

Downtown Liverpool In Business

DLIB

DLIB – Reaching Businesses Nobody Else Can Reach

In 2004 Downtown Liverpool in Business (DLIB) has made a noise. In 2005 we will make a difference.

The case we have articulated since our official launch, that too much government in the city is stifling business growth and investment in Liverpool, is a view now shared by many leading companies, entrepreneurs, and indeed within the Merseyside public sector itself.

With a myriad of agencies to negotiate and deal with, potential investors are increasingly being turned off Liverpool, and recent developments on issues such as the proposed tram and the fourth grace, have played a part in knocking the confidence of the private sector.

Of course, there have been successes, and DLIB welcomes these. Grosvenor's plans for Paradise Street will give Liverpool a retail centre to be proud of; the regeneration of Princes Dock, with quality residential and hotel developments on their way; and the removal at long last of the street traders from our city centre, are initiatives worthy of praise.

But the last thing Liverpool's Council and the organisations that run the city needs is another private sector cheerleader. What Liverpool's public sector needs – and what DLIB can be- is a critical friend.

We represent a constituency of businesses that needs Liverpool to succeed because of the commitment they have already made to the city. Our corporate sponsors alone have invested over £500 million in Liverpool – without grant assistance or state subsidy!

This constituency of wealth creators and entrepreneurs is desperate for Liverpool to economically succeed, and it increasingly wants to have a say in the future of a city in which it has risked fortunes.

Surely, if Liverpool's public agencies are genuine in their statements that they want the city to be 'business friendly', they will engage with DLIB, which can act as a bridge to a private sector that, quite frankly, the public sector on Merseyside has never managed to reach.

It may not be as comfortable or as cosy as relationships that currently exist. But we will criticise constructively, give credit where it is due and challenge some of the less ambitious thinking that we believe is hindering Liverpool's progress.

Is Merseyside's public sector up for that type of mature dialogue and debate – or will all critics, no matter how much they have invested in the city, continue to be dismissed as whinges and moaners?

We will wait and see, but in the meantime DLIB will campaign for streamlined Liverpool government – and we will publicly and effectively express the views of our growing membership.