

'It's a chance to tell our city's story': How hosting Eurovision could boost Liverpool's economy

Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest next year could have a major impact on Liverpool's economy, experts have said.

The city is battling it out with Glasgow for the right to hold the next edition after making the final two, seeing off competition from Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield and Manchester.

Ukrainian entry Kalush Orchestra triumphed at the 2022 competition in Turin, Italy, but the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which produces the annual event, decided the show cannot be safely held in the country following Russia's invasion.

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A final decision is expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

After Liverpool made the final two, BusinessLive spoke to business and music experts to find out what the economic impact could be for the city if it emerges victorious.

Bill Addy, CEO of Liverpool BID Company, said hosting Eurovision would have a "huge impact on the city" and would be a "chance to tell our city's story".

He added: "We are delighted to lead the private sector response to this bid as we know how important it is to the businesses of the city, which is why we have committed our

resources to support its success.



Liverpool has made the final two as the Eurovision Song Contest looks for its UK host city
(Image: Liverpool ECHO/Colin Lane)

“We know that major events in the city have an impact on local business and have a positive impact on the economy – we’re seeing that with the Labour Conference this week but we also see it with festivals as well as concerts. Eurovision isn’t a one off event, it’s a week long festival bringing a small army of musicians, artists, a creative community and, of course, fans.

“It would have a huge impact on the city, from filling hotel rooms to restaurant tables. The increase in footfall converts to spend in the city. So part of the work you do is showing everyone what the city has to offer.

“It’s also about profile. Eurovision has a huge global audience and it’s an opportunity to show people around the world what a rich, diverse, welcoming, inclusive, colourful and musical city Liverpool is.

“If even 1% of the 160 million viewers who watch Eurovision on TV and online decide they want to see Liverpool for themselves that has a major impact on our visitor economy. It is a chance to tell our city’s story, to remind everyone from tourists to investors, what Liverpool has to offer.”

Hosting Eurovision would be a “great opportunity for the city to further demonstrate its credentials as a global city of music”, Liverpool Chamber CEO Paul Cherpeau added.

He also said that the “prominence and profile of Eurovision is extraordinary and would provide our visitor economy and cultural businesses with a substantial boost”.



The UK will instead host the competition on behalf of Ukraine (Image: Yui Mok/PA Wire)

Dr Mike Jones, reader in music industry at the University of Liverpool, said the city is a “perfect location” because of

its strong musical heritage, the sense of the need to support and include people of all ages in music-making”.

He added: “What is notable about the UK shortlist of two for the choice of Eurovision host (considerations of Brexit aside) is that Glasgow and Liverpool are, respectively, UNESCO Cities of Music for their respective countries.

“Liverpool became the English UNESCO City of Music in 2015. The honour was a deserved one – not only has the city produced more number one hit singles than any other, but it is also home to the UK’s oldest symphony orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (RLPO). In its turn, the RLPO refuses to live in and on its past and is an active force for music education in the city.

“Overall, Liverpool is a perfect location for Eurovision because of this activity, this sense of the need to support and include people of all ages in music-making. For example, the University of Liverpool’s Music department has grown exponentially over the past few years, almost tripling in size and offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching (including an MA in the Beatles: Music Industry and Heritage).



The UK was named the Eurovision Song Contest host nation after Sam Ryder came second in the 2022 contest

(Image: Dominic Lipinski/PA)

“LIPA (based at Paul McCartney’s old school) is internationally known as an intensive hub for the career development of young musicians and Liverpool Community College is equally focused on supporting this development for local teenagers.

“One of the factors that led to Liverpool’s decline as a port city was that it is on the wrong side of the UK for trade with Europe.

“EC entry gave the Port of London, Dover and Southampton advantages that Liverpool could not enjoy. But, for all the lack of trade in goods with Europe, Liverpool enjoys a trade in tourism that Southampton could not even dream of!

“Before it was interrupted by the pandemic, Beatles tourism to Liverpool was at an all-time high and this is likely to recover over the next few years, with the city firmly on the map as a tourist destination.

“The M&S Bank Arena, opened in 2008, would host the Eurovision contest on a waterfront that seems always to be in a process of becoming more striking and more interesting – a perfect location within a UNESCO City of Music.”

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