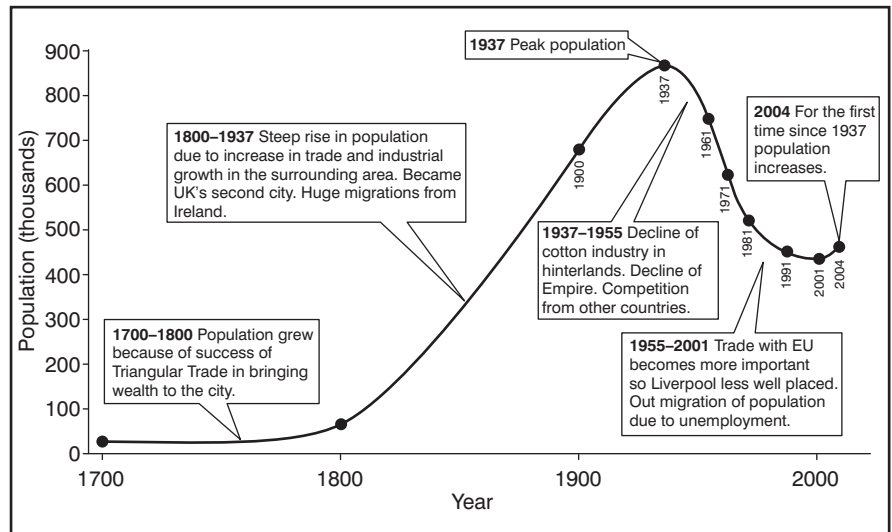


## REDEVELOPMENT OF AN INNER CITY AREA – LIVERPOOL

### Introduction

Liverpool began as a small fishing port on the Mersey estuary but grew rapidly from 1700 as a result of the ‘Triangular Trade’. Manufactured goods were exported to West Africa, where they were exchanged for slaves. These slaves were then taken to the Americas and the ships returned to Great Britain with goods such as sugar cane, raw cotton and rum. Port industries based on these imports grew, an example being the Tate & Lyle sugar refinery. The slave trade was abolished in 1807 but the city continued to grow as a major port for trading with the Americas. It was also important as an emigration gateway for people wishing to leave the country and settle in Australia and the USA. This was especially true for the Irish

Figure 2: Liverpool’s population, 1700–2004



during and after the Potato Famines of the nineteenth century. Flowing in the opposite direction have been

migrations of Chinese, African Caribbeans and people from the Asian sub-continent.

Figure 1: Liverpool and the city centre area

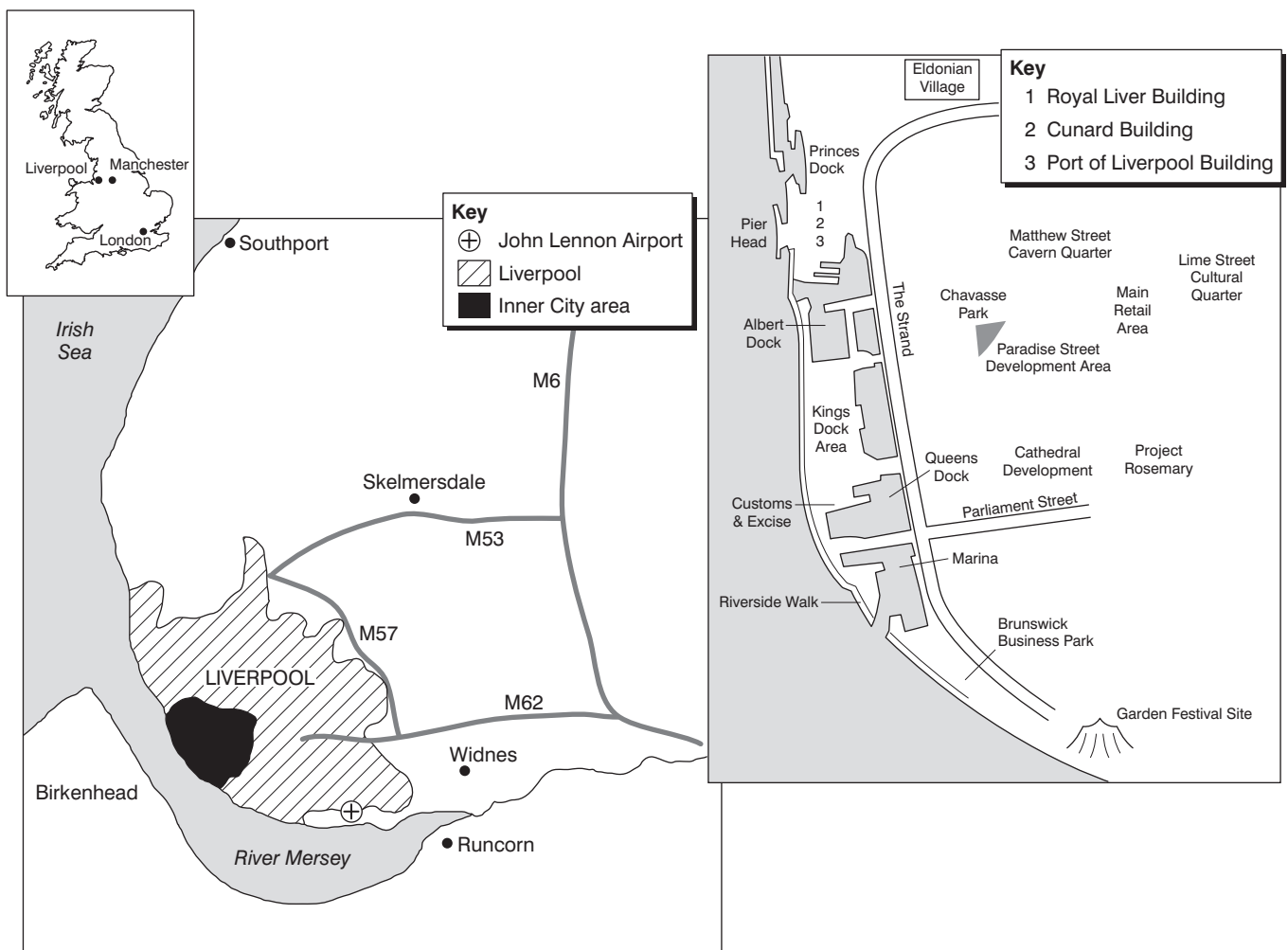
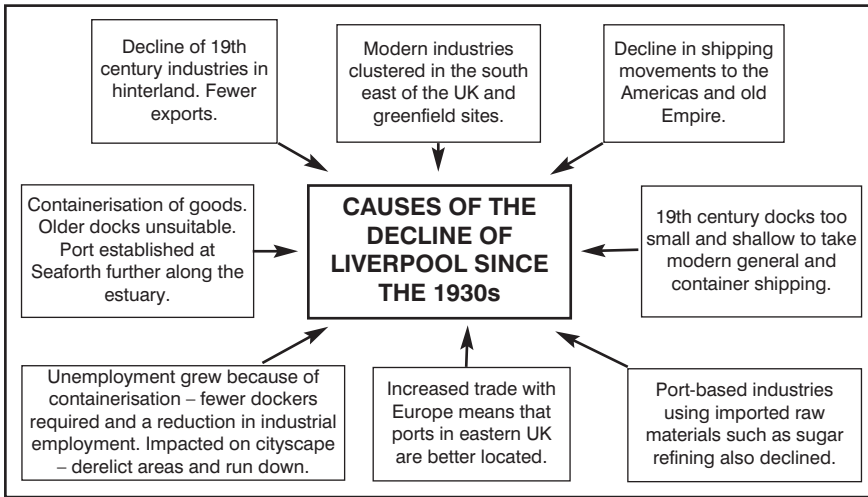


Figure 3: Causes of the decline of Liverpool since the 1930s

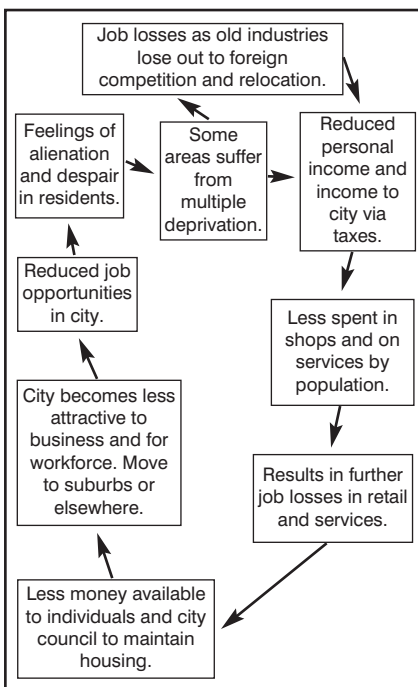


During the 19th century the city prospered; this is reflected in the many magnificent buildings to be found in the city centre, such as St. George’s Hall and Lime Street Station. By then, Liverpool was the second city of the British Empire, after London. The city’s population continued to grow, reaching its peak in 1937 (Figure 2), from when it declined – a process which is only now beginning to reverse. Industrial decline began earlier in the 20th century, linked to the decline of the old 19th-century industries, mainly due to competition from abroad. Figure 3 shows the main causes of decline in Liverpool during the 20th century.

**Results of the decline**

By 1981 the city of Liverpool was in serious decline. This was evidenced by

Figure 4: Cycle of deprivation



the abandoned, derelict docks, most of which were silted up and unusable. Much of the housing that remained consisted of 19th-century back-to-back terraces in poor condition. Where these had been demolished, largely as a result of the clearance of bomb-damaged areas after World War Two, they had been replaced by 1960s tower blocks. These were shoddily built and soon themselves required full refurbishment due to major problems of damp and the use of poor building materials. In the 1970s Liverpool’s population continued to decline so there was less housing need and many of the tower blocks were demolished in the 1980s.

Figure 4 outlines the effects of a cycle of deprivation. Unemployment grew as the work in the docks dried up, as did the jobs in the port industries. This led to feelings of alienation and hopelessness. By the early 1980s the UK was once again in recession and all these feelings of resentment blew up in the hot summer of 1981 into the Toxteth Riots, where Liverpoolians of mainly West Indian extraction fought running battles with the police. This action highlighted the problems of inner city Liverpool, which was now one of the poorest cities of Europe along with Naples, and spurred the Conservative government into action.

**Early regeneration**

**1. Top down approach**

Following the 1981 riots the Merseyside Development Corporation was created (the first Urban Development Corporation outside London) with the aim of improving life in Liverpool, including the renovation of the central dockland area. Because it is driven by the government, this is often referred to as

a ‘top-down approach’. The following are important examples in Liverpool of this approach.

- 1984 The International Garden Festival, held on previously contaminated land in the dockland area. It provided the money to clear derelict and contaminated land and offered a high-profile event to attract new investors. It was partially successful as it created a more attractive Mersey frontage but did not attract much inward investment.
- 1988 The redevelopment of the Albert Dock. This was the MDC’s flagship development and involved the complete renovation of this Grade 1 port complex – the largest in the UK. It provided quality apartments with river views and city centre living alongside prestige office space and television studios. On the ground level are a number of shopping outlets aimed at the tourist as well as the Tate Liverpool art gallery, the Maritime Museum and the ‘Beatles’ Story’. The residential accommodation has encouraged the middle classes back into what was a largely empty section of the city’s central area. Today it is an important tourist attraction, with 6 million tourists visiting the Dock every year. However, apart from improving the visual appearance of the area it has not provided much improvement in the quality of life for the local people of Toxteth, who cannot afford the apartments and for whom there are very few suitable jobs within the redeveloped dock.
- 1988 Brunswick Business Park was created within the dock area. It created a good quality landscaped business environment with river frontage, adjacent to the city centre and having access to a reliable workforce. Industries that are mainly light and footloose, such as media, telecommunications and packaging, were attracted to this location.
- Also in 1988, the Marina was developed providing high quality middle class homes near to the city centre and with adjacent moorings and yacht club if required.
- 1993 A new office development for the Littlewoods chain of stores opened and the Customs & Excise VAT headquarters was set up. Both of these provided a range of office jobs for the people of Liverpool, but still very little for the unskilled or semi-skilled worker.

## 2. Bottom up approach

A ‘bottom-up approach’ is where redevelopment or action is begun by the people who live and work in an area.

- 1989 The Eldonian Village was created. It is a new-build housing co-operative for the less well off, situated in Vauxhall near the city centre, which was an area of poor housing conditions. Major factory closures such as the Tate & Lyle sugar refinery meant high levels of unemployment, but there was a strong sense of community. The city council wanted to relocate people who were living in poor quality housing but they refused, preferring to stay in the area and have new housing built there where all their friends and connections were. Eventually it was agreed and the people worked with architects to create the living space they needed. The first phase consisted of 145 homes to rent which were a mixture of one, two and three-bedroom bungalows, houses with between two and four bedrooms and some special needs housing. The homes were well built and set at angles so that every home was overlooked by another as a form of crime prevention. Facilities include a village hall, sports centre and a home for the elderly. Today the community is thriving and expanding, with a waiting list of hundreds who

wish to live there. It has won awards for its design and now privately owned housing has been built adjacent to it because of what was started by the co-operative, to create a pleasant residential city centre area.

- The Cathedral Development. The Anglican cathedral is situated in Toxteth and the Dean of the Cathedral wanted to try and improve conditions in this inner city area of multiple deprivation. In the late 1980s a small-scale housing development was created using semi-derelict land around the cathedral and providing homes for cathedral staff, students and those needing low rent social housing. Offices and a conference centre were also built, visually improving the area and providing some limited employment.
- Half a mile east of the cathedral, Project Rosemary was built on land previously occupied by contaminated railway sidings. This was a partnership of government funding, Liverpool University and the local health authority. A new hospital for women and babies was built, a new hall of residence for the university, some new housing and a factory producing quality cake decorating materials which provided 200 jobs in an area of high unemployment.

government departments. The aim was to use local knowledge to try and drive the economy forward and there had to be some representation from the local community in order for a project to be supported financially.

In 1993, the city of Liverpool still had many areas of deprivation. Liverpool workers only earned 75% of the EU average, which triggered Objective 1 funding for the city, which aims to reduce the disparity between the areas of the EU. The grant was £630 million over six years, with EU funding being matched by the UK government. Some was spent on retraining workers for jobs in IT and the service industries whilst other funds were spent on providing capital for new businesses. One of the areas that received funding was the Rope Walk area, which is now a lively area of bars, restaurants and clubs for the young professionals who have been tempted back into the city centre by the range of waterfront and other accommodation on offer. This area also has the oldest Chinese community in the UK, whose presence is announced via the largest Chinese arch in Europe.

Of the service industries, tourism is the most important for the city. Liverpool has more museums and galleries than any other British city outside London. Eight of the museums are classified as national museums and have free entry, which is a pulling point for visitors. The Beatles continue to be an international attraction, with the Beatles’ Story exhibition in the Albert Dock. The Matthew Street area where the Cavern nightclub was situated has been revamped and is now an attractive part of the city.

## Situation at the end of the 20th century

At the end of the 20th century, although Liverpool still had multiple problems and was still losing population, a start had been made on breaking the cycle of deprivation, and positive changes were occurring (Figure 5).

In 1991 City Challenge was launched with money from several

Figure 5: Breaking the cycle

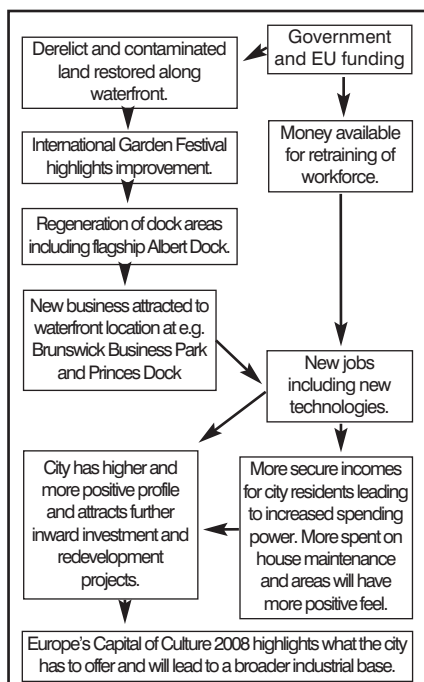


Figure 6: Quality of life indicators for Dingle Ward (Toxteth) Liverpool and the UK – (2001 National Census)

Factor	Dingle	Liverpool	UK
%Unemployed	5.4	6.0	3.4
% Permanently sick/disabled	12.6	11.4	5.5
% No qualification	40.2	37.8	29.1
% With no car	53	48.3	26.8
%No central heating	21.8	27	8.5
%Owner occupied housing	49.8	52.6	68.9
% Lone parent household with children	13.5	11.5	6.5



## Recent regeneration plans

Liverpool still has areas where the quality of life is below the UK average and this is especially true of the inner city areas. Figure 6 shows some quality of life indicators, compared with Liverpool as a whole and the UK.

In 1999 Liverpool Vision was created, which is an urban regeneration company whose initial funding is from the government. Their aim is to lead and co-ordinate inward investment for Liverpool. Between 2003 and 2008 over £2 billion of investment is expected in Merseyside as a whole within the Strategic Regeneration Framework. The following schemes are planned or already underway:

- The Waterfront including the Pier Head and the Albert Dock area is Liverpool's flagship regeneration area and has been designated a World Heritage Site. Further work to enhance its attraction is planned. The Pier Head is the front entrance to the city and is already important for ferry services. Its facilities are to be expanded to take cruise ships wanting to stop at the historic location. The lower floors of the 'Three Graces' (the Liver, Cunard and Port of Liverpool buildings) are to be converted from office space to more tourist-friendly uses to make the waterfront area seem more lively. There are also controversial plans for a modern 'Fourth Grace' building. The waterfront location is to be enlivened with more water features such as jets and fountains, as well as restaurants on the River Mersey itself. The Princes Dock is to have further prestige office developments and the Kings Dock area will be the focal point for the Capital of Culture celebrations. It will have conference and exhibition centres as well as hotels, apartments, open space and a central piazza to further enhance the appearance of the former docks and to provide additional employment opportunities.
- A new stretch of canal is planned to link the terminus of the Leeds and Liverpool canal at Stanley Dock with the attractions at the Albert Dock. It will act as an additional tourist and business attraction.

- An area around Paradise Street and Chavasse Park is Europe's largest retail-led regeneration scheme. It will have a mix of retail outlets including a John Lewis department store plus residential units and two hotels.
- In the heart of Liverpool is the Cultural Quarter, including buildings such as St George's Hall and Lime Street Station. The modern station is the public transport gateway to the city and its frontage is being redesigned to add to the appeal of the area.
- The City Centre Movement Strategy has been set up with the aim of making the city accessible for all and with good pedestrian connections which are safe and green. In 2007 the Merseytram will be introduced, 50 years after the last tram ran in the city. A new park and ride scheme is planned to be situated near the M57, with electric buses forming the connection with the city centre.

These and other regeneration schemes are already improving the visual look, the air quality and housing and open space provision of the city centre.

## Capital of Culture 2008

Liverpool aims to celebrate the culture and the people of the city and in so doing raise the profile of the area. The central theme is 'The World in One City'. This will help attract further funding and continue the city's regeneration. Tourism will increase – both national and international – as people become more aware of the city and what it has to offer. John Lennon airport is growing and likely to expand further due to the publicity associated with the Capital of Culture designation and will add to the general appeal for

businesses who might locate in or near the city centre. Being the Capital of Culture is expected to:

- create 14,000 new jobs
- attract an extra 1.7 million tourists over the year
- encourage £2 billion worth of investment.

Already some impacts can be seen. House prices have risen, even in previously undesirable areas such as Toxteth. Coutts Bank, the bank for the wealthy, now has offices in Princes Docks and whereas in 1993 fewer than 4,000 people lived in the city centre, now there are over 10,000, mainly living in the redeveloped middle class dock areas – a good example of reurbanisation.

Liverpool's population in 2004 recorded an increase for the first time since 1937 (see Figure 2). It has large universities and an associated high tech sector, a successful and increasing range of retail areas, several important annual festivals such as the Matthew Street Music Festival, world class museums and galleries and a buzzing night life. It would seem that Liverpool has a bright and buoyant future, with its heart still based around the original reason for its existence, the River Mersey.

## FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Using an example you have studied, assess the extent to which inner city redevelopment has slowed the impact of centrifugal forces within the city.
2. To what extent has the redevelopment of inner city Liverpool improved the quality of life for its residents?
3. How successful is waterfront regeneration in encouraging the economic growth of a port city?
4. To what extent can the redevelopment of inner city Liverpool be regarded as sustainable?