

## Liverpool set for regeneration breakthrough

AN AREA OF inner-city Liverpool is set to be valued as part of a trial to find out what Site Value Rating (SVR) would mean to small and large businesses.

The breakthrough initiative, which will take place later this year, has been made possible thanks to the work of Tony Vickers, the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain's Chief Executive, and his Liverpool-based researcher, Chris Newby, who have secured the necessary funding.

The locality chosen for this detailed investigation into the implications of SVR is in the London Road area of the city, which has been undergoing regeneration over the last few years but still contains pockets of derelict land and buildings.

One benefit of SVR is in reducing the tax on business occupiers in this mixed-use area. It would also move the onus to the owners of the vacant land and derelict buildings, who would incur much higher tax bills. Overall there would be no overall change in tax collected, but regeneration would be bound to occur.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in America is providing the funding to help Liverpool develop its plans. Vickers has already completed two years of a three-year fellowship called Preparing for Land Value Tax in Britain. Newby joined the study team last summer.

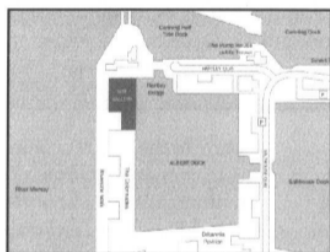
A conference on the project is due to be held in Liverpool on 22 February. It will discuss LVT and how it might be implemented. Experts from the US and Britain are expected among the speakers. Louise Ellman, a local Labour MP, has agreed to chair the event.

The conference, which is expected to attract 150 professionals and interested parties, will be held in Liverpool's Tate Gallery, set in the picturesque Albert Dock, overlooking the Mersey.

Radical thinkers have long hailed LVT as a tax system with the potential to benefit society in numerous ways. It is much easier to administer than the present myriad of taxes on businesses and citizens. It's also unavoidable because it's impossible to hide land or place it in an overseas tax haven.

Twice last century serious attempts were made to implement LVT, first by a Liberal government and subsequently by Labour, and twice the legislation was dropped due to war. Liberal Democrat policy now calls for the replacement of the Unified Business Rate (UBR) with SVR. Nearly half of the new Lib Dem MPs have expressed support for LVT and SVR. The Lib Dem Federal Conference in September 1999 passed a motion calling for diversity in revenue raising. Lib Dem Liverpool City Council responded to this by passing a motion in June 2000, which was reaffirmed recently in a council question, supporting a pilot of LVT in Liverpool.

**How to find the Tate**



**For further details of the conference on LVT and how it might be implemented please contact Chris Newby on 0775 129 4535 or by e-mail [chris.newby@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:chris.newby@liverpool.gov.uk)**