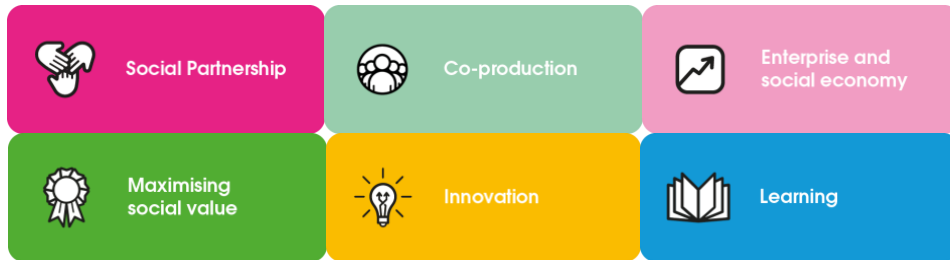




# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### COMMUNITY



## Liverpool City Council

### Eurovision in Liverpool: Cultural Events Connecting People and Places

Liverpool City Council has long recognised its cultural and creative sector as the beating heart of the city.

Major event programming is central to cultural provision, and Liverpool is a global leader in this area. A crucial element of its success has been recognising the need for such programming to build on, and foster, the social partnerships which exist between cultural organisations, artists, social enterprises, and communities to deliver improved outcomes for citizens.

Never has this been more evident than in May 2023, when Liverpool won the opportunity to host the Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine with a compelling, creative, empathetic and fun bid.

This wasn't the City Council's Eurovision, it was everyone's - residents, schools, community groups, businesses and stakeholders were encouraged to grab this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and make the most of it.

EuroFestival was a two-week cultural festival featuring 24 brand new commissions - 19 of which were collaborations between UK and Ukrainian artists – with the majority of activities being free to ensure there was no monetary barrier to being part of this experience.



Solidarity Disco Banquet, copyright Liverpool City Council

Along with this, Culture Liverpool commissioned more than 40 projects which would form part of EuroLearn – an education programme aimed at early years, primary, secondary and special education settings, offering a varied programme to ensure young people felt part of Eurovision. With three main strands of music, visual arts and storytelling, the creativity that emerged was unparalleled.

As part of EuroLearn, the Pysanka Egg project saw commissioned artists visiting primary schools across Liverpool and Wirral. They facilitated activities which would ultimately result in the design and creation of beautifully decorated large eggs – recreating a Ukrainian tradition - which went on display in a prominent city centre location.

But that wasn't all. A EuroStreet initiative saw communities across the region get involved, take part and deliver more than 60 celebratory Eurovision events from chess competitions (a nod to the popularity of the game in Ukraine) through to a Festival of Europe which celebrated the culture and heritage of all Eurovision nationalities. A Toxteth-based social enterprise, Squash Nutrition, came up with the innovative idea to host four 'Solidarity Disco Banquets' at different community venues. People were invited to cook Ukrainian dishes then eat together while being entertained by live Ukrainian music performances. It brought together different nationalities and ages in a unique and unforgettable experience - one attendee described it as "a priceless interaction".

Care homes across the Liverpool City Region also were on the receiving end of some Eurovision sparkle courtesy of NWoko Arts - a local collective which specialises in developing and performing theatre in community venues. They researched the history of Eurovision, then spent time with care home residents, engaging with those living with dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases and recording their memories of the competition and

of music. The result? A touring theatre show which was performed at local care homes 27 times across two weeks.



Eurovision Village, copyright Liverpool City Council

All this was the result of months of hard work by artists, musicians, poets and writers working to bring Eurovision to classrooms and streets, care homes, hospitals, parks, churches, village halls and refuges.

And if what was being commissioned and curated by Culture Liverpool wasn't enough, EuroGrants were introduced, which offered funding of up to £2,000 for community organisations to hold their events – whether it be street parties, fashion shows or even mini Eurovision contests.

The message was simple – when it came to Eurovision there were no barriers. And if you couldn't come to Eurovision, we'd bring it to you.

A comprehensive evaluation by external partners showed the impact. There was a £54million boost to the local economy and nearly half a million visitors. The EuroStreet and EuroLearn programmes engaged with 367 organisations and directly with 50,000 people, young and old – with the overall host city programme reaching 2 million people. Of those surveyed, 93 per cent of residents expressed pride in how Liverpool had staged the event, and businesses across the city reported a boost in profits in May.

It was without doubt a milestone moment in the City's cultural heritage, but it didn't end when that last sequin was swept up on 13 May 2023.





Children with Pysanka Eggs, copyright Liverpool City Council

The City Council is already looking at the legacy of this experience, how we can build on this success with a continued passion and commitment that genuinely hasn't waned since we were awarded the European Capital of Culture accolade more than 20 years ago. Our learning on this is invaluable, our social partnerships have been strengthened and our delivery and creativity pushed boundaries.

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