

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Black Organisations and Allies Statement of Support for Mayor Joanne Anderson

The following statement outlines our position as a collective of Black organisations and allies:

We are becoming increasingly concerned about a rising tide of allegations and attacks levelled at Mayor Joanne Anderson since her appointment as the first Black female Mayor to be elected in the UK and the first female elected Mayor of the City of Liverpool. These attacks are veiled as being levelled at the mayoral role rather than the person but appear to be quite personal and unwarranted.

The recent campaign to 'Stop the Arms Fair' was in the main aimed at the new Mayor, yet the fair was not an event created, endorsed, or supported by her. Attempts by campaigners to stop this fair targeted the majority of accusations, some quite preposterous at the current Mayor, with a particularly vicious smear campaign led by current and former local Labour Party members, that we feel was totally unmerited. Whilst some may believe the mayoral role has the power to stop the arms fair, there was no similar campaign levelled at the former Mayor or the Chair, Directors and former Directors (on the Board at the time) of the ACC who accepted and agreed to this booking, or the two previous arms fairs that have taken place in Liverpool (2014 and 2016).

These current attacks follow on from those made during Joanne's successful Mayoral campaign when she stepped up to ensure the city had the opportunity to be led by a Liverpoolian, rather than a candidate appointed by bureaucrats at Labour Party HQ with no connections to our city. Some people were determined to destroy that campaign before it even got out of the starting blocks with another vicious tirade of personal smears that thankfully went unheeded by the local electorate.

In light of previous attempts to vilify Joanne we have a deep concern that there is potential for future events booked at the ACC during the previous leadership's tenure, to be used in an irrational attempt to further attack her. We wholeheartedly condemn and object to such unmerited criticism.

Interestingly, just 6 months into her role as Mayor, there are similar undercurrents growing about the mayoral referendum, which she has agreed to hold, with the possibility that it may commence earlier than was originally agreed (2023) by the ruling Labour Group. It will be interesting to see what will be next!

For the first time this city has a leader who understands the experiences and needs of its Black communities and residents, yet it saddens us to see this appears to be unacceptable

to some in today's Liverpool. She did not get this role because she is Black, she got it because she was elected by the public based on her manifesto, but it is a welcome bonus to us in 2021 that she is Black, with the rising tide of racism and xenophobia throughout the country. The enormity of her appointment speaks volumes. Having a strong woman at the helm who can contribute to the city becoming a better place for us all, young and old, is something to be celebrated but she must be allowed the space to get on with her role without unwarranted distractions.

We are also concerned about the leadership style, lack of unity and camaraderie in the city and wider city region. In this rising tide of racism and xenophobia where is the leadership support for our new Mayor? How do leaders in Liverpool and the city region want to be remembered? As we can see how you are being perceived. It's time for you all to step up.

The history of this city is steeped in racism as was pointed out in the Gifford Report decades ago and we must therefore not forget this journey for Mayor Joanne Anderson is already a monumental one. We wish her the very best in this challenging role for her remaining term of office.

Signed on behalf of the Collective of Black organisations and allies:

Mandela8

Liverpool Black Men's Group

Liverpool Black History Research Group

Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre

L8 A Better Place

Africa Oye

Heritage Development Company Liverpool

Blackout Productions

Liverpool and Slavery

Creative Economist Ltd

Mulgrave Street Action Group

Women's Leadership Group

The Women's Organisation

The Isla Gladstone Conservatory, Stanley Park

The Florrie

New Beginnings Improving Lives CIC

Toxteth TV  
L8 Matters CLT  
Cycle of Life  
Sally Magazine  
Prosocial Place  
Wirral Change  
Anthony Walker Foundation  
Wordscape Ltd  
Steve Biko Housing Association  
EDI-Cate Consultancy  
Merseyside Somali and Community Association  
Kaalmo Youth Development Ltd  
Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service  
Communities First UK  
Princes Park BLP  
Data Performance Consultancy Ltd  
Writing on the Wall  
PAL Multicultural Centre

**Individuals:**

Gemma McGowan  
Debra Nolan  
Ronnie Hughes  
Jean Barrett  
Amnah Vicars  
Tabiha Moreton  
Gemma Sparkes  
Pat Harvey  
Karl Smith

Jacqueline Fray

Joanna Brown

Vicky Powell

Haifa Ali

Christina Averhart

Linda Freeman

Maria O'Reilly

Dawn Morris

Donna Davies

Paul Foster

Sonia Basse

Joseph Antigha

Brian Bishop

Katrina Carberry

Wally Brown

Judith Agis