

JOINING THE DOTS

IRELAND & THE UK

Under the 38th British-Irish Council (BIC) summit's theme of sustainable growth and regeneration, the Joining the Dots programme (JtD), initiated by the British Embassy in Cork City and facilitated by Connected Places Catapult (CPC), is a great example of how city-to-city dialogue can strengthen economic links between regions of the UK and Ireland and foster growth.

Until now, JtDs civic engagement included regions in England, Northern Ireland, and engagement from Welsh businesses. Taking JtD to the next level, Connected Places Catapult wants to extend its programme to places across the whole of the UK.

BIC delegates are invited to reflect on the successes of previous JtD events and the considerable benefits arising from the inclusion of other towns and cities in Wales, Scotland, and the Crown Dependencies in the JtD programme, should those regions wish to take part.

CONTEXT

- 'Joining the Dots' was launched in 2018 with then Tánaiste Simon Coveney to promote economic links between cities and regions of the UK and Ireland and to develop an ongoing programme of dialogue, sharing best practice across regions and learning from each other.
- Its aim is to bring city leaders together to build connections around the shared challenges and opportunities and areas of economic strength for the businesses in the local regions by creating a safe space for confidential discussions.
- Connected Places Catapult facilitated events in Coventry/Birmingham, Limerick, Galway, Dublin, and Belfast to share common agendas.
- In March 2022 as part of a Mayoral Mission led by Andy Burnham from Greater Manchester (GMCA) and Steve Rotherham from Liverpool City region (LCR), Connected Places Catapult delivered the first in-person 'Joining the Dots' event since the pandemic.



- The focus of discussions included sharing lessons and plans in response to Covid and dealing with the War in Ukraine. A masterclass on LCR Plan for prosperity and GMCA Innovation economy strategy were shared with the group.
- Building on these successful events, positive feedback, and at the request of attendees. Connected Places Catapult and FCO agreed to continue to expand on the programme: Themes that the regions wanted to explore include Inclusive Innovation and Community Wealth Building, Foreign Direct Investment, Skills Development, Culture and Place, Climate, Net Zero and Housing.

PARTICIPATING PLACES (TO BE EXTENDED OR REPLICATED)

- **UK:** Liverpool, Manchester, West Yorkshire, West Midlands, Belfast, Derry/Londonderry.
- **Ireland:** Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick.

IMPACTS

Belfast Inclusive Innovation master class (October 2022)

- 28 attendees including Council and City officers representing Liverpool, Belfast, Derry, Cork, Limerick, Galway.
- Case Studies presentation showed how Kindred from Liverpool City region supports socially traded organisations (STO) to start up and grow. Over two years it has invested £2million to 47 STOs.
- Among other successes, one of these projects, “Future Yard” from the Creative Leisure and Hospitality sector, has created 48 jobs and has turnover of £350,000.
- A Belfast skill-up pilot took 20 unemployed people (some 2/3rd generation unemployed) trained and supported them through a 16-week course whilst ensuring continuation of universal credit.
- As a result, 17 participants were offered jobs with wages ranging from £30-40k in the coding and tech industry.
- Connected Places Catapult are now working with both Case Studies to accelerate their development and launch specific place-based versions across member cities to scale up the impact.

Forward Look: The next six months

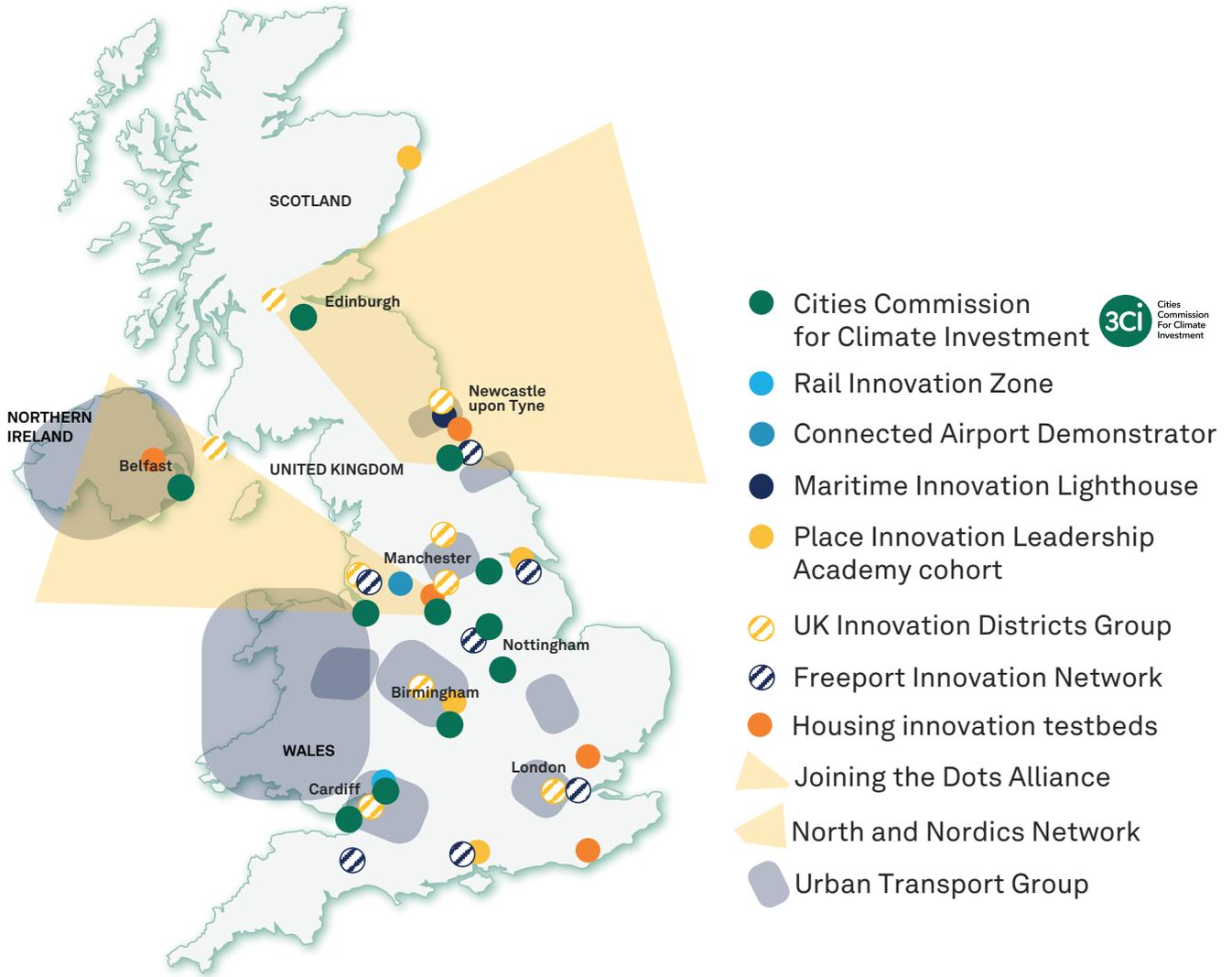
- **2nd November:** Collective steering group across UK and Ireland.
- **1st December:** Changing Nature of Inward Investment Master Class, Manchester inviting academics and presenting leading national case studies from the UK and Ireland.
- **January 2023:** Place and Culture, Liverpool/Birmingham/Leeds (City of Culture 2023).
- **March 2023:** Sharing best practice, impact event, Cork/TBC.

Developing the programme and approach

- Use the Connected Places Catapult network to extend this programme to other locations across the UK and Ireland.
- The self determined self directed collaborative approach to other communities and funding areas
- Conducting impact assessments and securing funding to ensure its continuation and key projects provide a legacy.

APPENDIX A

CONNECTED PLACES CATAPULT: WHERE ARE WE ENGAGING?



**WE ARE ACTIVE ACROSS THE UK SPARKING
THE UK'S INNOVATION POTENTIAL**



NB. This map only shows core funded activity. Commercial and CR&D funded projects are also underway across the UK.

