Mersey Maritime Face To Face meeting 6th November 2018.

On Tuesday 6th November the Chairman attended the breakfast meeting at Mersey Maritime in Birkenhead.

The speaker for this event was Steve Rotheram the Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City region. His attendance had attracted a large audience which necessitated a larger than normal supply of bacon and sausage sandwiches, croissants and tea and coffee.

Steve started his presentation by talking about the devolution agreement between central government and the six local authorities in the Merseyside area. Certain powers had been devolved to this area which came with certain budgets and resources.

He then spoke about some of the plans for the areas that were being considered. Amongst those were connecting the transatlantic fibre optic cable which 'comes ashore' in Southport with one of the largest computers in the country at Holton in Cheshire. This would then be used to provide extra services on the new Merseyrail trains.

A plan to harness the tidal range was being considered in the form of a tidal lagoon, having learnt the lessons of south Wales.

The opportunity to raise the level of training was also a priority. At the moment he told the audience that Merseyside has the lowest pass rate for NVQ level 3 in the country. Not a statistic he is proud of and is determined to change. He believes a local strong skill base is the foundation for a strong local economy.

Other plans afoot are £20 million for a new cruise liner terminal and the building of 1 or 2 new Mersey ferries.

He then took questions from the floor which included tolls on the Mersey Gateway bridge and the tunnels. His answer to that was the bridge was built on a business plan which included tolls and tolls are required to maintain the aging tunnels.

Asked about overall strategy he replied he had strategies as thick as an Argus catalogue what he wanted now from his team was delivery plans.

Having completed the Q&A session he left quickly with his team for what was obviously going to be another busy day.