

Liverpool Cathedral

Candidate Recruitment Pack

Role: Chief Operating Officer
Location: Liverpool Cathedral, St James' Mount, Liverpool
Reporting to: The Dean

Welcome from the Dean of Liverpool

Thank you for your interest in joining our team as Chief Operating Officer.

Liverpool Cathedral is an extraordinary place. It is first and foremost a place of Christian worship, prayer, welcome and mission, but it is also one of Liverpool's great landmarks, a major visitor destination, a centre for music, culture and civic life, and a place which holds a special place in the hearts of people across our city and region.

Our scale and reach bring both enormous opportunity and significant responsibility.

We want the Cathedral to flourish spiritually, culturally, socially and financially. We want to extend our welcome, deepen our service to the city and Diocese, care well for this magnificent building and ensure that the organisation supporting our mission is sustainable, well governed and equipped for the future.



Come and Help Shape Our Future

Liverpool Cathedral

The Chief Operating Officer will have a central role in achieving this.

We are looking for a warm, collaborative and enabling leader who listens well, communicates clearly and brings people together. You will combine strategic thinking with the ability to make things happen, building trust and creating the clarity, confidence and organisational conditions that enables others to succeed.

This is also an important period of organisational development and change. We need to ensure that our structures, resources and ways of working are aligned behind our mission and priorities, while continuing to build a positive, healthy culture in which people are supported and empowered to do their best work. Alongside this, we need to strengthen our operational effectiveness and financial resilience and develop sustainable ways of working for the future. The new Chief Operating Officer will play a central role in leading this journey and taking people with them.

The successful candidate will work closely with me, the Cathedral Chapter, clergy and senior colleagues. Together we aim to translate our aspirations into delivery and foster an environment in which our hard working and talented staff and volunteers can do their best work.

We are ambitious about the future of Liverpool Cathedral and realistic about the challenges ahead. For the right person, that combination makes this a particularly exciting leadership opportunity.

I hope this recruitment pack encourages you to consider joining us

Dean Sue

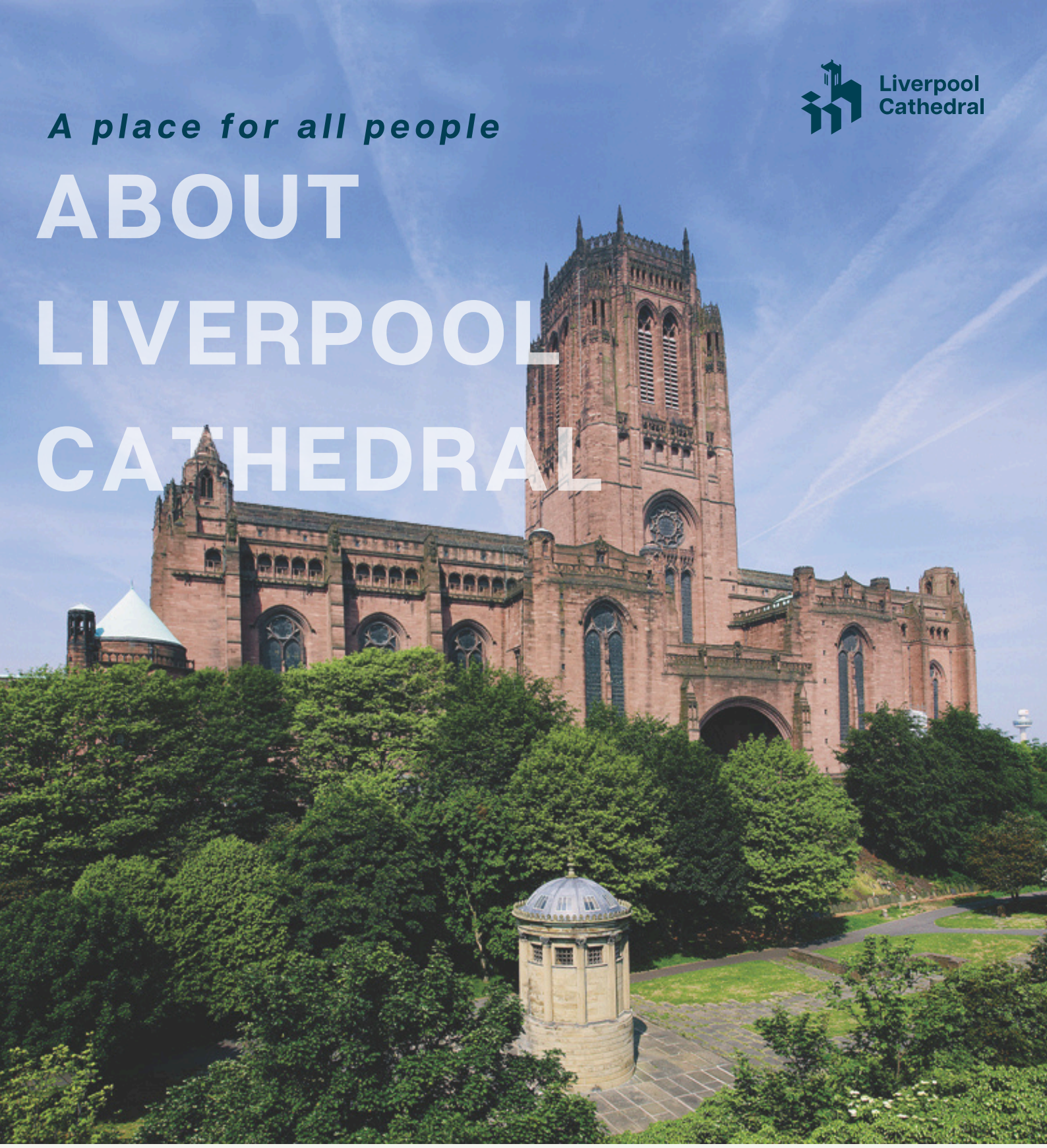
The Dean of Liverpool



Liverpool Cathedral

A place for all people

ABOUT LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL



Liverpool Cathedral is a vibrant place of worship, welcome, service and community. Over 700,000 people cross our threshold every year encountering a place where the glory of God manifests itself in many, varied ways.

ABOUT LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

We use six pillars to describe the breadth and variety of our work:

- Inspiring Christian worship
- A breath-taking experience
- A community committed to justice and mercy
- A safe and generous place in joy and sorrow
- A dynamic community of staff and volunteers
- A God who knows you and loves you

Standing on St James' Mount and visible across the city, Liverpool Cathedral is a powerful expression of Christian faith and a place where worship, heritage, music, culture, community and hospitality come together. We are the UK's largest cathedral and we occupy an iconic place in the city landscape.

But the Cathedral is much more than its building.

We are a living Christian community, a place of daily prayer and worship, a major destination for visitors, a breathtaking venue for major services and events, a centre for music and learning, and a civic space where Liverpool comes together at moments of celebration, remembrance and significance. We are also free to enter, committed to serve and support those on the margins and we are working to become Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

Our challenge is to steward this inheritance while ensuring that the Cathedral continues to develop and flourish for future generations.





Christian mission

OUR LIFE & MISSION

At the heart of Liverpool Cathedral is the Christian mission of the Church of England. Everything we do operationally and commercially exists ultimately to support our mission and purpose.

The Chief Operating Officer will therefore need to be comfortable leading a complex organisation in which mission and commercial sustainability are complementary rather than competing objectives.

Worship and mission

The Cathedral provides regular worship and prayer throughout the year alongside major diocesan, civic and national services.

It is a place where people encounter the Christian faith in many different ways – through worship, music, conversation, hospitality, beauty, silence and community.

Visitors and hospitality

The Cathedral welcomes people from Liverpool, the wider region, the UK and around the world.

Some come as worshippers, some as tourists, some to explore the architecture and heritage, and others for events, exhibitions, music or simply a place for reflection.

Providing an outstanding welcome and visitor experience is central to our work.

OUR LIFE AND MISSION

Liverpool Cathedral

Music

Music is integral to Cathedral life Our choral tradition and wider musical programme contribute both to worship and to the cultural life of Liverpool, creating opportunities for people of different generations and backgrounds to experience outstanding music.

Civic life

Liverpool Cathedral has an important civic role. We provide a place where the city and region can gather at significant moments – celebrating achievement, remembering loss, reflecting together and addressing issues affecting our communities.

Heritage and conservation

We have the privilege and responsibility of caring for one of Britain's great ecclesiastical buildings. Maintaining, conserving and developing the Cathedral and its precinct requires significant expertise, resources and long-term planning.

Events and cultural activity

The scale and character of the Cathedral allow it to host an exceptional range of events and experiences.

These activities enable us to reach new audiences, contribute to Liverpool's cultural offer and generate income which helps sustain the wider mission of the Cathedral.

Education, community and engagement

Through our programmes, partnerships and relationships we seek to make the Cathedral accessible to people who may never previously have thought of it as a place for them.

Our Cathedral is a place of generous welcome – rooted in Christian faith while open to the whole world.





BACKGROUND

A dedicated Cathedral COO

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) provides senior executive leadership across the operational life of the Cathedral, working in close partnership with the Dean. The role brings together strategy, people, finance, operations, governance and commercial delivery, strengthening our ability to translate Chapter's ambitions into sustainable results.

The Cathedral has benefited for many years from a close partnership with the Diocese, including shared teams across Finance, HR, Communications and Safeguarding, and a combined Diocesan Secretary/Cathedral Chief Operating Officer role.

However, the scale and complexity of both organisations has grown significantly and it is no longer practicable for one person to fulfil both leadership roles. Chapter has therefore decided to appoint a dedicated Cathedral COO, providing the additional leadership capacity needed to support our mission, ministry and long-term future.

Our close partnership with the Diocese will continue. The new COO will work closely with the Dean, Diocesan Secretary and colleagues across both organisations to ensure shared services continue to work effectively and evolve in response to changing needs.

Working Across the Cathedral

As the Cathedral's senior lay executive, the COO provides leadership and coordination across the organisational functions that support the Cathedral's mission and day-to-day life.

These currently include:

- Finance and financial planning
- People and HR
- Operations and systems
- Safeguarding
- Governance, risk and compliance
- Fabric, property and estate
- Commercial and enterprise activity
- Fundraising and development
- Communications
- Security and business continuity

These functions are delivered through dedicated Cathedral teams, and through shared arrangements with the Diocese (including Safeguarding, HR, Comms, Finance, and IT). Our management structure will continue to evolve. An important part of the new COO's role will be working with the Dean, Chapter and senior colleagues to ensure that leadership responsibilities, structures and resources remain appropriate for the Cathedral's emerging priorities and enable people and teams to work effectively together.



THE OPPORTUNITY & CHALLENGE

Working in a cathedral is unlike working in almost any other organisation. Liverpool Cathedral is simultaneously a place of worship and mission, a charity, a major heritage asset, an employer, a visitor destination, an events venue and an important civic institution. Decisions therefore need to balance mission, people, heritage, finance, governance and the needs of the many communities we serve.

Relationships matter enormously. The COO will work closely with the Dean, Chapter, clergy and senior colleagues, alongside the Diocese, volunteers and partners across the city and beyond. You will need to combine executive authority with a highly collaborative leadership style – knowing when to lead, when to advise, when to challenge and when to enable others.

The Cathedral has enormous strengths: an extraordinary building, committed worshipping communities, talented staff and volunteers, strong public recognition, an important civic role and significant opportunities for growth. We are ambitious about what comes next, but recognise that realising that potential will require us to address some important organisational challenges.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

Liverpool Cathedral

Financial sustainability

The scale of our mission and activities brings significant costs, from caring for and securing this remarkable building to employing the people who make its work possible. We need to strengthen our medium-term financial planning, make the most of appropriate commercial and fundraising opportunities and ensure our resources are focused on our priorities.

Leadership, capacity and culture

We want to build a confident and collaborative senior team, distribute responsibility effectively and give managers the clarity, authority and support to lead well. This will involve change: ensuring that our structures, resources and ways of working reflect our emerging priorities and helping people understand and shape the journey ahead. We want a culture in which people communicate openly, work well across boundaries, feel trusted to take responsibility and share a strong commitment to the Cathedral's mission.

Turning ambition into delivery

We need clear strategic priorities supported by realistic plans, resources and measures of success. Stronger planning, management information and ways of working will help us coordinate activity, make good decisions and turn ambition into sustainable delivery.

Making the most of our opportunities

Our visitors, events, partnerships, fundraising, commercial activity and extraordinary building create significant opportunities. We want to develop these thoughtfully and strategically, strengthening our financial sustainability while ensuring that income generation continues to serve our mission and values.

Stewarding a complex organisation and extraordinary building

The Cathedral's scale and breadth bring significant responsibilities for safeguarding, risk, governance, security, compliance and the care of one of Britain's great ecclesiastical buildings. These need to be embedded within effective day-to-day management and supported by strong long-term planning.

You will not need to be the expert in every aspect of Cathedral life. You will need to know how to bring together talented people, establish priorities and create the organisational conditions in which others can succeed. This is a rare opportunity to help shape the future of one of Britain’s great cathedrals. You will join us at a key moment, with the chance to strengthen the organisation, develop its people and help turn our ambitions into reality. For the right person, it is a role in which you can make a real and lasting difference – to the Cathedral, the people who make it what it is, and the Church, city and region we serve.



PRIORITIES FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS

Liverpool Cathedral

The priorities below set out the principal outcomes we hope to achieve with our new COO during their first two years. They will provide a shared framework for setting objectives, reviewing progress and supporting the COO's development and performance, recognising that priorities will continue to evolve as the Cathedral develops.

Within the first 2 years, we would expect our new COO to have helped foster a Cathedral where:

Mission and resources are clearly connected
People understand how operational and commercial activity enables the Cathedral's Christian mission.

Financial resilience is improving
There is a credible medium-term route towards sustainable finances, supported by stronger planning, control and income generation.

Leadership is distributed effectively
Senior and departmental leaders have clear responsibilities and authority and are held appropriately accountable for delivery.

People are supported to perform well
Objectives are clear, performance conversations are constructive and staff development supports organisational priorities.

Decision-making is better
Leaders and Chapter receive concise, timely and reliable management information.

Operations are increasingly efficient
Processes are simpler, systems are used effectively and duplication and unnecessary administrative burden are reduced.

Risk and governance are strong
Chapter can have confidence that the Cathedral's major risks and statutory responsibilities are understood and actively managed.

Commercial performance supports mission
Visitor, events and other income-generating activities make an increasing contribution to financial sustainability without compromising the character and purpose of the Cathedral.

Leadership is distributed effectively
Senior and departmental leaders have clear responsibilities and authority and are held appropriately accountable for delivery.



Liverpool Cathedral

WHY LIVERPOOL?

Liverpool is an exceptional city in which to live and work – a place with a distinctive identity, extraordinary cultural life and a strong sense of community.

Internationally renowned for its music, arts, architecture, heritage and sport, Liverpool combines the energy of a major city with a compact and accessible centre and a wide range of places to live across the wider City Region.

The city is known for the warmth of its welcome and the strength of its communities. For Liverpool Cathedral, this creates an exciting environment in which to build partnerships, engage new audiences and play an active role in the life of the city and region.

Liverpool is also exceptionally well connected, with direct rail links across the UK and an international airport. The coast, Wirral and North Wales are within easy reach, with the Lake District and wider North West accessible for weekends and time outdoors.

Liverpool offers the culture and opportunity of a major city alongside a strong sense of place and community – and an exciting place to make a home as well as build a career.



Key Responsibilities

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Liverpool Cathedral

1. Strategy & Organisational Development

Support the Dean and work collaboratively with senior colleagues to implement the Cathedral's agreed vision and strategic priorities.

Lead the development and delivery of the Cathedral's business plan, ensuring strategic priorities are translated into clear objectives, responsibilities, resources and measures of success.

Establish an effective planning and review cycle linking organisational and departmental plans, budgets, major projects and individual objectives, with clear monitoring and reporting of progress.

Lead and support organisational change, ensuring the Cathedral has the structures, resources and ways of working needed to deliver its mission and priorities.

2. Leadership, People & Culture

Work with the Dean to foster a confident, collaborative and effective senior executive team , with clear responsibilities and shared accountability for organisational priorities.

Empower senior managers with the clarity, authority and support needed to lead effectively, developing leadership capacity and reducing unnecessary dependency on individuals.

Provide warm, visible and accessible leadership across the Cathedral, building trust with clergy, staff and volunteers and fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement.

Work closely with HR colleagues and managers to ensure the Cathedral attracts, develops and retains the people and skills it needs, and that people-related matters are handled fairly, consistently and in accordance with employment law and Cathedral policies.

Promote effective workforce and succession planning, learning and development, wellbeing, inclusion, knowledge sharing and good internal communication.

3. Governance, Risk & Compliance

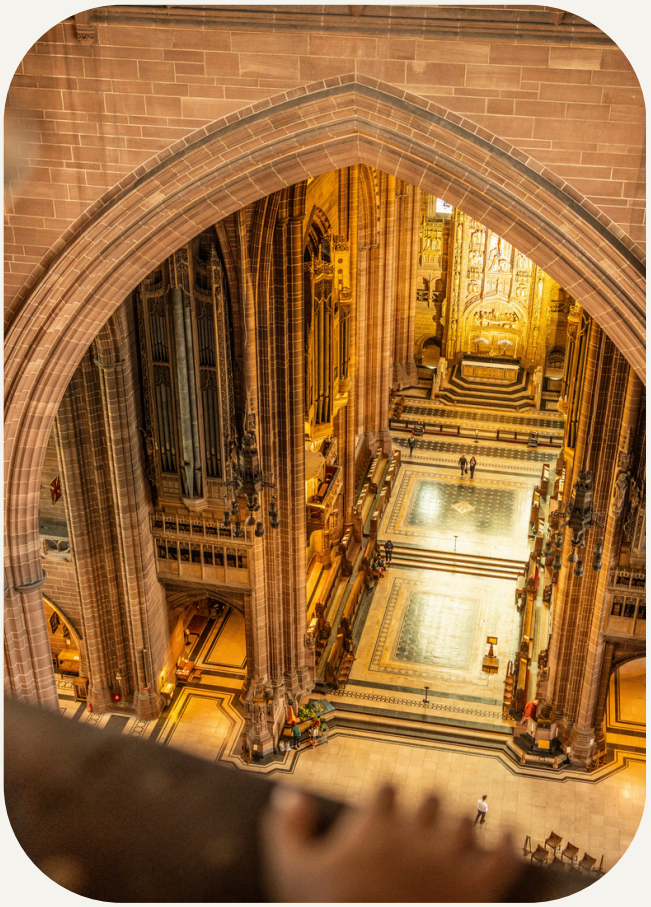
Support Chapter in fulfilling its responsibilities as the Cathedral's governing body, providing high- quality advice, information and assurance to support effective decision-making.

Ensure clear and effective governance arrangements are maintained, including appropriate committee structures, reporting lines and delegated authorities.

Ensure the Cathedral meets its legal, regulatory and statutory obligations, including the Cathedrals Measure, Charity Commission requirements, relevant company law, employment law, health and safety, data protection, conflicts of interest, insurance and environmental responsibilities.

Ensure effective strategic and operational risk management, audit and policy arrangements are in place, with significant risks and agreed actions appropriately managed and reported.

Ensure effective governance and accountability for the Cathedral's trading subsidiary and linked charities, working closely with Directors and Trustees while maintaining clear executive leadership of the Cathedral staff supporting their activities.



Key Responsibilities

Liverpool Cathedral

4. Safeguarding

Champion a positive safeguarding culture, ensuring safeguarding is understood as a priority and a shared responsibility that is embedded throughout Cathedral life.

Work closely with the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Team, Diocese and Chapter to ensure effective governance, assurance and compliance with Church of England safeguarding requirements.

Act as a senior executive point of escalation within the Cathedral for safeguarding concerns and complaints, working with the Dean to ensure that concerns are appropriately addressed and escalated in accordance with Church of England safeguarding requirements.

Ensure recommendations arising from safeguarding audits, reviews and other assurance activity are appropriately addressed and the impacts monitored.

5. Operations

Provide executive oversight and coordination of Cathedral operations, ensuring activities are safe, effective, well planned and support the Cathedral's mission and priorities.

Work with teams to improve organisational systems, processes and ways of working, reducing duplication and enabling effective collaboration and delivery.

Monitor operational performance and ensure appropriate accountability for key services, promoting continuous improvement and innovation.

Work closely with the Cathedral Constables to ensure effective arrangements for the safety and security of people, buildings and the Cathedral precinct.

Ensure robust business continuity and emergency planning arrangements are maintained and regularly reviewed.

6. Financial Sustainability & Commercial Development

Working closely with the Chief Finance Officer and other senior colleagues, the COO will:

Lead the development of a clear approach to long-term financial sustainability, aligned with the Cathedral's vision, priorities and business plan.

Oversee financial planning, budgeting and performance, ensuring resources are aligned with organisational priorities and that Chapter receive clear and timely financial information.

Promote sound financial stewardship, including effective controls, procurement, contract management and value for money.

Work collaboratively with the Director of Enterprise and Enterprise Board to maximise the contribution of commercial activity while ensuring it supports worship, mission, visitor experience and wider Cathedral priorities.

Work with the Dean, Development Team and other colleagues to strengthen and diversify income, create the conditions for successful fundraising and make effective use of Cathedral assets.



7. Fabric & Estate Management

Working closely with the Clerk of Works, Cathedral Architect and other specialist advisers, the COO will:

Provide executive oversight of the Cathedral's estate and fabric, ensuring effective governance, planning, reporting and assurance.

Ensure appropriate plans are in place for maintenance, conservation and capital works, with delivery and significant risks appropriately reported.

Ensure the Cathedral fulfils its statutory and regulatory estate responsibilities, including planning, heritage, accessibility and landlord obligations.

Support long-term estate planning, ensuring major repair, conservation and capital priorities have realistic delivery timescales and funding plans, make effective use of Cathedral assets and support environmental sustainability and Net Zero ambitions.

8. Cathedral – Diocese Relationship & Joint Teams

Maintain a close and constructive working relationship with the Diocesan Secretary and senior diocesan colleagues, promoting a positive partnership while respecting the distinct governance and responsibilities of each organisation.

Ensure shared-service arrangements have clear priorities, responsibilities and expectations and continue to meet the Cathedral's needs effectively.

Support effective communication, planning and regular review of joint arrangements, identifying opportunities to strengthen or develop them where beneficial.

9. External Relationships

Represent the Cathedral externally on organisational and operational matters as appropriate.

Develop constructive relationships with the National Church, statutory and regulatory bodies, civic partners, heritage organisations, funders and professional advisers.

Support the Dean and Chapter in developing partnerships that further the Cathedral's mission, civic role and strategic priorities, including its important ecumenical and multi-faith relationships and close partnership with Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.



Liverpool Cathedral

What we are looking for

PERSON SPECIFICATION



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Liverpool Cathedral

Essential Experience

The successful candidate will have:

Significant senior leadership experience within a complex organisation, with responsibility across a range of organisational functions.

Senior leadership experience within a complex mission-led, public benefit, cultural, heritage, faith or similarly values-driven organisation. A strong track record of organisational development and leading change, including bringing people with them through periods of transition.

Experience of translating vision and strategic priorities into practical business or delivery plans, with clear responsibilities, resources and measures of success.

Experience of developing and working with effective senior leadership teams, empowering others and building leadership capacity.

Experience of financial planning and management, including budgets, performance monitoring and contributing to long-term financial sustainability.

Experience of working within strong governance and accountability arrangements, ideally within a charity, public benefit or similarly regulated organisation.

Experience of safeguarding, risk management, compliance and providing assurance to trustees, boards or equivalent governing bodies.

Experience of leading multidisciplinary teams and working effectively through specialist professional colleagues.

Experience of improving organisational systems, processes or ways of working.

Experience of building and maintaining effective partnerships.

Desirable Experience

Experience of working with shared or partnership-based services.

Experience of commercial activity, income diversification or supporting fundraising.

Experience of property, heritage estate or capital project governance.

Experience of working with volunteers alongside paid staff.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Liverpool Cathedral

Essential Knowledge

Strong understanding of charity governance and the responsibilities of trustees.

Strong understanding of organisational development, people management and leading organisations through change.

Strong understanding of risk management, safeguarding, health and safety and organisational compliance.

Good understanding of financial planning, budgeting and organisational sustainability.

Good understanding of effective business planning, performance management and project delivery.

An understanding of the responsibilities involved in caring for significant buildings and heritage assets.

Essential Skills

An excellent communicator and listener, able to build trust and engage effectively with people at all levels.

A collaborative and enabling leader, able to bring people together, empower colleagues and create clarity around responsibilities and decision- making.

Able to combine strategic thinking with practical delivery, translating ambition into clear, realistic and achievable plans.

Able to analyse complex financial, performance and organisational information, exercise sound judgement and use evidence to support effective decision-making.

Able to navigate complexity, competing priorities and sensitive relationships with diplomacy, clarity and good judgement.

Able to lead change thoughtfully and inclusively, building confidence and capability in others and embedding lasting improvement.

Personal Qualities

The successful candidate will be:

- Warm, approachable and supportive, with a visible and engaged presence in the life of the Cathedral.
- Collaborative and generous in their leadership, listening well, sharing responsibility and recognising the expertise of others.
- Calm and considered, exercising sound judgement and knowing when care, consultation and reflection are needed.
- Able to build strong relationships and bring people together, while being willing to have difficult conversations and make tough decisions when necessary.
- Humble and enabling, recognising that a key part of the COO's role is creating the conditions for others to lead and succeed.
- Committed to the Christian mission and values of Liverpool Cathedral, and to safeguarding, integrity and inclusion in all aspects of its life and work.

Liverpool Cathedral

How to apply

Thankyou for your interest in the role of Chief Operating Officer

The deadline for submissions is Sunday 1st November 2026

Please visit this link to apply

Summary of Terms and Conditions

Contract
This is a permanent, full-time appointment. A three-month notice will apply on either side.

Salary
£70,000

Probationary Period
The appointment will be subject to a three-month probationary period, with regular review meetings with the Dean.

Employer
The Chief Operating Officer will be employed by Liverpool Cathedral Chapter.

Place of Work
The role is based at Liverpool Cathedral, St James' Mount, Liverpool.

Working Arrangements
This is a senior leadership role with a strong emphasis on being visible and present within the life of the Cathedral. Normal hours of 35 hours per week.

Some flexibility in working arrangements may be possible, but the postholder will be expected to work the hours reasonably required to fulfil the responsibilities of the role, including occasional evenings and weekends and attendance at key Cathedral services and events.

Annual Leave

25 days per annum, plus bank/public holidays.

Pension

Contributory pension scheme.

Safeguarding

The appointment will be subject to appropriate pre-employment and safeguarding checks, including an enhanced DBS check.

Additional information

We are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and diverse working environment, which contributes to wider community cohesion, and we encourage applications from people from all backgrounds and experiences.


Liverpool
Cathedral
www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk