

NEWS RELEASE:
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**UK City of Culture reveals exciting plans for new Events and Conference
Centre**

Hull City Council has today revealed ambitious plans for a new £42m events, conference centre and four-star hotel complex that will put the city on the UK map as a location for major events, shows and music concerts.

Situated in the heart of the city centre, the exciting proposals are part of a 10-year plan to make Hull a world-class visitor destination and to capitalise on its status as UK City of Culture, ensuring that this success leaves an economic legacy well beyond 2017. At least 500 long-term jobs will be created as a direct result of the development, which will inject £16.4m into the local economy every year.

Alongside other major investments in the city centre, including the regeneration of the Fruit Market and a recently announced £25m public realm programme, the new development represents a huge step-up in Hull's offer as a business and tourist destination. Together, they will increase annual visitor spend by more than £30m annually.

The purpose-built venue will - for the first time - allow Hull to attract large corporate and association conferences, exhibitions and trade tours as well as major touring concerts, stand-up comedy, family shows and sporting events, complementing what is currently offered at existing venues.

The preferred site for the new development is in the heart of the city centre to the west of Princes Quay, where it will provide an iconic landmark for visitors travelling to and through the city, as well as offering conference delegates and gig-goers spectacular views of Hull Marina.

Situated close to the key road and rail routes in and out of Hull, it will also revitalise and reconnect the city centre by providing a link between the historic Old Town, the 1950s-built new town and St Stephen's shopping centre.

The main auditorium will be a flexible, multi-functional space with the capacity to hold audiences of at least 3,500, with high-quality design, state-of-the-art facilities and excellent acoustics, ensuring it will be one of the most sought-after facilities in the region and in the UK.

The development of the £30m events and conference venue will be led by Hull City Council and funded through its City Plan budget for major capital projects.

The Council is working with Princes Quay owners, CIT, and their partners, Hull-based Wykeland Group, to finalise land assembly and to bring forward adjacent commercial development, including the potential of a £12m four-star hotel.

A competitive tendering process will be carried out to procure construction and operational management of the venue in order to select a bidder who provides value for money, in-depth sector knowledge, relevant contacts, and the ability to attract and retain major events.

Councillor Steven Bayes, Portfolio Holder for Visitor Destination and City of Culture, said: "A high-quality, purpose-built events and conference centre is absolutely essential to making Hull a top visitor destination and to ensuring that we make the most of the legacy of our City of Culture status.

"Put simply, a city of Hull's size needs a facility such as this. We will formally hand over the title to another city in 2020, but this development will allow us to attract events capable of delivering a big economic impact beyond that.

“Most importantly, it will deliver 500 long-term jobs for our local workforce and young people, which is part of the legacy that we want to deliver for Hull and the economic future we need.”

Chris Orr Managing Director of Asset Management at CIT said: “We and our partners, the Wykeland Group, are delighted to be working closely with Hull City Council on such an important and strategic scheme to the City. These are exciting times for Hull and we look forward to playing an important role in what will be part of the City of Culture legacy.”

Garry Taylor, Hull City Council’s Assistant Head of Service for Strategy and Renewal said: “The regeneration and improvements already in the pipeline for the Fruit Market and City centre public realm will provide a huge boost to the City, but it’s clear that a conference and events centre of this size is another important piece of the long-term regeneration jigsaw.

“The new development will make Hull more attractive to a range of potential investors and provides another opportunity to improve perceptions of the City.”

The proposals will be discussed by the Council’s Cabinet later this month and if approved, construction work could start next year for completion in 2018.

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