GV A Humberts Leisure has announced that Noble Group, the current owner of Brighton Pier, has put the site up for sale for the first time in more than 25 years.

Noble Group has owned the Grade II*-listed structure since 1984 and has helped transform its commercial fortunes, with 18 themed attractions and rides on offer.

The disposal of Brighton Pier will include the sale of the entire issued share capital of the Brighton Marine Palace and Pier Company, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1888.

FIA CEO Dave Stalker added: “Our strategic goals are aligned so working together to increase participation and bring benefits to the sector makes perfect sense.”

Sport England and the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to grow participation in sport.

The deal recognises that, as well as national governing bodies (NGBs), operators have the ability to help encourage more people to do sport.

Both Sport England and the FIA will offer support for operators to build beneficial relationships with NGBs. A contribution to the digital legacy from the 2012 Games is also planned, by creating online capabilities to enable, for example, people to find their nearest sports facilities.

Sport England property director Charles Johnston said: “This agreement further strengthens our relationship with the FIA as we deepen the links between operators and the rest of the sport sector.”

Sport England/FIA sign agreement

easyGym unveils first club in Slough

easyGym, a new budget fitness concept from easyJet founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, has launched its first club at The Observatory Shopping Centre in Slough, Berkshire.

It is one of two new sites to open under the new brand this summer, with the second in Wood Green, London. Other properties are also earmarked to launch by the end of 2011.

PE Contracts was appointed by easyGym to undertake the entire fit out of the former Virgin Active clubs, with the Slough site benefiting from an increased gym floorspace.

A new spin studio; replacement flooring; and a female-only gym area formed part of PE Contracts’ work at the new Slough club.

The new MoU recognises that operators can help drive up participation

FIA CEO Dave Stalker added: “Our strategic goals are aligned so working together to increase participation and bring benefits to the sector makes perfect sense.”

easyGym is one of two to open this summer

Paul Lorimer-Wing, joint CEO of easyGym, said: “We’ve worked closely with some of the best brains in the business to develop a proposition, which we are confident will make us a leading player in the European market.”

MPs: FIFA governance ‘needs urgent reform’

MPs have called on world football’s governing body FIFA to undertake a “full, urgent and independent” probe into claims of misconduct during the 2018 World Cup bid process.

In its new report, the House of Commons culture, media and sport committee said it was “appalled” at allegations made against some members of FIFA’s executive committee.

The report has also called on FIFA to implement a “fundamental reform” of its governance and the way in which competitions such as the World Cup are awarded to countries.

Brighton Pier’s fortunes have been transformed

Noble Group confirms plans to sell Brighton Pier

GVA Humberts Leisure has announced that Noble Group, the current owner of Brighton Pier, has put the site up for sale for the first time in more than 25 years.

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Sport}

SPORT

Sportivate legacy scheme launches

A £32m project has launched in order to enable 300,000 young people to receive six to eight weeks of coaching in the sport of their choice.

Unveiled by Sport England, Sportivate will be funded using National Lottery cash and will target 14-to-25-year-olds, as well as young people who aren’t currently playing sport in their own time.

Sportivate will be delivered by the network of 49 county sports partnerships which will work with local providers and sports clubs.

Meanwhile, Sporting Champions – a team of current and retired elite athletes – will visit Sportivate sessions to share their experiences and enthusiasm for sport.

An additional incentive will see teenagers and young adults who stick with sport given the chance to enter a ballot for free London 2012 tickets, with hundreds of Olympic and Paralympic tickets available for participants via the London 2012 Ticketshare initiative.

To be eligible for Ticketshare, participants need to complete the sports course missing no more than one session, and then continue to participate in sport for at least three months.

Bournemouth Cycling Centre officially opens

A celebratory event has marked the official opening of the new Bournemouth Cycling Centre – a 250m (820ft) Olympic-sized community facility at Slades Farm, Dorset.

Bournemouth Arrows Cycling Club will operate the facility, which offers an outdoor tarmac track that has been designed for use by local residents and elite competitors.

Work started on the £800,000 Bournemouth Cycling Centre in September 2010, with the banking constructed using materials sourced from Raymond Brown’s recycling facility.

ECB to re-tender Cardiff Test match

Glamorgan County Cricket Club (GCCC) has lost the right to stage a Test match between England and the West Indies next summer.

The England and Wales Cricket Board’s (ECB) management board decided to re-tender the match after GCCC said it would be late paying its staging fee for the recent Test with Sri Lanka.

Further talks between the ECB and the club have resulted in an agreement to grant an extended period in which GCCC are to meet its financial obligations.

ECB chief executive David Collier said: “This decision was made with a view to assisting the club in developing a sustainable business plan for staging international cricket.

“While it will not be permitted to stage the West Indies Test match, the club will host a one day international (ODI) against India later this summer and South Africa next year.”
Work starts on Glasgow complex

A ceremony has taken place to mark the start of construction work at the £13.7m Tollcross Aquatics Centre in Glasgow, which is to be used for swimming events at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The facility will open in early 2013, with a new community venue also planned to replace the fire-damaged Shettleston Burgh Halls.

Scottish sport minister Shona Robison said: “[This venue] will help to showcase Scotland’s world class facilities during the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.”

THFC seeks to kick-start stadium scheme

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) has confirmed that it is seeking public funding towards its multi-million pound Northumberland Development Project (NDP) regeneration proposals.

The Premier League club had previously stated that the development – centered around a new 56,250-seat stadium and designed by KSS – was not financially viable.

However, THFC has now submitted an application for Round Two of the Regional Growth Fund in a bid to push forward the NDP.

THFC chair Daniel Levy said: “[The NDP] would attract millions of pounds of additional expenditure in the local economy and lever further private investment into the area.”

SGL launches new Circadian Trust branding

South Gloucestershire Leisure (SGL), a social enterprise that operates leisure venues in the West County, has announced that it has rebranded as Circadian Trust.

The exercise forms part of the organisation’s growth strategy over the coming years, with a briefing event on 8 July to mark the official launch of the new brand.

It comes five years after SGL was chosen by South Gloucestershire Council to run venues, with the Circadian Trust set to continue its partnership with the local authority.

Glasgow 2014 chief executive steps down

John Scott has resigned as the chief executive of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games organising committee with immediate effect due to an “error of judgement”.

Scott has been replaced by chief operating officer David Grevemberg while the search for a permanent replacement is carried out by the organisation.

Glasgow 2014 chair Lord Smith said: “The board has accepted his resignation for an error of judgement he made in accepting, and not declaring, an offer from one of Glasgow 2014’s potential suppliers.”

Derwent Holdings fails in Old Trafford appeal

Derwent Holdings’ bid to block Lancashire County Cricket Club’s (LCCC) redevelopment of Old Trafford cricket ground has been rejected by the Court of Appeal.

The property firm – owner of the White City retail park – brought the action despite a High Court ruling in March in favour of the multi-million pound scheme.

Two new grandstands and a refurbished pavilion accommodating 15,000 supporters will be part of the revamp, with the potential to increase capacity to 25,000 with temporary seating.

Council backs Bridgend sports village vision

Bridgend County Borough Council has backed plans for a new multi-million pound sports and leisure village on the site of a former prisoner of war camp.

The proposals – including a 15,000-seat rugby league stadium and a 2,000-seat football venue with two pitches – will now go to the Welsh Assembly Government.

HD Limited is leading the Island Farm Sports Village development, which has been designed by PJ Lee Architect and will also feature an indoor 4G training pitch and sports hall; and tennis facilities.
Fit4less roll-out to ‘accelerate’

Health club operator énergie has announced that it is to accelerate the roll-out of its Fit4Less budget concept, after opening the chain’s 13th site in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.

According to énergie, the Chesham site has attracted 350 sales in its first month-and-a-half of business. The 14th Fit4Less is now planned to open in Stockport.

Launched in July 2009, énergie has now set a new target of 45 openings for Fit4Less in the coming two years. According to the group, an average Fit4Less club achieves around 700 members in pre-sales prior to each launch.

Fit4Less brand director David Beattie revealed that the no-contract model used by the budget chain has worked for attracting the clubs’ target market. Beattie said: “Fitness enthusiasts historically deterred by long term commitment and escalating fees now have a clearly defined alternative to the traditional established health club groups.

“Online social media has also played a large part in building awareness that has enabled us to communicate even more closely with members and prospective members.”

Sandwell leisure centre to shut in October

Sandwell’s Oldbury Leisure Centre will close its doors to customers in late October ahead of the development of a new £18m complex, which is due for completion by 2013.

When complete, Portway Lifestyle Centre will comprise a four-court sports hall; a hydrotherapy pool; a sensory garden; a climbing wall; a dance studio; and a gym.

A full-size artificial turf pitch for senior, junior and five-a-side football; a GP surgery; and a café will also form part of the facility, which will offer healthcare alongside leisure services.

The Portway Lifestyle Centre will establish a new centre of excellence, with a specific focus on disabled users. It was one of four projects to receive government funding in April.

Sandwell Council cabinet member for leisure services Linda Horton said: “Oldbury Leisure Centre has served the community well but it is at the end of its useful life and Portway will be a superb replacement.”

FIA launches new research institute in Greenwich

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has launched its new Research Institute at the University of Greenwich, London.

FIA chief medical officer Dr John Searle, and the university’s Professor Alfonso Jimenez will lead the new institute, which aims to re-balance the current focus of research more towards structured forms of exercise.

The first programme will be the FIA Structured Exercise Research Study, which is an evidence-based, dose-response intervention study and is scheduled to last 12 weeks.

Fusion secures Charnwood leisure contract

Fusion Lifestyle is set to invest £1.9m in upgrading three Charnwood Borough Council-owned leisure centres after securing a 10-year deal to run the facilities.

Loughborough Leisure Centre; South Charnwood Leisure Centre, Syston; and Soar Valley Leisure Centre, Mountsorrel, are all in line for improvements as a result of the new agreement.

Meanwhile, an additional £2.4m will be spent on equipment over the course of the 10.5-year deal, with £3.9m to be invested in maintenance and repairs.

The work has preserved the original architecture

Dulwich gym reopens following £6.1m revamp

A health club at Dulwich Leisure Centre has reopened to the public, following the completion of a £6.1m redevelopment.

The venue’s pool reopened last October as part of the first phase of work, with the gym launch marking the end of the work.

Housed in the original Victorian Dulwich baths, the 420sq m (4,521 sq ft) gym space has been designed with the historic charm of the original architecture in mind.

The fitness suite houses 100 stations of Life Fitness equipment and strength equipment, as well as Power Plate and TRX kit.

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New-look Blackpool leisure complex opens

An open weekend has been held on 2-3 July to mark the completion of an expansion programme at Blackpool’s new-look Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre.

Facilities include a four-court sports hall; a 25m swimming pool and separate teaching pool; and a fitness suite.

Blackpool Council has developed the new gym in partnership with Life Fitness, which boasts a bespoke floor plan and offers more than 50 pieces of Life Fitness equipment, including the Elevation Engage cv series and Signature Series Cable Motion.

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**FIA starts referrals consultation**

The Joint Consultative Forum has released its latest standards for Exercise Referral – now out to consultation as part of a 10-week process.

Once the consultation period has concluded, the Joint Consultative Forum will consider responses in September and publish the standards by early 2012.

The new standards build on the work of the 2001 National Quality Assurance Framework for Exercise Referral systems and the more recent British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health Exercise Referral Toolkit.

The standards set out the minimum requirements for risk stratification of patients; the assessment of patients’ physical activity; and the communication between patient, exercise referral instructors, and doctors.

Guidance also includes benchmarks for liability and medico-legal considerations as well as reporting to commissioners.

Fitness Industry Association (FIA) chief medical officer Dr John Searle said the standards aim to pave the way for referrals to be more widely used by medical professionals.

**Formula to boost urban park benefits?**

Researchers at the University of Bradford have devised a new formula for measuring tranquillity, which could help to increase the health benefits of urban and country parks.

According to Greg Watts, a professor of transportation noise at the School of Engineering’s Centre for Sustainable Environments, the toolkit could help in the design of better parks.

Methods to assess noise levels and the visual setting have been devised by Professor Watt, which give each amenity an accurate “tranquillity rating”.

Professor Watt said: “When people are surrounded by images of nature and hear natural sounds rather than mechanical noises they find it easier to recover from stress.

“Our research assessed what particular factors would improve tranquillity in green open spaces, and what factors would degrade it, so that an overall tranquillity rating can be calculated,” added Professor Watt.

**New operator appointed to Guildford leisure venues**

GLL/Freedom Leisure has been appointed as the new operator for Guildford Spectrum, Ash Manor Sports Centre and Guildford Lido by the local authority.

Guildford Borough Council’s executive made the decision at its meeting on 16 June, with an initial 10-year management contract to start on 1 November.

In 2009, the local authority commissioned an independent review to look into the best options for the management of local leisure facilities, which prompted the start of a procurement process.

**The Pods leisure complex opens in Scunthorpe**

A split-level, 85-station fitness suite and a six-court sports hall are among the first facilities to open at The Pods leisure complex in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire.

Two exercise studios; a sauna; a spa bath; a steamroom; and a café with an outdoor terrace were also unveiled at the venue on 4 July by North Lincolnshire Council. The Pods’ swimming pool opened on 11 July.

Andrew Wright is behind the design of the new complex, with S&P Architects acting as the project’s delivery architects. Bowmer and Kirkland built the venue.

**Mobile marketing nets £400,000 for Fitness First**

A marketing campaign targeting mobile phone users with location-based messages and offering them a free two-day pass to the nearest Fitness First has resulted in 1,100 people signing up as new members.

The “You Are Here” campaign by O2, the second-largest mobile phone network in the UK, used ‘geo-fences’ which are set up around a particular location, in this case a Fitness First health club and gym.

O2 estimates that with average membership costing just under £300 per year, the uptake generated increased revenue of around £400,000 for the operator.
**ARTS & CULTURE**

**£55m fund for arts/heritage groups**

A new £55m Endowment Fund chaired by Michael Portillo has been established to help arts and heritage groups work to secure their long-term financial stability. Groups will be able to apply for grants worth up to £5m to support endowment fundraising, which will be decided by the independent panel to match funds from private donors.

It is anticipated that 50 arts/heritage groups will benefit from the fund, with £5m of that to go towards smaller cultural and heritage organisations.

**Glasgow base for new European arts fund**

Glasgow has been unveiled as the base for a major new European arts commissioning fund – Meta, which will focus on the development of work for urban public spaces.

The announcement was made by the pan-European network of festivals, Insitu, and will see Meta combine some of the most innovative institutions and events across the continent. UZ Arts is the UK and Ireland representative for Insitu and will now be the commissioning agent in those areas. Meta will be commissioning work over a five-year period.

**£11m Surrey gallery restoration complete**

An art gallery dedicated to the work of renowned Victorian artist George Frederic Watts in Compton, Surrey, has reopened its doors following an £11m restoration.

Watts Gallery featured on English Heritage’s Heritage At Risk register before missing out on winning the BBC’s Restoration Village in 2006.

The restoration project involved Blenheim House Construction, which secured the contract after R J Barwick Construction Services went into administration in 2009.

Many of Watts Gallery’s original features have been restored as part of the scheme, while new systems have been implemented in order to ensure greater access and to provide environmental controls.

**New director for Arts Council Ireland**

Arts Council Ireland (ACI) has appointed Orlaith McBride as its new director, following an application and interview process run by the Public Appointments Service.

Due to take up the role in September, McBride has worked within the industry for more than 15 years at arts-in-education, youth arts and theatre groups.

ACI chair Pat Moylan said: “At this time of economic challenge and creative opportunity, [McBride] will play a pivotal role in both the leadership and management of the Arts Council.”

**Paralympic ceremony directors appointed**

Jenny Sealey and Bradley Hemmings have been named by the London 2012 Paralympic Games organisers (LOCOG) as artistic directors of the Opening Ceremony.

Sealey is currently artistic director at Graeae, the UK’s flagship disabled-led theatre group, and was awarded an MBE for services to disability arts in 2009.

Meanwhile, Hemmings is the artistic director of Greenwich+Docklands Festivals, which is renowned for working with a wide range of artists on the creation of outdoor events that reflect ‘contemporary Britain’.

**Art Fund unveils new funding programme**

The Art Fund has launched a new £600,000 funding initiative to help build collections in UK museums with the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

RENEW has been established with the support of a grant from the foundation and is scheduled to run for two years, offering 100 per cent funding in order to enable up to six new collections.

The scheme will encourage future centres of excellence by backing fresh areas of collection in museums and galleries that deliver “demonstrable” public benefit.

**Jenny Sealey and Bradley Hemmings**

Hemmings (left) and Sealey have been appointed artistic directors of the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games. They were awarded an MBE for their services to disability arts in 2009.

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Mike Buss takes on Iron Soldier Powerbag Challenge

Endurance Athlete, Mike Buss will be back at LIW after the fantastic success of his HERO100 Marathon Challenge culminating at LIW 2010. This year, Mike will be taking on the IRON SOLDIER Powerbag Challenge in true Ultra style, completing this challenge continuously during the first day of LIW in support of Help for Heroes. There will also be an opportunity for visitors to take on the Iron Soldier Challenge themselves. Further information: http://www.justgiving.com/LIW-IRONSOLDIER-H4H or visit the Jordan Fitness stand H650.

Network with the Fitness Industry Association

The FIA Networking Lounge will offer the chance for attendees at LIW to meet with representatives of the FIA. This interactive space will provide the opportunity for attendees to network with their peers and ensure that they are in a position to maximise industry opportunities which have been brought to light by the educational, feature and exhibitor content at LIW. The ongoing partnership between LIW and the FIA will be exemplified by this lounge in addition to the brand new Spark of Innovation Showcase.

Eat & Drink @ LIW Welcomes Subway

LIW 2011 welcomes SUBWAY® as a first time exhibitor this year, highlighting the growth of the Eat & Drink sector at the show. The SUBWAY® chain has a proven successful presence in over 166 parks and recreational venues worldwide, and has more locations than any other restaurant in the world. With trusted brand recognition, simple operations, custom designed floor plans and staff support, SUBWAY® (Stand E225) will demonstrate to visitors how they can enhance leisure operations through increased secondary spend.

Family based attractions education from Cartoon Network

For the first time at LIW, leading kids brand Cartoon Network is confirmed to present a series of seminars focusing on the influence that children have on the activities and attractions families choose.

A confirmed session outline below, with details of other seminars set to be unveiled in the coming weeks:

‘Are we there yet? Kids influence on Holidays and Days Out’. Turner Media Innovations, the experts in kids media and the sales house of leading kids TV channels Cartoon Network, Boomerang and Cartoonito, will discuss the change in the family decision making and the increased importance of family time in relation to days out/holidays. The presentation will include a look at the planning of holidays/days out, who’s involved, where families like to go, what factors need to be considered and the influence of kids throughout the process. Turner Media Innovations will also look at where parents get their holidays/days out ideas from and some of the best ways of targeting them.
The Inside Track to uncover fresh talent

PHILIPPE ROSSITER is chief executive of the Institute of Hospitality

Over the past few weeks, we have once again witnessed the British summer sporting festival. Wimbledon, Henley and Goodwood all attracted much interest – not just from sports fans, but also by many organisations who use these occasions to host their customers and potential clients. There is no doubt that this is big business for those hosting the events and also for the many companies who provide the food and beverage service at these venues.

It will not go unnoticed that many of the staff employed by the industry at these events do not come from a hospitality background, but yet without them the specialist companies would simply be unable to provide the high levels of service that customers experience. At the same time, a significant number of the younger men and women working at these venues are bright, highly skilled and well-motivated, but faced with huge difficulties in securing long-term employment. Against this backdrop, the hospitality industry is facing a growing need for staff, especially in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

The Institute of Hospitality is now collaborating with Springboard UK and Westminster Kingsway College on a programme that draws upon a sporting theme – Inside Track. It aims to help improve the industry’s chances of attracting potential management talent by tapping into an emerging pool of people. These are typically graduates with non-hospitality degrees or A Level students who may have previously chosen university, but are now put off by the excessive costs of higher education.

Inside Track provides a chance for recruits to gain worthwhile employment with participating businesses, and at the same time, gain an Institute of Hospitality professional qualification through a part-time course offered by Westminster Kingsway College. By targeting quality candidates, Inside Track aims to provide employers with a pool of qualified managers.

For more details on how you can benefit from this new scheme, call Sam Coulstock at Springboard UK on 020 7497 8654, or email samc@springboarduk.org.uk.

HOTELS

IHG launches iPhone booking apps

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has announced the launch of new iPhone apps to allow guests to find and book rooms across each of the operator’s seven brands.

The launch marks the continuation of the company’s mobile strategy and follows December’s unveiling of the InterContinental Concierge Insider Guides for the iPad.

Each of the new iPhone apps feature booking and management reservation features, such as quick access to contact details and maps and secure storage of credit card information.

IHG also produced the Priority Club Rewards app for Android systems (July 2010) and the Priority Club Rewards app for iPhones (April 2010). The company has seen an increase of nearly 1,000 per cent in the number of room bookings made from mobile devices over the past year. In the first five months of 2011, the number of bookings made from mobile devices already surpassed the total number for 2010.

IHG senior vice president, sales and marketing EMEA, Matt Luscombe said: “We’re now expanding our iPhone booking app service to all of our seven brands.”

Birmingham hotel freehold owner in administration

Hyatt Regency Birmingham Limited, the freehold owner of the Hyatt Regency Birmingham Hotel located in the heart of the West Midlands city, has gone into administration.

Diana Frangou and Ian Best of Ernst and Young have been named joint administrators of the company, which has no connection to the Hyatt Hotels and Resorts group.

The 319-room property is run by Hyatt Holdings (UK) – not in administration – as part of a management contract and it is anticipated there will be no impact on trading.

Marriott’s UK hotel portfolio to go on sale?

A number of UK Marriott hotels could be put up for sale, after owners of the properties were unable to agree a debt-for-equity deal with Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS).

The 42 hotels are thought to be worth around £2bn in total. RBS has said that it has now taken control of their ownership and has appointed Ernst and Young as receivers.

RBS sold the hotels to the group of investors – including Delek and Quinlan Private – in 2007 and reportedly still owns about £700m of the debt used to finance the deal.

RBS first acquired the hotels in 2006 from Condor – a joint venture between Whitbread and Marriott International. Marriott continues to run the hotels and a spokesperson said each is under a 30-year agreement dating to the 2006 deal. She added that the operating company remained “entirely unaffected” by any changes in ownership of the properties.

RBS has now taken ownership of the 42 Marriott-operated properties.

An example of the new iPhone applications unveiled by the hotel group
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Spa management and skincare company ESPA has unveiled its brand new ESPA Life spa concept, at the 294-bedroom Corinthia Hotel London. ESPA Life is billed as ‘a leading voice in the next generation of spa’ and offers a fully-integrated wellness approach in conjunction with a luxury spa experience.

The wellness menu includes lifestyle programmes that focus on detox, sleep, weight-loss, pregnancy and general vitality. It also features complementary and alternative medicine, alongside targeted fitness and rehabilitation services to counter-act the effects of modern lifestyles and to optimise health.

In addition, there is a full spa menu incorporating ESPA’s new and upgraded product lines and a number of targeted and specially-created signature treatments, plus Rush Hour Beauty – a service where those pressed for time can hire two or more therapists to work on their hands, feet, face and body within an hour.

ESPA worked closely with GA Design on the spa design. Occupying four floors and covering 3,300sq m (35,500sq ft), the facility boasts 15 curved treatment pods and a thermal floor.

**August launch for new Imagine Spa**

Imagine Spa Thames Valley – a new luxury day spa – is to open at the Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 in Colnbrook on 31 August. The facility will be the latest to open under the Imagine Spa brand, which is run by Imagine Spa Management – part of the Mosaic Spa and Health Club Group.

Guests will be given the opportunity to book a block of time at the facility, with an Imagine Spa therapist then helping them to choose treatments based on how they wish to feel when leaving.

Facilities will include eight treatment rooms; a hydrotherapy pool; a steamroom; a sauna; an aromatherapy bath; and relaxation areas, plus facilities for spray tanning and waxing.

Products at Imagine Spa Thames Valley are to be supplied by Babar’s skincare range; Mii make up; Jessica products for nails; and St Tropez tanning, along with Voya.

**Bidding for Von Essen hotels ends**

The deadline for companies and individuals to submit bids for the 27 hotels in the von Essen portfolio closes today (12 July 2011).

The properties were put up for sale by Alan Robert Bloom, Angela Swarbrick and Christopher Marsden, the joint administrators of the troubled von Essen Hotels. Leisure property specialist Christie + Co was appointed to handle the process.

It is thought that the agent has received more than 200 expressions of interest for the hotels, which include a number of luxury spas.
Hadrian’s Wall Heritage has submitted plans for a ‘world class’ Roman visitor attraction in Maryport, Cumbria.

The plans received by Allerdale Borough Council outline a £10.7m Roman Maryport development at Camp Farm with attractions including a Victorian model farm; a Roman fort; and a civilian settlement.

The development plans also include a new museum building to house the Netherhall Collection – a selection of Roman Army religious dedications – and the redevelopment of the existing museum in the battery building.

Michael Baker, the director of sustainable development for Hadrian’s Wall Heritage, revealed that the attraction would have a strong educational aspect and that he hoped to have the site open to the public by 2014.

He said: “This key heritage development involves the restoration and conversion of the historic farm buildings into galleries and visitor facilities, and will significantly raise the profile of the west coast of Cumbria as a destination worthy of visiting to a large audience for whom the area is as yet unknown.”

London’s Design Museum has received a £7.5m donation towards its new development project from the Conran Foundation, which is endowed by Sir Terence Conran.

The cash gift has been pledged by the foundation, in addition to the value of the sale of the lease of the current museum building at Shad Thomas, which is currently valued at £10m.

Under its development plans, the Design Museum is proposing to relocate to the Commonwealth Institute building; a move that will offer three times as much space as its current home.

John Pawson will convert the interior of the vacant Commonwealth Institute building, while Rem Koolhaas’ OMA has created the vision for the surrounding development. The capital budget for the project is £77m, with the Heritage Lottery Fund also earmarking support worth £4.9m with the award of a first round pass announced late last year.

Dudley Zoological Gardens (DZG) is a step closer to a £1.5m redevelopment of its four Tecton structures after securing a first-round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

DZG secured development funding of just over £125,000, giving it up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for a full HLF grant of £970,000 towards the project.

The attraction contains the world’s largest collection of Tecton buildings, named after the architects chosen to design the zoo in the 1930s and led by Russian-born Berthold Lubetkin.

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Travel firms that impose debit and credit card surcharges are to face action from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) after a super-complaint by consumer group Which? was upheld. Airlines and operators may face enforcement under consumer protection laws, following the conclusion of a 90-day OFT probe. According to the OFT, removing surcharges for debit cards would ensure headline prices are “truly meaningful”.

The OFT accepted that credit card surcharges may be imposed to cover the increased cost of processing such methods of payment, as long as they meet transparency requirements. Which? chief executive Peter Vicary-Smith said: “While we understand that some of the regulatory changes will take some time, we urge the OFT to take steps immediately to ensure that consumers know the true cost of their purchases up-front.”

Cavendish Elithorn, senior director of OFT’s goods and consumer group, added: “Consumers find it harder to shop around and find the best deal if they have to invest time and effort in discovering surcharges.”

Operators may face enforcement action for imposing debit card charges

Foster underlines golf tourism potential

Northern Ireland tourism minister Arlene Foster has said that promoting the nation’s golf offering to a wider international audience will help generate increased economic benefits.

Foster pointed towards the interest created by Rory McIlroy’s recent win in the US Open could help grow Northern Ireland’s golf tourism industry to £1bn by 2020.

“Holding high profile golf events such as this will be crucial in further strengthening Northern Ireland’s position as a world class golf tourism destination,” said Foster.

Scottish mountain biking sector to grow

Scottish tourism firms have been urged to capitalise on the predicted growth in the mountain biking sector over the next five years, which is expected to be worth £155m to the country.

The market is currently worth £119m a year to the economy, although it is set to grow by nearly a third and is now Scotland’s second most popular adventure activity.

Tourism Intelligence Scotland has published a mountain biking guide to help companies to take advantage of the growth as part of its Opportunities for Growth Series.

Scottish Enterprise tourism product development manager Katrina Morrison said: “Mountain biking is so much more than a niche market for adrenalin-junkies. It offers the perfect social activity for families, an alternative day out for older couples, and an exciting new challenge for beginners.”

The Scottish mountain biking industry is already worth £119m a year

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Air Passenger Duty and aviation capacity

KURT JANSON

is policy director of Tourism Alliance

The government recently carried out a consultation on a restructuring of the Air Passenger Duty (APD) regime. It was originally meant to discuss the merits of moving from the current ‘per passenger’ regime to a ‘per plane’ regime, which the government preferred as a means of encouraging airlines to use more efficient aircraft.

After a long debate with officials, however, this radical overhaul has been shelved and current proposals now being considered are to resolve issues with the current banding system – for example, because the payments bands are based on the distance between London and the capitals of other countries, so passengers to/from Hawaii pay less APD than passengers to Jamaica.

The proposals could also see APD is extended to include private jets and a rethink on the APD charge on premium economy seats. While these are important, they do not address the fundamental issue that visitors to the UK pay more tax than visitors to almost every other country.

To put this in perspective, the World Economic Forum ranked the UK 135th in terms of ticket taxes and airport charges in its assessment of international competitiveness. The only countries ranked worse that the UK are Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Chad and Timor-Leste – and Timor-Leste is only bottom because they didn’t file a return. None of which, it has to be said, are seen as major global destinations.

In addition, none of these countries is proposing to increase their aviation taxes by double the rate of inflation next year and to have their aviation sector join the EU Emission Trading Scheme on 1 January 2012 – a further increase the level of taxation on visitors. Oh, and a further detail: None of these countries are hosting the Olympic Games next year, when an estimated 20,000 journalists from around the world will fly into the country and get to experience just how much tax the government will be taking from visitors.

In terms of a PR strategy to promote the UK and boost tourism by £2bn, this seems to me to not be the best idea.
Swansea Council has approved Amusement Equipment Company’s (Ameco) outline plans for the mixed-use redevelopment of the foreshore at Mumbles Pier.

The outline planning permission will allow for the construction of a new six-storey Headland Building, featuring a mix of commercial, leisure and entertainment facilities on the ground floor.

Upper floors of the building have been earmarked for hotel and visitor accommodation with a maximum of 70 rooms, and/or a number of residential apartments.

Cork City Council has called on Heineken Ireland and BAM Contractors to provide additional details relating to plans for a €150m (£134.7m) Brewery Quarter.

Plans were submitted by the joint venture in December, which will transform the former Beamish and Crawford Brewery site.

However, the Irish Times has reported that councillors have requested further details. At the heart of the Brewery Quarter development is a 6,000-capacity event centre, along with an exhibition/conference space within the old brewery building.

Scottish culture secretary Fiona Hyslop has announced that a number of historic buildings throughout the country are set to receive a share of £1m towards repairs.

The funding – made available through Historic Scotland’s Building Repair Grants scheme – will benefit sites such as Drum Castle in Aberdeenshire (£405,70), Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum (£264,000), Craigston Castle estate (£243,371) and Dunoon Burgh Halls (£161,241) are among the other recipients of six-figure grants.

Cecil Balmond has been selected to work with Charles Jencks on the creation of a new contemporary landmark to be located at Gretna.

The Star of Caledonia is the working title of Balmond’s response to a design contest for “The Great Unknown” – part of The Gretna Landmark Project – being developed and produced by Wide Open (South Scotland) for the Gretna Landmark Trust.

Balmond’s design for the landmark aims to capture the “magnetic pull” of Scotland, while celebrating the work of physicist James Clerk Maxwell.

Jencks said: “Crossing the border to Scotland, across the River Sark, is now a passage obscured under a bridge by cars travelling at speed. Instead of marking this with motorway signs, we are using a landform and sculpture that pulls together the adjacent site, the distant hills and the Solway.”

Cecil Balmond chosen for Gretna Landmark

Hadley Mace – a joint venture comprising Hadley Property Group and Mace – has been appointed as preferred development partner for London’s Heart of Greenwich scheme.

Plans include leisure facilities alongside 645 homes; an NHS health centre and a Greenwich Council service centre, which are earmarked for the former Greenwich District Hospital site.

The regeneration project is to be delivered in partnership with the Homes and Community Agency; NHS Greenwich; and Greenwich Council.

Hadley Mace is to work with architects Make to create an eco-friendly development, which will also include a large public square and will see the first phase completed by late 2013.

London mayor Boris Johnson said: “It is a landmark scheme, as part of a determined effort we are making across London to bring forward public land for development. As well as bringing some vital new facilities such as a library and leisure centre to the community, it will deliver quality housing that will make a real difference to families in the area,” added Johnson.

Court approval for Preston’s Tithebarn scheme

A multi-million-pound mixed-use regeneration scheme planned for the centre of Preston has received the green light after being given the go-ahead by the Court of Administration.

The court upheld the decision by the community secretary Eric Pickles – made in November 2010 – to award planning permission for the Tithebarn development.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council challenged Pickles’ decision, which had followed a public inquiry. A cinema, cafés and bars are proposed as part of the scheme.
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Invitation for Expressions of Interest

**Barking Park boating lake**

Barking, Essex

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (the “Council”) is looking for Expressions of Interest from suitably experienced parties wishing to work up detailed proposals to operate the Barking Park boating lake. Opened in 1898 Barking Park attracts an estimated 716,000 visitors each year and is currently undergoing a major renovation and improvement project. Partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund this £6m scheme will restore the park to its premier position within the borough.

The project includes landscape works (construction of new public car parks, park entrances, boating kiosk and pontoon, environmental improvements to the lake, ornamental gardens, creation of landform / wildflower meadows, new seating and signage) and building works (construction of new park hub including café, visitor centre and play area, and redevelopment of the Lido into an enclosed garden and exciting wet play area for young children and families.).

The overall project is due for completion in December 2011 but the lake improvements and new boating facilities will be completed in spring/summer 2011 and opened immediately.

The park is owned by the Council.

To be part of this exciting leisure development and to register your interest and receive an information pack please contact:

Andy Johnson, Barking Park Manager,
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham -
t: 0208 270 6269 email: andy.johnson@lbbd.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of Expressions of Interest is noon on Friday 5th August 2011.

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NSA workshop for Armed Forces personnel

A workshop is to be held on 14-15 July to help ex-Armed Forces personnel forge a career path in the industry.

Explore Sport is being organised by the National Skills Academy (NSA) for Sport and Active Leisure and is scheduled to take place in south east London.

The workshop will offer 30 free spaces with the help of sponsorship from the sector. Individuals attending the workshop will be reviewed for their career preferences before receiving bespoke advice and training solutions, as well as networking opportunities.

Attendees will also benefit from free accommodation; an activepassport to provide an online record of training and CPD; and access to NSA-approved training providers.

Training facilities for The Shard open

New real work environments – including a fitness studio – have opened as part of an initiative to help people in Southwark to access jobs in the new Shard development.

Hands-on vocational training will be offered as a result of a partnership between Sellar, the developer behind The Shard; Southwark Council; and Southwark College.

Former classrooms and lecture theatres have been converted into new workshops and public retail units to give students the practical experience needed to deal with customers.

Meanwhile, the partnership is also working to secure first interviews for college students in a variety of positions within The Shard - including the Shangri-La Hotel.

The 202-room hotel will be located between floors 34 and 52 of The Shard and will feature an indoor swimming pool; fitness centre; and a whirlpool, as well as a themed bar.

Florence Orban, chief executive officer of the NSA for Sport and Active Leisure, said: “Our workshop will help [Armed Forces personnel] understand what options are available in sport and active leisure and how to access the training they deserve to achieve success.”

CYQ and Edexcel sign partnership deal

CYQ has teamed up with Edexcel as part of plans to offer a programme of apprenticeships in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector.

The two aim to offer employers and training providers who deliver apprenticeships access to a range of qualifications under one roof.

Lori Randall, director of business development for CYQ said: “With Edexcel’s experience of apprenticeships and CYQ’s brand recognition for technical qualifications, we will hopefully make life easier for employers and training providers in the sector.”
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DUTY MANAGER

Full-time (40 hours per week)
Salary scale up to £17,000 pa

This role will include the responsibility for the successful operation of the facilities, whilst working on shift basis (between the hours of 6:45am – 10:30pm including weekends) and undertaking any specific projects as required. Ideally candidates will have a related degree or a minimum of at least 1 year’s experience in a similar role and a good understanding of the leisure industry. Candidates must hold the RSLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, the First Aid at Work and Pool Plant Operators qualification.

It is essential that successful candidates have a positive, proactive approach to work with a customer-focused attitude. In return we offer excellent training, use of the health club facilities and the potential for career progression.

Candidates should note that Disclosure Checks will be obtained. Further information about the Disclosure Scheme can be found at www.disclosure.gov.uk

Closing date for receipt of applications: Sunday 24 July 2011. First stage interviews to take place during the first week of August 2011.

Further questions regarding the above position can be addressed to chmv@christsf-hospital.org.uk or by contacting the Human Resources Department 01403 247546.
Personal Trainers, Pure Gym Limited, Various locations, UK
Swimming Teacher, Virgin Active, Various locations, UK
Spa Therapist, Virgin Active, Bank, UK
Spa Manager, QHotels, Warrington, UK
Health and Fitness Manager, The Hogarth Group, London, UK
Assistant Health and Fitness Manager, University of Leeds, UK
Fitness Instructor, The Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club, Brabourne, UK
Senior Netball Coach, - ESF Educational Services, Hong Kong SAR
GP Referral Coordinator, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Hackney, UK
Health and Fitness Adviser, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK
Assistant Development Officer (Active Lifestyles), Active Sefton, Sefton, UK
Development Officer (Active Lifestyles), Active Sefton, Sefton, UK
Health and Beauty Manager, Espa, Chiswick, Northwood, London, UK
Duty Manager, Bluecoat Sports Health & Fitness Club, Horsham, UK
Personal Trainers, Pure Gym Limited, Cardiff, UK
Lifeguard, Virgin Active, Canary Riverside, UK
Personal Trainers, Pure Gym Limited, Various locations, UK
Swimming Teacher, Virgin Active, Various locations, UK
Sales and Fitness Development Manager, Inspire Leisure, West Sussex, UK
Casual Leisure Centre Duty Manager, Reading Borough Council, Reading, UK
Further Education Manager (2 days per week), Tennis Foundation, Roehampton, UK
Membership Sales Advisor, The Playgate Group Ltd, London, UK
Duty Manager/Boys Games Coach, Metacombe Park Sports Club, Dorset, UK
Project Co-ordinator (Active Universities), Laughborough University, Laughborough, UK
Sports Activator, Coventry University, Coventry, UK
Assistant Director of Sport & Physical Recreation, University of Nottingham, UK
Head Coaches, Greenhouse Schools Project, East London, UK
Duty Manager, Rolls-Royce Leisure, Derby, UK
Spa Therapist, Virgin Active, Various locations, UK
Lifeguard, Virgin Active, Various locations, UK
B-Fit Coach, Tone Leisure, Wellington, UK
Sales and Fitness Supervisor, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Hackney, UK
Operations and Attractions Manager, Warwick Castle, Warwick, UK
Casual Leisure Centre Attendants, Reading Borough Council, Reading, UK
Casual Receptionists, Reading Borough Council, Reading, UK
Marketing Executive, Fusion, London, UK
Membership Manager, Energi Group, Epsom, UK
Group Marketing Manager, Fusion, London, UK
Operations Manager, Fusion, Tunbridge Wells, UK
Direct Sales and Marketing, Energi Group, Liverpool, UK
Dual Sales and Fitness Team Member, Energi Group, Liverpool, UK
Sales Manager, Energi Group, Liverpool, UK
Race Director / Business Owner, - Xtra Mile Events Limited, Nationwide, UK
Get Active Exercise Referral Specialist, Kingston PCT, UK
Get Active Programme Co-ordinator, Kingston PCT, Kingston-upon-Thames, UK
Casual Cover Class Teachers, Tone Leisure, Taunton, UK
Membership Sales Consultant, Tone Leisure, Cheltenham, UK
Sports Coaches / Specialist Instructors, Middlesbrough Council, Middlesbrough, UK
Lead Fitness Course Tutors and Assessors, The Training Room, Nationwide, UK
Visitor Experience Consultant, National Trust, Llandudno, UK
Spa Manager - Maternity Cover, Virgin Active, Chelmsford, UK
Freelance Personal Trainer, Reach Fitness, Cheltenham, UK
Spa Receptionist, Virgin Active, Chelmsford, UK
Sales Manager, Energi Group, Fulham, London, UK
Assistant Leisure Club Manager, Shire Hotels Ltd, Almondbury, Bristol, UK
Spa Treatment Manager, Shire Hotels Ltd, Penrith, Cumbria, UK
Group Exercise Manager, Reebok Sports Club, London, UK
Member Services Manager, Reebok Sports Club, London, UK
Membership Sales Consultant, Fitness Industry Association (FIA), London, UK
Sales Consultant, Energi Group, Swindon, UK
Team member, Energi Group, Swindon, UK
Membership Sales advisors, Energi Group, Dudley, UK
Membership Recruitment Consultant, Energi Group, Various, UK
Fit4Less Tower Hill Fitness Instructor, Energi Group, Tower Hill E1 (City of London), UK
Swimming Teachers, Fusion, Craydon, UK
Fitness Instructor x2, Nexus Community, Henley, Oxfordshire, UK
Fitness Instructor (30hpw), Nexus Community, West Oxfordshire, UK
Fitness Instructor (39hpw), Nexus Community, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, UK
Customer Advisor (Membership Sales - 20hpw), Nexus Community, Prestwood, Buckinghamshire, UK
Duty Manager, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Various locations, UK
Club Manager, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Pan London, UK
Business Sales Manager, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, UK
Recreation Assistant, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, City of Westminster, London, UK
Swim Manager, Virgin Active, Wandsworth, UK
Experienced Spa Manager, Hotel Verta, London, UK
Spa Manager, Tunberry Resort, Tunberry, Scotland, UK
Assistant Spa Manager, Virgin Active, Manchester - Didsbury, UK
Training Manager, Sunsworth Resorts, St Lucia
Spa Treatment Therapist, Shire Hotels Ltd, Penrith, UK
Membership Sales Advisor, Shire Hotels Ltd, Kerrier, Northamptonshire, UK
Spa and Beauty Therapist, Whitley Manor and Aquarias Spa,Wiltshire, UK
Visitor Services and Enterprises Manager, National Trust, Poole, UK
Sport and Recreation Director, Bangor University, Bangor, UK
Duty Manager, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Westminster, UK
Sales executive (part time) Energi Group, Finchley, UK
Membership Sales advisor, £12,000- £16,000 Energi Group, Dudley, UK
Duty Manager - Newham Leisure Centre, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, East London, UK
Fit4Less Crew Member, Energi Group, Inverness, UK
GP Referral Facilitator, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Hackney, UK
General Manager SW London, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Various locations, UK
Senior Maintenance Technician, Finesse Leisure Partnership, Welwyn Garden City, UK
Gym Manager, The Gym Group, Ealing, UK
Spa Receptionist, Virgin Active, Crouch End, UK
Attraction General Manager, Continuam, Yorkshire
League Development Officer, - Manchester Football Association, UK
Workforce Development Officer, - Manchester Football Association, UK
Discipline & Competitions Officer, - Manchester Football Association, UK
Spa and Beauty Therapist, Armathwaite Hall Hotel, Keswick, UK
Partnership Projects Officer, South Yorkshire Sport, Barnsley, UK
Partnership Development Officer (Equity), South Yorkshire Sport, Barnsley, UK
Leisure Operations Manager, Ealing Council, London, UK
Leisure Operations Manager, - Harbury Manor Hotel and Country Club, Herbertshire, UK
Front of House Manager, Virgin Active, Chelsea, UK
Attraction Marketing Manager, Continuam, Yorkshire
Operations Manager, Adventure Valley, Durham, UK
Operations Manager, National Trust, Clumber Park, North Nottinghamshire, UK
Programme Manager (Swimming), New Forest District Council, New Forest, UK
Swim Manager - Part Time, Virgin Active, Clapham, UK
Health and Sports Manager, Capeland Borough Council, Cumbria
Head Swim Coach, Desert Sports Services, Dubai, UK
Regional Sales Manager, Holmes Place, Switzerland
Gym Manager, The Gym Group, Southampton, UK
Spa Membership Sales Advisor, Shire Hotels Ltd, Penrith, UK

Duty Manager at the Rolls-Royce Leisure Fitness Centre

Salary: £16,000 - £17,500, excellent benefits package
40 hours per week including evening and weekends

We are looking for an experienced Duty Manager to assist in the general running of the Rolls-Royce Leisure Fitness Centre, a fully equipped gym, squash courts, sports hall, and class studio.

Essential criteria
- Level 3 Gym qualification and/or Sports Studies/Science Degree
- Management experience within the leisure industry
- IT literate
- Ability to communicate both in writing and verbally
- Proven track record in customer care
- Have a high degree of integrity and trust
- Experience of devising progressive personal training programmes, taking fitness assessments & delivering various group based classes
- Be able to work alone and under own initiative
- Have a flexible approach to work
- Be confident, friendly, approachable and enthusiastic

Please send your CV to Michael Tietz, Rolls-Royce Leisure Fitness Centre, The Pavilion, Moor Lane, Derby, DE24 4HY or email to mike.tietz@rrleisure.co.uk

Further particulars and an application form are available on our website: www.uea.ac.uk/hr/jobs/ or Tel. 01603 593493.

* subject to full attendance.

Health and Fitness Manager
Immediate start £ OTE (basic + PRP)

The Hogarth Group are currently looking to recruit a dynamic Health and Fitness Manager for The Park Club in West London.

The successful candidate will be enthusiastic and able to clearly demonstrate leadership skills to head up a well-established and highly skilled health and fitness team. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are essential along with a thorough knowledge of pre-exercise screening, exercise planning and health behavioural change. The successful candidate should also be IT literate as The Hogarth Group operates the FitLinxx Interactive Network.

Relevant qualifications (to degree level or similar) along with at least one year in a supervisory role are essential.

The role of Health and Fitness Manager will also carry duty management responsibility, therefore an understanding of customer service excellence is required.

Candidates should send a CV and supporting letter to: Terry Rodham, Group Health and Fitness Manager, The Hogarth Health Club, Airedale Avenue, Chiswick, London W4 2NW
Email: terry@thehogarth.co.uk
www.theparkclub.co.uk

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NEC scheme secures casino licence

Plans for a new casino as part of a wider leisure and entertainment complex to be developed on the outskirts of Birmingham have been handed a boost.

Genting UK, which is working alongside the NEC Group on the Resorts World at the NEC proposals, has landed a large casino premises licence from Solihull Council.

The council’s licensing committee granted the permission to Genting – the only bidder to proceed to the second stage of a licensing process that concluded on 31 January.

In addition to the casino, the 55,000sq m (592,015sq ft) Resorts World at the NEC complex will feature a hotel; a spa; a banqueting and conference centre; and a cinema.

It is anticipated that plans will be submitted in due course. Food and drink outlets also form part of the development, which is earmarked to launch in late 2013/early 2014.

New plan to develop Dublin’s cruise market

New plans drawn up by Dublin City Council to further develop the Irish capital’s cruise liner market, which is already worth €50m (£45.1m) a year, has been unveiled.

The Dublin Cruise Traffic and Urban Regeneration Plan was launched onboard the Crown Princess in order to make Dublin more attractive to cruise liner operators.

Minister for transport, tourism and sport, Leo Varadkar, together with the city’s Lord Mayor Gerry Breen and Dublin Port Company representatives attended the launch.

Muse to lead Warrington scheme

Muse Developments has been chosen by Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to lead the regeneration of the Bridge Street area.

A gym; a cinema; a cultural centre; a hotel; and restaurants are among the facilities earmarked for the 6 hectare (14.8-acre) site.

The appointment follows consultation between the council, Warrington and Co – the town’s urban regeneration partnership – and GVA and Cobbetts’ Manchester offices.

Work is expected to commence on site in 2013, although a firm timetable for the scheme is to be drawn up over the coming months. A consultation will also take place next year.

WBC leader Terry O’Neill said: “This scheme will completely transform the town centre; bringing new jobs to the local area and providing the entertainment and leisure facilities that are currently missing but needed.”

A cinema and a gym are to form part of the scheme

Darran Lawless, development director at Muse, added: “[This development is] a genuine mixed-use regeneration scheme which will not only change Warrington but help its people enjoy a much wider range of facilities and services than ever before.”

The planned new leisure development could be completed by late 2013