



**LCRCONNECT**

PART OF THE FASTER BRITAIN NETWORK



# Annual Review

Autumn 2023

# Executive Summary

LCR Connect is our 214km full-fibre, ultrafast, gigabit capable network infrastructure across the region.

We wanted to invest in the digital infrastructure of our region, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of opportunities in digital technology and the next industrial revolution.

LCR Connect is a high-speed, high-capacity fibre network that interconnects key strategic locations, including our town centres and major business parks, with national and international digital networks.

It's an initiative that will attract inward investment and benefit everyone residing, working, and visiting the Liverpool City Region.

Sections of our network are already live, with completion expected in late 2023. Already serving business customers and community organisations, users of the service are already seeing the impact.

It is fostering local growth and providing opportunities for innovation. We recently broadcasted Eurovision to a global audience thanks to the power of this network, and on a daily basis we are connecting the region's most exciting digital hubs and businesses, while also supporting the educational needs of our youth.

Once finished, it will empower businesses, investors, universities, schools, hospitals, residents, and students across all six local authorities to access cutting-edge, future-proof, and cloud-enabled technologies.

This infrastructure will position our City Region's businesses at the forefront of numerous expanding sectors, driving both business growth and investment. By connecting all six boroughs within the region, Liverpool City Region will establish itself as a leader in digital connectivity.



# Statistics

## LCR Connect in numbers

### The Build

Investment: equity  
invested across the  
joint venture

**£32m**

Spend on Build  
(as of May 2023)

**over £22m**

Network length at  
completion

**214km**

**96km**

of new build

**118km**

existing infrastructure

**Over 66km**

of new duct network  
completed

**135km**

of network 'cabled'

Overall

**414km**

of fibre optic cable in  
the ground

# Statistics

## LCR Connect in numbers

### Supporting people and businesses

Now accessible to  
**8500** businesses

Local business  
involved in build **15**

Businesses connected  
**250**

Regional  
technology  
partners **25**

Total people working on the build project  
across the region **138**

**7** apprenticeships

**2** student  
interns

**26** local  
recruits

### Supporting our communities

**13** Careers Carousels  
meeting Year 6  
pupils

Over **1100**  
students reached through  
career events

**19** schools  
visited

Over **100** staff hours  
volunteered

**1** enterprise  
advisor

**82** employees  
attended  
EDI training

**4** mental health awareness sessions

**6** work experience placements

**50** refurbished and donated laptops

# Network



- |    |                                     |    |  |
|----|-------------------------------------|----|--|
| 1A | Daresbury to Astmoor                | 2B | Ormskirk PIA to Southport                          |
| 1B | Astmoor to Runcorn                  | 2C | Ormskirk PIA                                       |
| 1C | Runcorn to Widnes                   | 3B | Wirral, Rock Ferry to Bromborough                  |
| 1D | Bold to Haydock                     | 3F | Birkenhead North Link                              |
| 1E | Haydock to St Helens                | 4B | Knowsley Business Park, South                      |
| 1F | Halton, Link to Widnes              | 4D | Link to Sefton Meadows, Maghull                    |
| 1I | Huyton to Liverpool                 | 4G | Liverpool City Centre, Moorfields to Liverpool One |
| 1J | Liverpool, Wavertree to Hunts Cross | 4H | Liverpool City Centre - Chinatown                  |
| 1K | Liverpool, Speke to Halton          | 4I | Liverpool City Centre - Myrtle Street to Edge Hill |
| 1L | Halton to Widnes                    |    |  |

# Build

The build is now well underway, with completion expected by late 2023.

Building an ambitious fibre optic network infrastructure to serve the businesses and communities across the city region has been an immense undertaking bringing together the combined strengths of the three partners, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, NGE, and ITS.

To deliver the 214km of dedicated fibre network for business across the region to access high capacity, highspeed communications and internet feeds over 94km of trench excavation and duct install will ultimately be delivered to accommodate fibre cable for this network and provide space for thousands of additional fibres into the future. Some 120km of existing duct systems will have LCR Connect cable pulled through and in total 414km of fibre optic cable will be connected through 25 street cabinets, 2 BT exchanges and 2 data centres in the city region to create a resilient network.

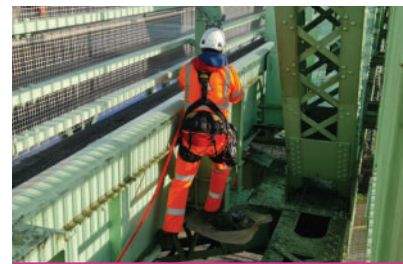
16 subcontracted organisations employing some 108 staff have been engaged in works on the streets of the city region overcoming a range of challenges. Excavation uncovering buried tramlines telling of the city's historic transport, Victorian drains and water systems not previously identified on modern utility maps, congested fibre network ducts, a telling reminder of the importance of providing greater capacity for the future.

Working with councils to overcome logistical challenges arising from key annual events as well as the advent of Eurovision coming to the city of Liverpool. Planning to minimise disruption to traffic and residents in the areas we excavate and build.

## Silver Jubilee Bridge

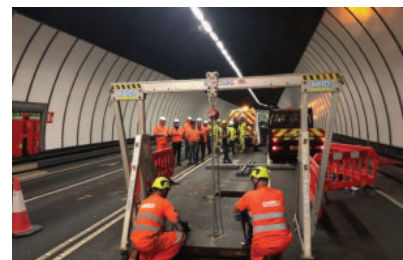
This iconic Runcorn bridge across the river Mersey carries our fibre cable enabling links from Southport and Liverpool across to Daresbury Science Park and points in between.

The logistics of securing duct to carry the cable were challenging and involved complex rigging.



## Mersey Tunnels

The LCR Connect network fibres run through both Mersey tunnels connecting the Wirral to Liverpool city centre and ensuring a resilient network.



# A network for business

There are currently 250 connected businesses across the LCR Connect network, via 105 customers.

Economic modelling has indicated that by becoming one of the most digitally-enabled areas in the UK, there will be as much as a £1 billion boost to the local economy.

Here's a glimpse into the areas where we're making an impact already.

## Taking Eurovision to a global audience

Organisers of the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest needed specialised circuits in the venue, points to hand off to in London, as well as a level of cyber protection to deal with potential distributed-denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks.

Utilising LCR Connect, the solution ensured the event was broadcast to the largest global audience in the contest's history, providing connectivity to the world's media, audience members, and visitors in the city.

That encompassed completely diverse routes from the M&S Bank Arena in Liverpool to independent locations in London, where internet traffic was handed off to the BBC and the European Broadcasting Union, allowing the show to be beamed around the world.



# A network for business

## Supporting schools on their road to outstanding

School children attending Church Drive Primary School on the Wirral have had their 'learning experience enriched creating a myriad of opportunities'.

One of seven schools that form Oak Trees Multi-Academy Trust, Church Drive Primary is achieving 100Mbps speeds through its broadband connection, nearly three times faster than the service it has replaced for download and more than ten times faster for the upload.

“As a school, we are very keen to make the best use of technology to enhance and improve the learning opportunities for our children. Access to a fast, reliable internet connection has now become a vital part of the curriculum. This new broadband service has transformed the enjoyment and ease of access to the many online resources and opportunities that enrich the day-to-day learning of our children. It also means that our teaching staff no longer have to implement 'plan B' which was a regular occurrence when our old broadband service couldn't keep up with demand.”

**Joanna Jones,**  
Headteacher at Church Drive Primary School



## Enabling world-class research and supercomputing

Sci-Tech Daresbury needed resilient, scalable high-capacity services to underpin its world-class facilities and support the growing demands of the businesses located on the site.

The campus doubled its capacity and future-proofed connectivity for more than 150 science and technology businesses and it now has the inbuilt flexibility to upgrade its resilient, multi-gigabit connections at very short notice, delivering a solution that will support growth as the campus continues to develop.

“World-class connectivity is critical to underpinning the needs of these organisations to support the demands of the often business-critical work they are undertaking which tends to produce extensive amounts of data that needs to be processed and shared quickly and securely.”

**John Downes,**  
Chief Executive Officer of Langtree and  
Director of Sci-Tech Daresbury





# Social Value

Positive social impact and supporting digital inclusion are founding principles of LCR Connect, delivering authentic outcomes across the City Region.

## Supporting the next generation schools

Through Career Carousels in St Helens at various primary schools, helping students understand different roles, and raise awareness of local businesses for future careers; to raise aspirations

We've delivered mock interviews at schools including in Runcorn and Liverpool. We've also undertaken street works safety talks, delivered to junior schools close to where our operational works have been undertaken, taking the opportunity to explain our fibre network and the associated jobs.

## Supporting girls in STEM

Working with 'Innovate Her', we're proud to be sponsoring Kings Leadership Hawthorns, Bootle, helping more youngsters embark on STEM subjects and digital, highlighting careers pathways and raising aspirations.



## Supporting digital inclusion

The LCR Connect Social Value Fund was launched to help drive digital inclusion and support communities across the city region.

As part of its first award, VOLA, a consortium of Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) service providers, has received £5,000 for the refurbishment of 50 laptops donated to the charity by Jaguar Land Rover.

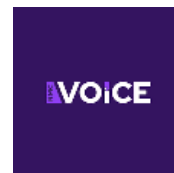
## Supporting makers and artists

We're helping social enterprise Make CIC who, for the last decade, has been helping to support artists, makers, and small businesses by providing space, specialised facilities, mentoring and classes to benefit local communities across the Liverpool City Region.

To underpin this hub of creativity and innovation, LCR Connect is providing gigabit-capable connectivity to five of its locations across the City Region as part of the LCR Connect Social Value Fund.



# Collaborating and connecting: who we're working with



Sign up for updates and to  
check your business postcode

