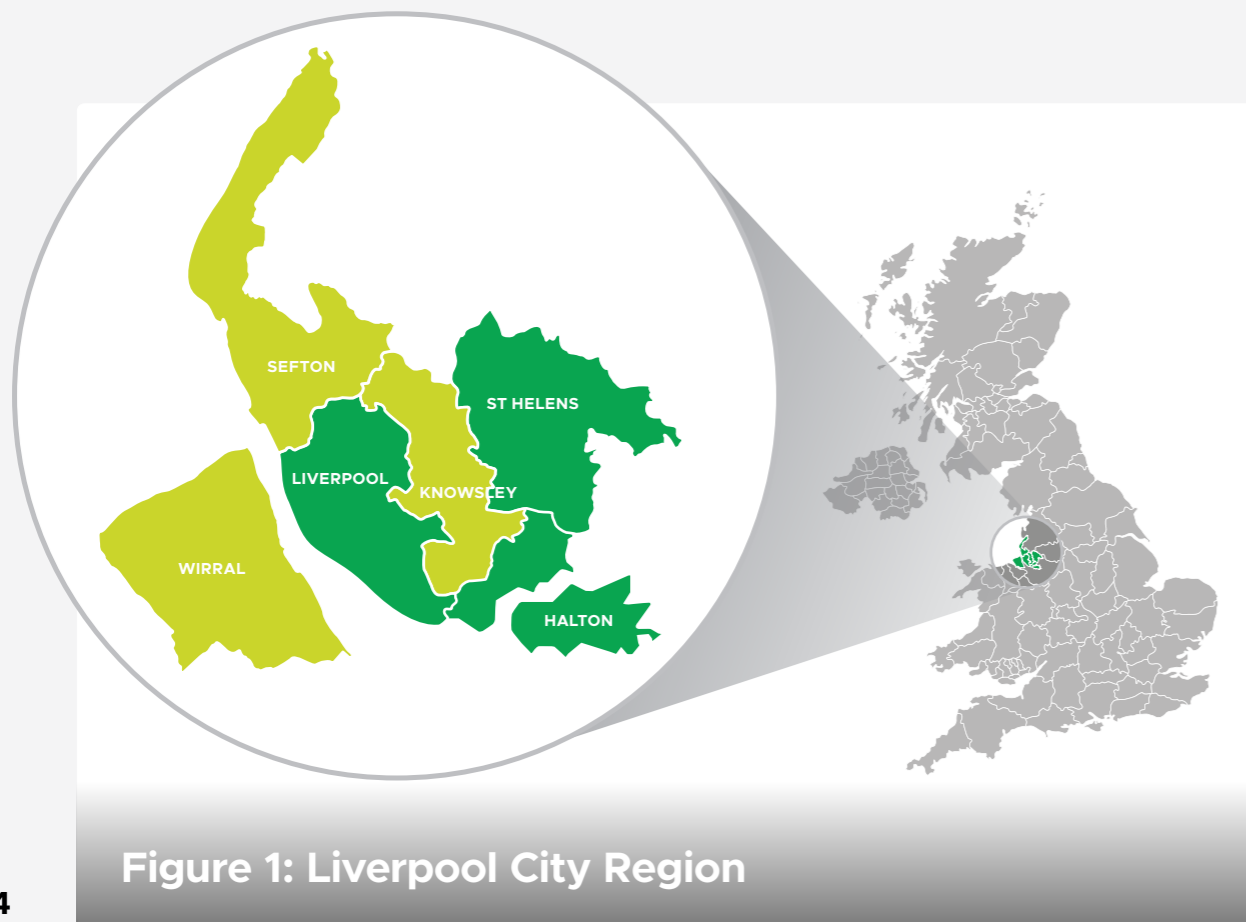


Figure 1: Liverpool City Region

## 1 Liverpool City Region

**Liverpool City Region (LCR) - Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, and Wirral - is centrally and strategically positioned on the UK's west coast. With a £35bn economy and a population of 1.6 million people, it is a true global gateway built on international trade and connectivity, driven by innovation.**

It is a place where the ingenuity and creativity of our people is helping to pioneer the ideas, industries, and infrastructure of the future. It is also a place where a spirit of innovation is providing local solutions to global challenges through world-leading assets and capabilities in areas including high-performance computing, materials chemistry, health and life sciences, and in developing our distinctive contribution in the drive to net zero.

But it is not just world class science and industrial innovations that power LCR. It is a place where people choose to be – to visit, live, work, study and invest. It is world-renowned as a 'Global Cultural Capital', founded on creativity and a unique sense of place. This is set against a backdrop of inspirational natural landscapes, providing a distinctive city/countryside/coastal lifestyle combination. It is powered by LCR's greatest asset: its people - their passion, character, warmth, and ideas.

The City Region has one of the most sophisticated transport networks in the country, is one of the UK's most digitally connected places, and has a wide-ranging housing offer. It also offers a strong sense of belonging, community and cohesion that adds to its vibrancy and quality of life. LCR benefits from strong and cohesive political, business, and institutional leadership through its Metro Mayor, Combined Authority and six local authorities; private sector-led Business & Enterprise Board and Cluster Boards; its leading universities, research organisations, and the UK's first sub-regional Innovation Board.

This leadership fosters a collaborative environment that creates a unified vision and sense of purpose, maximising a unique global brand that will instil confidence to investors and partners who share the same long-term ambitions for the future of Liverpool City Region.

## 2 A Focused Approach to Building on Our Strengths and Opportunities

We are committed to an *innovation-led, inclusive, connected and sustainable* approach to growing the economy. These integrated principles – built on partnerships - underpin the Economic Opportunities Framework and our current and future thinking.

Alongside these principles are a range of priorities - upmost amongst them is an emphasis on **convergence across established key strengths, enabling capabilities, and emerging opportunities**, with a focus on key clusters, supply chains and industry-led networks. A concentrated focus on these principles, priorities and core opportunities will support the City Region in meeting key targets and outcomes, such as:

- GVA growth from £35bn (2021) to £45bn in 2035 – a transformational growth scenario where LCR maximises the potential of its economic strengths and opportunities;
- Achieving Net Zero by 2040 or sooner;
- Securing investment of 5% equivalent of GVA spend on R&D by 2030, which could mean additional £19.7bn in GVA, 6.5% increase in jobs, (44,000), and 10% increase in productivity;
- Increasing the level of exports to 35% of GVA (£11.8bn) and increase the percentage of foreign direct investment coming into the City Region;
- Growing the proportion of knowledge intensive businesses from 22% towards the national level of 26%;
- Progress in closing the business density gap;
- Improved outcomes across the skills continuum and enhancing career progression routes.

## 3 Scaling Up Regional Growth Drivers

The Framework sets out transformational strengths, capabilities and opportunities that are of central strategic focus: why they are important, key locations, and the opportunities they provide. It begins with the **Innovation Ecosystem** - the knowledge anchor and enabler - and then how this connects with strengths across **Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Sciences**, and **Digital and Creative**. These are areas which will have the most significant economic, social and environmental impact for the City Region, and where its strongest competitive and comparative advantages lie.

### Innovation – Local Solutions with Global Reach and Impact

Our world-leading and highly distinctive innovation strengths and priorities were set out in successive Science & Innovation Audits in [2017](#) and [2022](#) and [Innovation Prospectus \(2023\)](#). These are centred on infection prevention & control, materials chemistry, and AI solutions & emerging technologies. They form the basis for the City Region's cluster focused approach to developing innovation assets that will support growth across the economy.

The ecosystem is driven by longstanding collaborations between universities, research institutions, industry and the public sector. It is enabled by focal points around nationally significant science and innovation campuses at Sci-Tech Daresbury and Knowledge Quarter Liverpool and is underpinned by a high-impact R&D pipeline worth £1.9bn and £725m of projects underway. It is supported by an ecosystem that is being constantly developed through public and private investments to help businesses turn ideas into commercial and investable propositions, to finance them, and bring them to market.

The opportunities are boundless, but include global differentiator ‘Superclusters’ in:

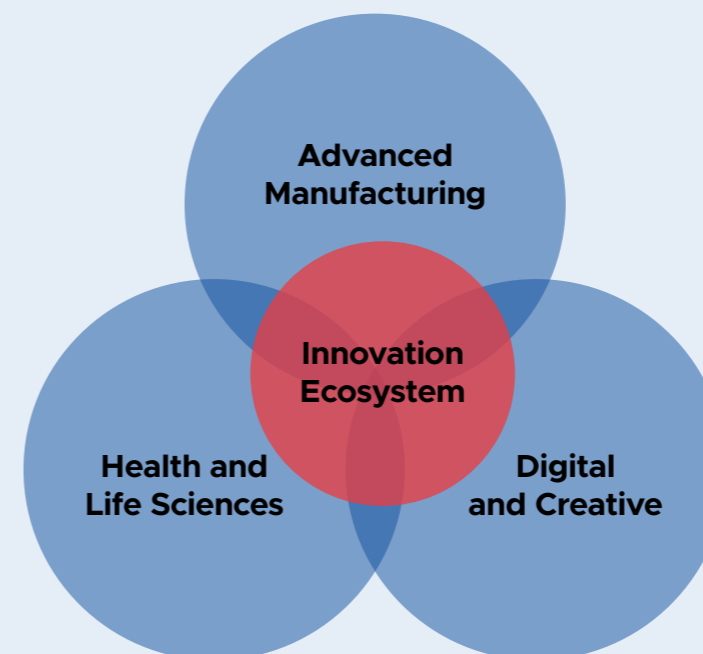
- **Infection** - scaling existing capabilities of the Infection Innovation Consortium ([iiCON](#)) - centred around the world-leading Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine - to deliver on its objective to extend an ambitious 10-year £1bn R&D investment target towards £3bn per annum. This will be complemented by a Pandemic Institute facility for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.
- **Materials** - a ten-year horizon opportunity for a Materials Innovation Zone, with the [Materials Innovation Factory](#) at its heart, built on longstanding collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Unilever.

Alongside these developing Superclusters, there are a wealth of opportunities that the combination of assets, capabilities and R&D pipeline provides – focused on creating, sustaining and scaling up local solutions for global challenges. Some examples include:

- **Positioning LCR as a ‘Global Smart City Region’**, using UK-leading capabilities in collation and application of data, AI and other digital technologies. All the elements exist in LCR for using technology to make smarter decisions and more strategic approaches to sustainability, resident wellbeing and economic development.
- **Being at the forefront of maximising population health improvements**, with developments supported and enabled by the Life Sciences Investment Zone - such as the scaling out of a world first Centre for Long-lasting Therapeutics; Civic Health Tech Innovation Zone; and a new world class mental health research facility around what is already one of Europe’s foremost specialist forensic psychiatry centres.
- **Driving industrial decarbonisation**, with examples including further development of Glass Futures, a global industry led open-access hub for both glass technologies innovation and wider decarbonisation for foundation industries; and solutions for maritime decarbonisation, supporting the delivery of the national Maritime 2050 Strategy through LCR Freeport and deep academic and industry specialisms.

## Sector Led Cluster Strengths with an Array of Investable Opportunities

LCR’s innovation capabilities converge with and help enable longstanding strengths, particularly within Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences, and Digital & Creative. The priority is for these clusters to weave together to create an offer greater than the sum of their parts. Given their prevalence in terms of economic impact, they are each supported by private sector led Cluster Boards that will help inform and shape policy, partnerships, investment and delivery.



**An offer greater than the sum of their parts:** clusters intersect within, across, and between each other (e.g. Vaccine development and manufacture, our digital manufacturing expertise, LCR’s MedTech capabilities).

**Mutual dependencies and learning across areas** such as Net Zero, Skills, Productivity, Supply Chains, together with processes and systems.

## A Place for Makers and Innovators with Continent Spanning Connections (Advanced Manufacturing)

With a port-centric location providing global trade opportunities, a skilled workforce, established R&D infrastructure, and with the presence of major Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), LCR provides significant competitive advantages for advanced manufacturing businesses. Contributing £2.9bn to the economy, there are 22,000 jobs and nearly 700 businesses in LCR's Advanced Manufacturing sector, with a critical mass of activity in which the percentage contribution to LCR's GVA is 70% larger than the national average, and productivity per job 10% higher.

It is supported by a strong smart logistics infrastructure and the benefits of the UK's third largest Port, a Freeport that will unlock global markets and trade hubs for manufacturers, and an Investment Zone that will drive bio-manufacturing.

There are many key locations, but a core strategic focus for premium manufacturing capability includes the Freeport sites and the *Speke-Halewood Corridor* based on high value national and internationally important Biomanufacturing and Automotive.

## The Opportunities

### At the forefront of electrification

- As part of a nationally important North West cluster, JLR, Ford, Stellantis, Bentley, Leyland Trucks, and Toyota will all be transitioning to EV simultaneously. They are in close proximity to the Port and LCR Freeport, with ease of access to markets this brings;
- The opportunities this provides to an already strong LCR supply chain are vast, with focus on battery systems, hydrogen fuel cell components, and electrified powertrains;
- The refurb, reuse and recycling of batteries will also be important – uniquely, LCR is the location of only one of two plants in Europe that recycles lithium batteries.

### Nationally important vaccine production

- One of Europe's most important biomanufacturing clusters to is to be further enabled by the Investment Zone (see Health & Life Sciences below).

### Positioning LCR at the forefront of advanced manufacturing innovation

- **A Freeport that accelerates manufacturing growth.** Tax incentives across three tax sites together with beneficial customs arrangements for businesses that import, hold or manufacture goods and export. It will deliver £800m of new investment, 14,000 jobs, and accelerate employment and supply chain opportunities across the whole City Region;
- **A centre for Low Carbon Manufacturing.** Through **Mersey Tidal**, LCR has the opportunity to become a cluster for tidal supply chains in the UK. The City Region can embed wind power supply chains as it becomes a net exporter of offshore wind and of knowledge for other places. With one of the highest concentrations of materials and science robotics in the world and the Materials Innovation Factory, LCR is also at the centre of rapid sustainable materials development;
- **Leaders in Industrial Digital Technologies (IDTs).** LCR was the UK's first industrial digital adoption programme (LCR4.0). As IDTs transform UK industry, the City Region has invested in an ecosystem giving it competitive edge in utilising digital technology;
- **Connecting supply chains to industry enablers and innovation excellence.** Convergence of innovation assets, academic research, and expertise in emerging technologies addresses industry challenges, in turn reducing costs and risk for manufacturers undertaking R&D. Assets and capabilities including the University of Liverpool's Virtual Engineering Centre, Centre for Process Innovation, and Manufacturing Technology Centre futureproofs LCR as a centre of leading-edge facilities and knowledge.

## From Discovery to Production: The Place for Health and Life Science Innovation

The LCR is a globally significant location for health innovation. It excels in several fields including infectious disease, healthcare focused data science, antimicrobial resistance, cancer care and oncology, Health/MedTech, children's health and mental health.

It is also one of the UK's 12 designated Investment Zones – and only one of two focused on Life Sciences. The Investment Zone will build on LCR's rapidly expanding and highly productive life sciences sector which already employs 6,000 people (the largest cluster of employment in any City Region excluding Cambridge and Peterborough) and delivers an estimated £730m a year to the local economy. It is enabled by a highly distinctive ecosystem with clear intersections between innovation excellence, R&D and discovery, through the value chain to production/manufacture of drugs and vaccines.

Activity is across the City Region, but particularly concentrated in Liverpool Knowledge Quarter, Speke's pharma cluster, and Sci-Tech Daresbury with its enabling digital/data capability and Health/MedTech.

### The Opportunities

- **Turbocharging the vaccines opportunity.** The City Region has been designated by government as a *High Potential Opportunity (HPO) Programme for Vaccines*, and the Investment Zone further drives this. These developments illustrate confidence from government, academia, and business, translating into major investments such as £450m from Astra Zeneca into its vaccine manufacturing site in Speke in 2024;
- **Investment Zone status will act as a clustering and networking programme for Life Sciences to more than double the size of the sector.** The Life Sciences Investment Zone has the potential to drive more than £800m of public, academic, and private sector investment and create 8,000 jobs. It will further scale out world leading capabilities and create new high-quality health and life science facilities, offering high quality accommodation to investors;

- **Convergence across LCR Freeport and Investment Zone.** LCR is one of only three UK places with both Investment Zone and Freeport status. The market for life sciences products will continue to scale exponentially, and so the Freeport plays an important role in supporting this growth through trade flexibilities – providing ease of access and efficient transit to markets for high quality life sciences products;
- **A strong NHS marketplace to drive innovations.** LCR hosts nine specialist NHS Trusts - the largest number outside London - with expertise in neurology (Walton Centre), children's health (Alder Hey); cardiology and respiration (Liverpool Heart and Chest); and Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, a central knowledge anchor. This critical mass is key to stimulating and supporting innovations across the local supply chain and driving health improvements.

### Inspiring Technology and Creative Spirit (Digital and Creative)

Digital capabilities and high-performance computing have positioned the City Region at the forefront of tech-led industry solutions. Key assets and expertise such as at Sci-Tech Daresbury and the Hartree National Centre for Digital Innovation, drive AI and data proficiencies, allowing businesses to acquire technical capability required to adopt digital technologies like supercomputing, data analytics, AI, Immersive Technology, and Quantum Computing. With nearly 4,000 digital and creative businesses employing 24,000 people in highly productive jobs, there is a strong network for further cluster development of highly innovative enterprises. Digital and Creative contributes £1.8bn to the City Region economy.

The cluster is powered by [LCR Connect](#), providing a 212km fibre backhaul network, gigabit capacity and capability to data hungry sectors. This will make LCR one of the most digitally connected places in the UK. Furthermore, the University of Liverpool is the UK's top-rated Computer Science department for 4\* and 3\* research, whilst Liverpool John Moores University's 'Live Lab' drives development and delivery of commercial and research projects via cutting-edge mixed-reality technologies.

As well as Sci-Tech Daresbury, the epicentre of the Digital and Creative sector is the Baltic Triangle, home to many innovative small companies, and there are emerging clusters developing across the City Region.

## The Opportunities

### Creative Content - driving convergence across technologies

- LCR has a strong gaming sector with major names including Sony PlayStation, Avalanche Studios and Universally Speaking. It has the talent, skills, suitable studio locations, and a strong supporting ecosystem;
- There is a national drive to grow creative industries by £50bn and support a million more jobs by 2030. The convergence of music and film production augmented by virtual realities sets LCR apart from other areas.

### Applied Tech: transcending multiple sectors to deliver scalable tech solutions

- A major advanced manufacturing industry, well-connected health sector and the more nascent emerging technologies in LCR (AI/Quantum) can respond to new Med Tech opportunities in a £500bn global market;
- The City Region is focusing on developing 'smart' approaches to digitally driven ports and logistics building on AI expertise;
- LCR has significantly developed its capability and offer in Fintech, WealthTech and LawTech – building on the strengths of its Financial, Professional and Business Services.

### Leading infrastructure to drive innovation, delivering national and global solutions

- LCR Connect is opening up connectivity across the City Region. This combines with world-leading high-performance computing and AI capabilities and a Civic Data Cooperative data-sharing platform, all of which are designed to transform and enable better health and social care. Together with the next stage development of 'Meta-Liverpool' - the world's first city-scale digital twinning and AI-enabled decision support platform - LCR can be a national digital transformation exemplar for showcasing a truly Smart City Region.

## 4 Convergence of Opportunities to Push Net Zero Boundaries

LCR's cluster strengths and opportunities are central in responding to the biggest global challenge of our time – the climate emergency. The City Region is at the forefront of innovation-led low carbon solutions across the economy; 140,000 'green' jobs are forecast by 2040.

The focus is to build on our clean energy and decarbonisation portfolio, and to support established and fledgling industries to accelerate change. Developing 'Climate Tech' clustering will inspire local innovation and advance the ecosystem for start-ups and local and regional supply chains, enabling transformation of LCR and the UK into a cleaner, greener economy.

### The Clean Energy Coast – Forging the Pathway towards Energy Security

Given the significant challenges around energy insecurity, price volatility and geopolitics, this is a crucial time to consider the need for joined up thinking to reduce demand, increase efficiency, and provide predictable sources of energy. We already have substantial regional offshore wind operable. The focus now is on supporting the growth of Hydrogen to replace natural gas, diesel, and petrol, and to bring a first-of-a-kind tidal range to the UK.



- **Mersey Tidal represents an opportunity for LCR to become the UK's de facto tidal cluster**, creating a major predictable energy source for the next century and thousands of jobs, with new skills, in the green economy;
- **Building out one of Europe's largest clusters of offshore wind farms and tripling the volume of wind energy by 2032**, generating capability in local supply chains which will grow across North Wales and the North West, directing offshore energy supply towards net zero projects;
- **HyNet and the Green Hydrogen opportunity**, a planned network of over 20 Green Hydrogen Hubs responding to market need and with an investment opportunity valued at up to £810m, combined with HyNet North West – the UK's leading industrial transport low decarbonisation project - to capture, store, produce and carbon hydrogen, in doing so supporting the UK Hydrogen Strategy.

### Industrial Decarbonisation – Local Solutions for Global Sustainable Growth

LCR is at the forefront of driving world class expertise and solutions to accelerate sustainability across the economy. In addition to hydrogen there are opportunities in several areas:

- **Glass Futures:** attracting innovators to the City Region, bridging the technology readiness level gap between research and commercial viability; driving decarbonisation for both glass technologies and wider foundational industries at a global scale;
- **Building a circular economy by converting waste into energy:** utilising the City Region's industrial and academic expertise in Sustainable Chemicals;
- **Port and Freeport opportunities driving logistics and maritime decarbonisation:** significant transport and logistics activity - alongside our major maritime and Freeport focus on innovation - presents opportunities for decarbonisation across supply chains, freight and marine.

## 5 Powering and Enabling Our Strengths

Innovation and cluster priorities do not work in isolation and there are strong synergies across other areas of the economy and the opportunities they provide.

### Oiling the Wheels of the Economy: Financial, Professional and Business Services

Financial, Professional and Business Services (FPBS) are intrinsic to driving the City Region's economy, with breadth and depth of expertise that transcends clusters and sectors. With one of the highest concentrations of financial services and wealth management companies outside of London, and expanding on strengths such as a Fintech proposition, FPBS has a distinctive offer that will continue to be at the forefront of driving and supporting LCR's economic ambitions: 9,500 companies employ 75,000 people across the City Region.

Net zero and the sustainability imperative cannot be achieved without climate and green financing. Applied tech is driving innovations that will allow the sector to drive broader digital revolution across the economy. In short, a strong FPBS sector in LCR means a strong economy. Supporting FPBS' continued growth therefore remains an important strategic focus.

## Building on our Position as the Pre-eminent Western Global Gateway to the UK Economy

The artery running through the City Region is the River Mersey. It remains as important today as ever, with the **Port Complex** a central economic engine.

The centrepiece is the **Port of Liverpool**, providing the quickest, most cost-effective route to major global markets and the best-connected terminal in the country. It is the **UK's third biggest port and main transatlantic gateway handling 45% of all US trade**. More than £1 billion of intermodal infrastructure investment and a new deep-water container terminal means faster global supply chain transit.

Combined with excellent logistics infrastructure, this critical hub is within four hours transit to more than 50% of UK manufacturers, and is complemented by an array of multi-gateway infrastructure assets alongside along the Mersey and across the City Region. Combined, this all provides the opportunity for speed to market.

## A Maritime Offer Key to the Future Prosperity of LCR and the UK

This connects directly into a buoyant and strong international maritime sector, built on heritage and innovation, supporting 8,500 jobs with a £2.7bn economic impact. LCR is home to a diverse range of world class companies providing national and global expertise in the ports industry (including 4 of the 6 world's largest shipping firms), marine engineering, leisure marine, and maritime professional services served by a strong regional cluster network. A dedicated Maritime Innovation Action Plan will further drive cutting edge activity across the cluster.

## Global Reach that Delivers Supply Chain Solutions for the UK

Taken together, LCR's location and assets are crucially important in responding to shifts in global supply chains and potential future energy insecurity. LCR's Port and Freeport, alongside a vibrant maritime presence, multi-modal/multi-gateway infrastructure assets, digital supply chain expertise, and proximity to manufacturing and logistics activity, all provide significant trade and efficient global transit that will benefit LCR, the north of England, and the UK. Building on this distinctive infrastructure and seizing the opportunities for maritime growth and innovation will be a key priority for driving economic prosperity.

## 6 Enabling Economic Opportunity: Connectivity, Vibrancy and Talent

Realising the scale of opportunities needs to be achieved with the right mix of enabling conditions as part of an integrated approach to wider economic development. This underpins the City Region's strategic, joined up approach to the economy.

### Investing and Innovating in Connecting People, Businesses and Communities

LCR Connect is a full-fibre city region network providing gigabit capacity and capability to data hungry sectors, ensuring that LCR is one of the most digitally connected City Region's in the UK. This is matched by ambitions to accelerate the delivery of a world-class, fully integrated transport network. A 76km Merseyrail network serves over 2.5m workers and continues to benefit from investment in stations and a £500m investment in new trains that are amongst the most modern and sophisticated in the country. LCR bus franchising will provide greater public control on setting fares and routes, meaning that more people and places will be better connected to areas of economic opportunity.

LCR secured £710m through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to build and improve services across the public transport network. Together with further devolution, this allows us to grow the network and deliver full affordable connectivity. Crucially, it enables strategic transport corridors and gives our place-based pipeline an opportunity to deliver transformational schemes, including for active travel and low carbon solutions.

## A Vibrant Place Where People Want to Visit and Live

The City Region is an exciting place to be with excellent quality of life. It is renowned for culture, creativity, and a unique sense of place. It welcomes 57m visitors per year and is the third most popular UK destination for international visitors - hosting major international events such as Eurovision has further cemented global status. Its importance as a destination is reflected in government designation as a *Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)* area.

There are also many high-quality neighbourhoods, and we are committed to accelerating delivery of new homes. This includes building on emerging market trends to widen choice and improve quality taking advantage of our unique urban offer to provide new types of housing; and driving change in areas which have potential to deliver long term improvement.

## Talent to Fuel the Knowledge Economy

A core priority is talent management through *development, attraction, and retention*. With a clear strategic focus on investments at scale to provide high-quality jobs, a distinctive quality of life offer, and a diverse housing market, the ingredients are in place. The pipeline is also there to ensure the sustainability of the talent pool. With access to a 3.9 million working-age population within one hour's drive, the City Region provides the economy with a skilled workforce and a thriving student population of 57,000, and over 250,000 within one hour. This is combined with nationally recognised teaching excellence at our universities, and through various learning routes provided by our further education colleges across the City Region.

The talent pipeline will be further strengthened through emphasis on *future focused skills* in line with transformational opportunities, and ensuring the labour market is ready for rapid changes including through AI.

## Breaking Down the Barriers to Talent and Supporting an Inclusive Economy

Talent is widespread, but opportunity is not. Addressing inequality and removing multiple barriers to prosperity is paramount. Ultimately, more people need to be engaged in work and in higher quality work. Our focus is improving educational attainment, broadening the apprenticeship offer, supporting people into employment, enabling progression across the skills continuum, and systemically improving health outcomes.

These are long-term challenges requiring long-term solutions that this Framework will integrate into – the [LCR Plan for Prosperity](#) sets out the priorities in detail, and policies such as the *Long-Term Skills Plan* will detail how we intend to deliver. An *Access to Opportunities Plan* has also been designed for the Investment Zone, which will be mainstreamed as a wider approach to supporting all residents to benefit from economic opportunity.

Enhancing social infrastructure and social capital will help support these objectives, underpinned by a vibrant social economy. We have already invested in Kindred, a vehicle providing bespoke finance and support for socially trading businesses and will build on this through a social economy clustering approach that fosters networks of social entrepreneurs.

## 7 Developing Economic Opportunities and Clusters

Only through an integrated approach and actions across economy, people, and place, can the City Region maximise its economic opportunities. The full Framework document sets out the types of actions that will be required as it is operationalised. It will be continually amended and added to, informing LCRCA's workstreams.

### Economy

- Develop further insights around market & supply chain opportunities, demand and requirements for cluster growth;
- Identify innovation cluster potential and delivering the LCR/ Innovate UK Action Plan;
- Actions to drive up business innovation culture across the value chain;
- Ensure that business support integrates effectively with innovation and skills support;
- Support foundational industries and the foundational economy to grow;
- Develop further strategic partnerships with larger companies, influencing them in their role as corporate anchor institutions;
- Strategic and targeted focus around infrastructure and commercial premises;
- Build the mechanisms to enhance business-led networks across key clusters;
- Explore where we can scale opportunities into propositions transcending the City Region.

### People

- Access to Opportunity across our economic strengths as a core and overarching theme;
- Alignment of FE and HEI provision against high-value economic opportunities;
- Place-based skills approaches based on inclusion and meeting future demand;
- Enable businesses to develop their own skills base through upskilling and reskilling;
- Strategic and targeted approach to technical and future focused skills, including AI;
- Aligned careers advice and alignment with commissioning programmes;
- Boost diversity to maximise our opportunities through proactive engagement with communities and businesses;
- Ensure digital inclusion so no one gets left behind in an ever-evolving digital world.

### Place

- Further increasing transport connectivity, including developing strategic transport corridors that link to key economic assets and clusters;
- Enhance housing offer and choice, through lobbying for devolved housing funding and positioning for further institutional investment;
- Link key economic opportunities to placemaking and regeneration, bringing employment closer to housing and communities, and uplifting localities and town centres that are in the proximity of key economic strengths;
- Determine opportunities and/or constraints to the physical development of clusters, working with partners towards innovative and long term solutions;
- Support the deployment of 5G infrastructure, an increasingly important enabling technology for certain sectors;
- Create the conditions for a high-speed/capacity, low-latency digital connectivity network, with the provision of digital infrastructure integrated across commercial premises, transport and regeneration.

