

# leisure opportunities

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## Merlin plans London IPO in 2014

Merlin Entertainments has revealed London as its preferred location for a planned initial public offering (IPO), after its turnover topped £1bn for the first time during 2012.

At a presentation of its annual results on 27 March, the attractions operator revealed total visitor numbers were up 16 per cent on 2011 at 54m and revenue had risen 15 per cent to £1.074bn.

Speaking to Bloomberg news, chief executive Nick Varney said he made no secret that the group's preference was to list in the UK – a move planned by 2014.

However, he said 20 per cent of all Merlin's business is in North America and all options would be considered. As far back as 2007, Varney has announced several times that the group planned a market flotation but these have been



Varney said despite challenges Merlin achieved £1bn revenue in 2012

delayed each time due to the poor economic climate. Varney said 2012 was the 13th consecutive year the group had beat its profit target. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r3B8m>



The Bedfordshire scheme will target the inactive

## Exercise professionals and GPs to work together

A ukactive-led partnership - involving NHS Bedfordshire, team BEDS&LUTON and local authorities - has been selected as one of 14 pilot projects to receive support from a £5.8m Sport England fund designed to support inactive people to get more active. The partnership will see a motivational interviewing programme entitled Let's Get Moving being introduced to Bedfordshire and Luton.

The initiative includes the target of placing an exercise professional in each GP surgery. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k7O3l>

## Budget 2013: help for pubs and SMEs

The chancellor George Osborne has scrapped the annual alcohol duty escalator and cut the price of a pint of beer by 1p from 24 March.

The move aims to help out the UK's pub sector - although Osborne confirmed that a planned duty increase for other forms of alcohol would still go ahead.

There will also be help for small and medium-sized businesses with the introduction of the new Employment Allowance.

The new scheme will take the first £2,000 off the employer National Insurance bill of every company in the country, meaning that around 450,000 small businesses will pay no employer National Insurance at all. The



George Osborne's budget was seen as a win for pubs

scheme will be extended to all charities and community sports clubs, which often rely on part-time staff. The chancellor also announced new tax reliefs for the creative industries. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q5b4N>

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## SPORT

# Olympic Stadium deal for Hammers

West Ham United Football Club (WHU) will be the new anchor tenant of the London Olympic Stadium following the government's agreement to contribute a further £25m towards converting the venue. WHU was chosen as the preferred bidder for the tenancy in December 2012 but the signing of the deal was dependent on a number of financial and commercial terms being agreed upon.

It is believed that as part of the negotiations, WHU has also agreed to increase its contribution towards the conversion project from £10m to £15m.

The deal means that the proposed conversion of the stadium - which involves reducing the seating capacity from 80,000 to around 55,000 to 60,000 - can now go ahead.

The redevelopment of the venue and the planned use of retractable seating will allow



West Ham hopes to move into the stadium ahead of its 2016-17 season

the stadium to operate as both an athletics and football arena. WHU has signed a 99-year lease for the venue and is hoping to move into the stadium in time for the 2016-17 season. Karen Brady, WHU vice chair said: "A capacity of at least 54,000 seats will place WHU among the top five attended clubs in the Premier League." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y1Gr>

## British Cycling aims to get 1m more women cycling

British Cycling plans to have 1m more women cycling in the UK by 2020 by shifting the culture and accessibility of the sport, it has revealed in a new document.

'A Journey of Inspiration and Opportunity - Our Vision for women's cycling 2013-2020'

revealed the organisation wants increased female membership, more women riding competitively and more women involved in the governing of the sport.

In 2012 525,000 UK women were regularly cycling. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u3b8B>

## Sunderland college to get sports facility

Sunderland College is to undertake a multi-million pound project to provide sports and arts facilities that includes a new three-storey sports centre.

The project, which will be developed by Bam Construction, will see the demolition of several buildings at the college's Bede Campus to make way for the new sports centre and a new visual and performing arts building. The 1,205 sq m (12,970 sq ft) sports centre will include a four-court sports hall, a fitness suite, a sports science laboratory, classrooms and changing facilities.

Also on three storeys, the visual and performing arts building will provide a performance hall; dance and drama studios; music,



The sports and arts centre is being built with sustainability in mind

photography and media classrooms; recording studios; and art facilities.

Work is due to start on site in April 2013 and be completed by August 2014. Both new buildings will focus on sustainability. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=LoT7G>

## £150m boost for school sport

The government has confirmed it will make an extra £150m-a-year investment in PE and school sport over the next two years.

As reported in *Leisure Opportunities* on 13 March, the ring-fenced money will be jointly provided by the Department for Education, Department for Health and DCMS and will see money going directly to primary school headteachers to spend on improving the quality of sport and PE.

Funding for each school will be calculated by the number of primary-aged pupils based on January 2013 figures and schools will have to spend the money on improving their provision of PE and sport.

All schools with 17 or more primary-aged pupils will receive a lump sum of £8,000 plus a premium of £5 per pupil. Smaller schools will



The extra funding is aimed at improving after-school sports provision

receive £500 per pupil. Crucially, schools will have the freedom to choose how and what the money will be spent on - a decision which will provide a boost for the UK's sports provider sector and professional coaches.

To see the full government announcement on the funding, see: <http://lei.sr?a=FoXoG>

## Sport England funding to tackle inactivity

Thousands of people living with and beyond cancer are among those who will be helped to get more active after Sport England announced £5.8m through its Get Healthy Get Into Sport fund.

Macmillan Cancer Support, which will receive £500,000, is one of 14 groups benefiting from funding, which comes as new research shows that the cost of inactivity to the NHS in England is £944m.

The Macmillan project will open up fresh sporting opportunities for cancer patients in 10 parts of England, including work in Oxford to help 14 to 25-year-olds with cancer to get active. Macmillan is investing a further £230,000 in the scheme. Almost 130,000 inactive people are expected to get involved in sport through



The scheme aims to get 130,000 inactive people taking part in sport

the scheme, which will explore a wide range of ways to use sport to improve health.

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality after high blood pressure, tobacco use and high blood glucose. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h8M2v>

## Essex indoor tennis courts get £130,000 refurbishment

Following a two-month closure for refurbishment Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre, managed by Parkwood Community Leisure, has reopened its indoor tennis courts.

The 10-week project, costing £130,000, was a partnership between Parkwood and

the Southend on Sea Borough Council (SBC) and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).

Improvements include a new lighting system, with lux levels meeting the international standard, and resurfacing of the acrylic tennis courts. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X5f9v>

## Stamford AFC's planned £5m ground gets approval

Stamford AFC's new ground and sports educational facility has moved a step closer after being granted planning permission by the South Kesteven District Council.

The multi million pound development is a partnership by the football club, Burghley House Preservation Trust/Burghley Estate Leisure Limited and New College Stamford. Located on land west of Ryhall Road, the stadium will feature a new first team grass pitch with a two-storey covered stadium for spectator seating and standing. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g5t5x>



Virgin boss Richard Branson signed the deal

## Virgin signs deal with Lawn Tennis Association

Virgin Active has become the official health club of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), under a three year agreement.

Virgin Active will introduce a number of LTA tennis products to its members - including Mini Tennis, designed for three to 10 year-olds and Cardio Tennis, a group fitness class that takes place on a court.

Gary Stewart, head of racquet sports at Virgin Active, said: "The LTA's overall purpose mirrors that of Virgin Active - to continue to grow and sustain the sport, nurture young talent and increase participation." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M4iap>

## More British women involved in sport in 2012

The number of women participating in sport and physical activity has increased by more than one million since 2005, according to the latest Taking Part survey.

Released by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the survey examines participation in sport, heritage and the arts in England.

The latest report presents figures for the period January to December 2012 - which includes the period when the UK hosted the Olympics and Paralympics. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m8U4T>

## Sports zone improves activity levels in Watford

The first of a planned series of community facilities inspired by the legacy of London 2012 has proven successful as a way to increase levels of physical activity in communities. The Sports Legacy Zone (SLZ), created by outdoor play equipment specialists Proludic, is a play and fitness area designed for use by the community.

The first SLZ, installed in Watford's Meriden Estate in April 2012, has significantly improved activity levels in the area. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z2a4T>



Running produces 90 per cent greater weight loss

## Running may be better for weight loss than walking

Running may produce more dramatic weight loss results than walking, according to research to be published in the April edition of *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

The six-year study conducted an analysis of body mass index change (BMI) of 15,237 walkers and 32,216 runners, under non-experimental conditions.

In those with a BMI over 28, running produced 90 per cent greater weight loss than walking when done in the same amount. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D7H2s>

## Mytime Active picks up Health Trainer contract

Social enterprise Mytime Active has been awarded the contract to deliver the Heath Trainer service across Norfolk.

Health Trainers are recruited from within the community and are trained to motivate people to change their behaviour and lifestyles, including increasing levels of physical activity, stop smoking and lose weight. They are trained to assist clients on a one-to-one or group basis, assessing their health and lifestyle risks. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c7z9V>

## Streatham leisure hub tops out

Building work on a new multi-million pound leisure development in Streatham, South London, has reached the topping out phase.

The Streatham Hub leisure complex will include a 25m, six-lane swimming pool, a 13m learner pool, a 1,000-capacity ice rink, sports courts and a health and fitness club.

Scheduled to open later this year, the mixed-use complex will also feature a Tesco Extra supermarket, 250 new homes, a local transport hub and a range of public spaces.

Built by contractor Vinci Construction and designed by Michael Aukett Architects, the centre is one of only two in the world which will include a full-sized ice rink above a swimming pool space.

The cost of the development has been largely met by Tesco with the Lambeth Council



The centre's design will include a full-size ice rink above a 25m pool

contributing £19.42m. Lib Peck, leader of Lambeth Council, said: "It's fantastic to see the Streatham Hub taking shape."

"In less than a year from now, top-class sports facilities will be coming back to Streatham." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W2K4i>

## énergie gets skills development funding...

Health club operator énergie Group has secured £400,000 worth of funding from the Government's UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to invest in its national training programme.

The grant was made out from the Employer Ownership of Skills scheme - a competitive fund open to employers to invest in their current and future workforce in England. énergie will look to use the grant towards raising skill sets and the creation of new jobs and apprenticeships - as well as help drive enterprise and the group's economic growth.

Karrin Simpson, training manager at the énergie Group's National Training Centre in Milton Keynes will lead the project and manage



énergie will use the grant to develop its training structures for staff

the completion of all milestones and targets set. She said funding would enable énergie to give franchisees and their staff a greater structure of training and develop its own internal team. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v2K3n>

## ...and secures deal with Playgolf for four new clubs

énergie Group has confirmed a deal with Playgolf Management to open a further four fitness clubs at its leisure sites in the next three years. The first énergie gym at a Playgolf club - at Playgolf London club in Northwick Park - opened in 2009.

The first launch has been confirmed at Playgolf Colchester, scheduled to open July 2013 with Bournemouth, Surrey (Leatherhead) and Brentford to follow in the next three years. They will use énergie branding and Precor equipment. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y8P1B>

## London hosts Fit Cities forum

Leading architects, planners and city experts gathered in London last month to attend Fit Cities-Fit World – a conference organised to look at the role design and planning have in ensuring cities have healthy and active populations.

The conference, held on 18-19 March, examined and built on what was learned as a result of major infrastructure and urban developments created for the London 2012 Games, including Queen Elizabeth Park and regeneration at Stratford.

Key speakers at the event included James Corner, the landscape architect behind Manhattan's High Line project, and David Burney and Karen Lee from New York's Center for Active Design.

Architects and planners from Brazil and Glasgow, which are both currently planning



James Corner, the man behind New York's Highline, speaks to the forum

major sporting events, also presented case studies at the conference. Mayor Boris Johnson said: "London is being transformed, with inviting public spaces to relax in, new bike routes to entice cyclists, plots of land to grow food in and facilities to boost sports participation." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=SiW7D>

## Vitamin D linked to muscle efficiency

New research reveals a link between vitamin D levels and muscle efficiency, which may explain why patients with a deficiency of the vitamin commonly experience physical fatigue.

The research, by Newcastle University, measured the response to exercise in the calf muscles of 12 patients with severe vitamin D deficiency.

The results revealed recovery significantly improved in patients who took a fixed dose of oral vitamin D for 10-12 weeks. Vitamin D is a hormone produced in the skin through exposure to sunlight, and to a lesser extent can be derived from dietary sources.

Study leader Dr Akash Sinha said: "This is the first time a link has been shown



Scans were used to examine mitochondrial metabolism during exercise

between vitamin D status and muscle aerobic function."

The researchers hope further study will reveal the mechanisms underpinning this effect. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J5c8a>

## London mayor urged to tackle childhood obesity

The London Assembly has called on mayor Boris Johnson to implement policies to tackle childhood obesity, as a London 2012 legacy.

At a meeting on 13 March, the assembly unanimously agreed recommendations in two recent public health reports should be

implemented, including: education and training programmes for healthcare professionals; increased funding for weight management services; nutritional standards for food in hospitals; and increasing support for new parents. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k2o4D>

## Risca Leisure Centre to get £280,000 refurbishment

A £280,000 refurbishment of Risca Leisure Centre in Newport, Wales will begin over the Easter holidays, Caerphilly County Borough Council has announced.

Improvements at the centre will include the refurbishment and extension of the first floor fitness suite complete with the latest resistance and functional training equipment. A new health suite accessible from poolside will also be unveiled including a sauna, steamroom and multi purpose social area, which will include a new pool-viewing gallery. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=zoxiv>



Sports minister Hugh Robertson tests facilities

## Sports minister opens new leisure centre in Kent

The £7.8m Three Hills Sports Park in Folkestone, Kent, has been officially opened by minister for sport Hugh Robertson.

Funded entirely by a donation from the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, the centre will act as a centre of excellence for cricket, hockey and netball.

Outdoor facilities at the centre, which is managed by Freedom Leisure, include two artificial turf pitches with floodlighting, netball courts, two cricket squares, multi-lane cricket nets and a multi-use games area. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h6j3D>

## Life long exercise improves brain function in older age

Results newly published from a longitudinal study examining the effects of life long exercise on the brain, reveal regular intensive exercise can improve cognitive function in those aged 50.

The study examined information from the UK National Child Development Study, which detailed levels of exercise in 9,000 individuals aged 11 to 50. The researchers found participants who exercised weekly as a child and as an adult performed better on memory, learning, attention and reasoning. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W1o2m>



## Large-scale art plan for Crossrail

The team behind London's £14.8bn rail project Crossrail has revealed plans to host permanent large-scale public art across eight stations along the 118km route.

Crossrail – to be funded entirely through private sponsorship – will work with leading art organisations and commercial galleries to secure international commissions for the project, called The Cultural Line.

Crossrail, due to open in 2018, will include 37 stations spanning from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east.

The brief states artists should work in partnership with Crossrail's architectural design teams and manufacturers of keynote materials for their station. Already, American artist Spencer Finch has been chosen to produce



Paddington Station will house 'A Cloud Index' by artist Spencer Finch

120m long A Cloud Index for Paddington Station, which will use a glazed station canopy to depict more than 25 types of clouds found in the British sky.

Public art curatorial consultancy Futurecity is providing specialist strategic support to the project. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v2X5W>

## Northern Ireland announces £13.6m of arts funding

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has awarded £13.6m of funding to 109 arts organisations in its annual funding allocation.

The Annual Funding Programme allows arts organisations to make a one-off application to secure public funds from the Department

of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the National Lottery.

Funding is awarded for running costs and programming. This year 15 organisations have landed the funding for the first time. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z2V3z>

## Building begins on Glasgow Theatre Royal

Construction is now under way on an £11.5m project to create a dramatic new entrance at Glasgow's Theatre Royal and provide more public space at the venue.

Earlier this year the Café Royal wing of the theatre was demolished and foundations have now been laid for the oval-shaped entrance, which will include bars, a box office, cloakrooms, toilet facilities and hospitality suites.

Lifts will also be installed for the first time to improve all areas accessibility.

Scottish cabinet secretary for culture and external affairs, Fiona Hyslop, said: "The Theatre Royal is a beautiful building and one of our nation's major cultural assets. However, it was built in Victorian times and



An artist's impression of the Glasgow Theatre Royal by Brian Allen

needs updating to meet modern needs."

Construction is expected to last until May 2014 – before the city's Commonwealth Games begin. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k1Z4F>

## Funds for digitisation of arts and heritage

A new £4m initiative funded by the Arts and Heritage Research Council, aims to develop ways for digital technologies to help communities explore their culture and heritage. The funding is open to independent research organisations, including museums, and will bring together researchers, community engagement experts and digital technology specialists.

The resulting research will be used to develop assets like new or enhanced digital databases, archives, galleries and creative outputs. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r2D7N>



Birmingham will provide works by 17 artists

## Birmingham contributes to the Google Art Project

Birmingham Museums Trust has joined the Google Art Project, contributing 127 works by 17 artists to the online collection.

The museum has a particularly strong collection of pre-Raphaelite arts and through inclusion in the project will be able to showcase paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown and William Holman Hunt to global audiences.

The Google Art Project started in February 2011 and now includes works from 200 major art institutions from 40 countries. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N8J9x>

## Leeds Central Library to consider new arts space

The viability of a small-scale performance hub and arts space at Leeds Central Library will be considered after the city's library and information service received £10,000 funding from the Arts Council.

The service will work with arts providers, community organisations, artists and practitioners to determine what is possible in the space. Leeds City Council audience development manager Ann Day said the space would focus on performance work and the written word. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=qoj9V>

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## **Revamp for Dorchester's Old Crown Court and Cells**

Dorchester's Old Crown Court and Cells, famous for the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, is set to be transformed into a visitor attraction as part of Heritage Lottery Funding awarded to Shire Hall, in which they are housed. West Dorset District Council has secured £69,000 of development funding to build plans to transform the Grade I listed Georgian property into a major visitor centre with exhibitions and educational resources. It would be part of a proposed heritage quarter for the town. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Q8RoR>



Displays will feature behind-the-scenes photos

## **Aston Martin centenary to be celebrated in Gaydon**

Heritage Lottery Funding has been awarded to the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust to showcase the history of luxury car brand Aston Martin, which celebrates its centenary this year. The £71,000 grant allows the display of original build records, photographs, design and engineering drawings and documents relating to the car's appearance in television and film, including the James Bond franchise.

The collection will be displayed for two years at the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L2B4L>

## **£4m revamp plans for Edinburgh's Saughton Park**

A multi-million-pound project to transform Saughton Park and Gardens into one of Edinburgh's premier parks has entered the next stage after submitting a £4m funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF).

The money would be used to renovate the walled garden, footpaths and historic features, and replace the Winter Garden building with a Victorian-style glasshouse. The estimated cost of the project is £5.8m, of which £4m is sought from the HLF. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N2z1u>

## **Hadrian's Wall plans visitor centre**

Concept designs have been revealed for a £10.5m visitor centre and hostel at the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site in Northumberland National Park.

Newcastle architects Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall (JDDK Architects) have been appointed to explore the initial concepts for The Sill, which will replace existing facilities built in the 1960s.

The building will act as a hub for visitors to explore more than 400sq miles of national park, including stargazing, discovering rare flora and fauna and learning traditional skills such as dry stone-walling and hedgerow laying.

Design concepts will focus heavily on sustainability, incorporating locally sourced materials, heather thatched pitched roofs and whinstone walls.



The JDDK concept plans include thatched roofs and whinstone walls

It will include a café, retail spaces and roof-top viewing galleries.

The local community will be consulted about the development over the next 10 months before a final design is submitted for round two Heritage Lottery Funding in December. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=O1Fie>

## **Royal Institution still faces financial trouble**

The chairman of the Royal Institution (RI) says an anonymous donation of £4.4m is enough to clear the organisation's debt but that its financial troubles are far from being solved. Sir Richard Skyes revealed the anonymous donation at a special general meeting of the Institution's members on 19 March.

In a Guardian column last month he revealed RI was operating with annual deficit of around £600,000 and was £5m in debt.

RI, established in 1799, is dedicated to science education and communication and includes Professor Lord Robert Winston among its members.

Its headquarters at Albemarle St include the free-entry Faraday Museum and some of



RI's headquarters in London underwent a £22m refurbishment in 2008

the most important scientific collections and archives in the world. The headquarters were extensively refurbished in 2008 to the tune of £22m, but the project did not attract sufficient funds. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g1m1O>

## **Staffordshire Hoard lands funding for new gallery**

The Heritage Lottery Fund has this week awarded £704,500 for the permanent display of the largest and most valuable Anglo-Saxon treasure ever discovered at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. The 3,500-piece Staffordshire Hoard, which includes 7th-

century gold and silver metalwork, has been on temporary display since September 2009 – two months after its discovery in a field near Lichfield. The proposed gallery will showcase approximately 300 items. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a6m1M>





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## Visa reforms are crucial for continued growth in sector



**UFI IBRAHIM**  
is chief executive  
officer of British  
Hospitality Association

**T**eresa May announced that she'd be restructuring the UK Border Authority (UKBA) – this should be applauded. The need to reform the UK's visa procedures so that they less expensive and more straightforward is absolutely critical to continued growth.

Championing the improvement of the visa system is one of our most important campaigns here at the BHA. It has now gained the support of many other organisations including the CBI, Institute of Directors and the British Chambers of Commerce.

The fact is that the UK's overall economic competitiveness is being weakened by both international perceptions and the reality of visa policy driving business into the hands of our European competitors. To give an example, tour operators bringing Chinese tourists to Europe have been removing the UK from their tour itineraries because of the complicated need for an extra visa.

So what needs to change? We need to bring the UK up to the European equivalent as soon as possible. More far reaching opportunities would be sharing of biometric data with the French and German governments and a 'dual processing' system which would allow Chinese visitors to submit their UK forms at the same time as their single European one. It's estimated that we miss out on an £1.2bn in annual spend from Chinese tourists and the UK share of the Chinese tourists is falling in contrast to growing annual Chinese visitor numbers in countries like France and Germany.

Britain should also follow Australia which introduced an online visa programme, storing personal information and doing away with personal stamps.

Elsewhere, the US administration has also made a number of changes to its visa policies with the deliberate intention of increasing the number of international arrivals – especially those from China.

With the UKBA now back under Home Office control I hope that the government is moving towards reform. It's not just the hospitality and tourism sectors which will benefit from these changes. It is the British economy as a whole.

## HOTELS

### King's Cross hotel to relaunch

London's first railway hotel – Great Northern Hotel – will re-open in April for the first time in almost 12 years following multi-million-pound renovations.

Situated between King's Cross Station and St Pancras International, the privately owned Grade II-listed building has been restored by owner-operator Jeremy Robson of Ram.

Originally designed by architect Lewis Cubitt, the Great Northern Hotel opened in 1854 as the first of the new generation of Victorian railway hotels. Archer Humphreys Architects were responsible for the interior design, which followed the theme of timeless elegance with a hint of modernity.

The hotel's 91 rooms were refurbished with a Victorian inspired colour palette and three room types were created: Couchettes



Great Northern includes destination restaurant Plum + Spilt Milk

(which emulate train sleeper compartments); Wainscot (named after their walnut Wainscot panelling) and Cubitt (named after the architect Lewis Cubitt). The aim for the renovation was to evoke the romance of rail travel from a bygone age and to preserve a sense of history and style. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=14j6q>

### Shangri-La, The Shard, to open in summer this year

Details of the UK's first Shangri-La – to occupy levels 34 to 52 of The Shard – have been revealed ahead of its opening this summer.

The five-star 202-room property will be London's first elevated luxury hotel and promises panoramic views of nearby attractions

such as the Tate Modern, the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral and Shakespeare's Globe. Room features will include custom-made beds, iPod docking stations, complimentary high-speed internet access. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Uoy7r>

### Malmaison and Hotel du Vin sold to KSL

US-based private equity firm KSL Capital Partners has acquired UK boutique hotel brands Malmaison and Hotel du Vin. KSL plans to invest significantly in the existing portfolio of 27 hotels and expand both hotel brands in the UK and internationally.

The investment will support the current development strategy of chief executive Gary Davis – who joined the brands in January 2012 – including the planned September opening of a new Malmaison Hotel in Dundee. There are also plans to convert an existing property in St Andrews to a Hotel du Vin by early 2014.

Davis said: "We look forward to leveraging their considerable expertise, which combined



Malmaison Reading is one of 12 hotels included in the group

with the talent in our own senior leadership team, will further develop our leading hotel brands." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V2O3jh>

## UK tourism spend up 7 per cent

Tourism expenditure in the UK increased by £9bn during 2012 – a 6.9 per cent jump from £125bn to £134bn.

According to the Tourism Alliance's 2013 Tourism Statistics Review, the £9bn increase was sufficient to generate 180,000 new jobs for the UK economy – over one third of all additional jobs generated in the UK last year.

Speaking at the launch of the report at the Houses of Parliament, Tourism Alliance chair Michael Hirst said: "This strong increase in tourism expenditure comes despite the disruption in tourism flows associated with hosting the Olympics and the fact that 2012 was the second wettest year on record."

"The overwhelming success of hosting the Olympics and the likelihood of a better summer this year means that tourism expenditure



Inbound visits to the UK increased during 2012 – despite the weather

in 2013 should produce another record year."

Hirst, however, highlighted the fact that despite the strong growth in spend, the World Economic Forum recently produced a report that places the UK 138th of 140 countries worldwide in terms of tourism-related taxation. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h7l8n>

## Prince Charles to be patron of English Tourism Week

On the back of its second annual English Tourism Week, VisitEngland has announced The Prince of Wales will become the patron of the event for the next five years.

The event, which this year went from 16 to 24 March, aims to showcase the value of the

tourism industry to local communities and the national economy.

Attractions, accommodation providers and tourism operators put on special events and activities aimed at inspiring Britons to explore England. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F4c4s>

## Irish tourism sees second year of recovery

Ireland saw 7.9 per cent growth in inbound business trips last year and 3.8 per cent growth in holiday trips, the second year of recovery for the country's economy.

Spending by visitors increased 4.5 per cent to 3.68bn euro (£3.12bn) with a particularly strong spend from North American tourists and visitors from other long-haul destinations.

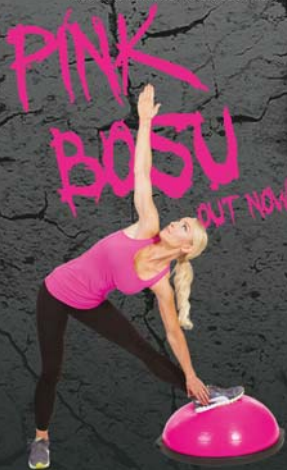
In the hotel sector the number of bednights grew by 13 per cent to 14,180,000, however, those staying with friends or family dropped

9.8 per cent to 13,331,000. Tourism Minister Leo Varadkar said as a result the government was introducing Visa Waiver Programmes and attracting new air routes to target long haul



An increase in city breaks provided operators and hotels with a boost

visitors. He said Ireland continued to market strongly to potential holidaymakers from these areas, because they tend to stay longer. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=B5L0z>



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The site comprises seven listed buildings

## Funding sought for £12m Flax Mill regeneration

An £11.6m funding application to regenerate Shrewsbury's 18th-century Flax Mill Maltings for public and commercial use will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by the end of March.

The site comprises seven listed buildings and includes the Main Mill, which was built in 1797 and was the world's first iron-framed building and the forerunner of the modern skyscraper.

Other buildings to be renovated include the Kiln, the Dye, Stove House and the stables. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n8p7p>*

## London to get 100 'pocket parks' in forgotten spaces

Work has started on the first of London's 'pocket parks', which have received £2m of funding to transform neglected urban spaces into mini oases.

Twenty-seven 'nooks and crannies' in 17 boroughs were selected for the first round of funding. Benefits of the parks include improving air quality, reducing flood risk, providing shade and offering a haven for wildlife. A £30,000 edible park on dead space behind a bus stop in Stockwell will include vegetables, herbs and fruit. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k3U3D>*

## Museum planned for Old Magnus Building, Newark

A new national Civil War Museum in Newark, expected to attract more than 40,000 visitors a year to the area, is set to receive a £1m boost from Nottinghamshire County Council.

The council funding will join the £3.5m Heritage Lottery Fund to go towards the £5.4m costs of the initiative.

The new museum and learning centre will be based in the Old Magnus Building, which includes a Tudor School Hall and Georgian and Victorian classrooms. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A6e8o>*

## Funds for Birmingham's £450m city revamp

Birmingham's £450m regeneration programme for its city centre has taken a step forward with a funding allocation of £63.1m approved for the first phase of the project.

The Paradise Circus project was one of the UK's largest city centre outline planning applications approved last year and will include up to 10 buildings in 17 acres of land between Centenary Square and Chamberlain Square.

The funding was approved on 14 March by the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) board – representing a partnership of businesses, local authorities and the education sector.

The development covers an Enterprise Zone – one of 24 nationwide developed as part of a



Developers Argent are behind the multi-million pound development

2011 government initiative to support new and expanding businesses. The development will include offices, shops, leisure facilities and civic amenities. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=S5msg>*

## New architecture review launched

The British government has launched an independent review of architecture and the built environment with aims to better shape policy to achieve high quality design.

The report – expected to be complete by the end of the year – will be led by London-based architect Sir Terry Farrell with support provided by an advisory panel.

In addition to the government's role in promoting quality design the review will look at the economic benefits of architecture, cultural heritage and the built environment, and promoting education and outreach and developing skills.

Culture minister Ed Vaizey said: "Good design builds communities, creates quality of life, and makes places better for people to live, work and play in." He urged the architecture



World-renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell will lead the review

and design industries to contribute their views when the panel issues a call for evidence shortly. Farrell is known for his work on the Home Office and Greenwich Peninsula in the UK, and Korea's Incheon airport in Seoul and Guangzhou Station in China. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t6V7B>*

## Aberdeen to get £25m De Vere Urban Village Resort

A £25m urban village resort is to be built on the outskirts of Aberdeen as part of the Prime Four business park at Kingswells.

Scotland's first De Vere Urban Village Resort, which was approved by members of the council's development management sub-committee,

will include a five-storey 148-bedroom hotel and a luxury health spa.

It will also house a leisure club with a gym and swimming pool as well as business and conferencing facilities and restaurants and bars. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H9h8f>*



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## Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) Leisure Management Contract

NBBC is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from suitable leisure management operators, including existing non-profit distributing organisations and private sector operators to enter into a contract to manage, develop and operate the Council's sports and leisure centres in line with the Council's strategic objectives for leisure. The Council is seeking innovative solutions to deliver key objectives, to improve access to sport and leisure across the Council's demographic and to provide an improved revenue position.

### The facilities that are to be included in the scope of this procurement are:

- Pingles Leisure Centre, Nuneaton
- Bedworth Leisure Centre, Bedworth
- Jubilee Sports Centre, Nuneaton
- Elton Sports Centre, Nuneaton

In addition, EOI are also required for a separate contract for **Sports Development** provision throughout the borough. Such provision will involve the delivery of programmes and projects that will meet the priorities within the recently adopted NBBC Sport, Active Recreation and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2017. Social Value for these services has been considered. Applications for one or both of the opportunities would be welcomed.

Both contracts will be for a term of 7 years, and will include provision for a further potential extension of another 3 years. The proposed contract commencement date is 1st May 2014.

In order to be included on the Council's select list to be invited to tender, potential bidders must complete a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and demonstrate a proven successful track record including delivering innovative partnerships in a variety of areas within a leisure environment.

The successful contractor(s) will then be selected through a formal tender process.

The Council considers that the existing staff at the leisure centres may transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).

Although the Council considers this Contract to be a Service Concession, the Council intends to procure these services in accordance with the restricted procedure set out in Regulation 16 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

Interested organisations can register and request a pre-qualification questionnaire through the Council's e Tender portal at [www.csw-jets.co.uk](http://www.csw-jets.co.uk)



The closing date for the return of completed questionnaires is the  
**30th April 2013 at 12.00 noon**



## Wyre Forest District Council



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL** is seeking a specialist leisure contractor and/or consortia with appropriate disciplines to Design, Build, Operate and Maintain a new leisure centre in the district. The proposed location for the centre is the former Victoria Sports Ground on the corner of Chester Road South and Spennells Valley Road in Kidderminster. The estimated capital cost is approximately £10.135 million and core facilities shall include a 25 metre 6 lane swimming pool, teaching pool, 6 court sports hall, fitness facilities and some outdoor small sized synthetic pitches. The management and operation of the existing dual use site in Bewdley and the facility in Stourport may also be included in the contract. This opportunity has been placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and expressions of interest are sought from suitable contractors and/or consortia which should be led by a leisure management operator. It is planned for the new centre to be open in 2015. The contract will be for a period of up to 25 years.

The Council considers that the existing staff at the Council's leisure facilities may transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). The Council intends to procure these services in accordance with the Restricted Procedure set out in Regulation 16 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

Interested parties should refer to the recently published OJEU Contract Notice number 102240 (Wyre Forest District Council contract reference 071/03/13) for further details.

Pre-qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) can be obtained from [procurement@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

The closing date for the return of completed PQQs is  
**12 Noon on the 1st May 2013**

### Further information can be obtained from:

Kay Higman, Cultural Services Manager  
Wyre Forest District Council, Wyre Forest House  
Fine Point Way, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 7WF



## this is a leisure opportunity in Redcar & Cleveland



### Are you interested in developing a centre for adventure sports and pursuits?

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council are seeking expressions of interest from developers and operators who share our aspirations for growing our leisure facilities.

Our Borough boasts some of the country's finest beaches, waters and upland areas for active sports and has invested £10m's in recent years on vision improvements and leisure facilities.

If you share our vision, please call us to discuss how you could work with us to establish a new facility that makes best use of our growing sports leisure market.

### PLEASE CONTACT:

Ian Stewart, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council on  
[ian.stewart@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:ian.stewart@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk) or call 01642 774774.

this is Redcar & Cleveland

## Business Opportunities on Wales' Golden Coast

The Llanelli coastline in South West Wales is a unique location and presents an exceptional opportunity to create a national, even international, visitor destination. The foundations are already firmly in place with two major parks, the Millennium Coastal Park and Pembrey Country Park, spanning over 20 miles of that coastline and containing a wide mix of visitor facilities.

The aim now is to build on the success of the Parks by giving visitors an even richer range of interesting and exciting activities, which will add, not detract, from the beauty and ambience of this stunning location.

Carmarthenshire County Council believes the private sector can play a major role in helping achieve this goal and would like to hear from anyone who shares the vision and can bring something of value to the table.

### Proposals could include:

- Taking on and improving existing facilities
- Introducing new leisure attractions
- Developing new activities
- Staging events
- Adding holiday accommodation
- Alternative use of under-utilised areas
- Renewable energy projects
- Community projects



Expressions of interest are now being sought from anybody with innovative proposals that will help Carmarthenshire County Council realise the full potential of these two spectacular Parks. For further information and a copy of the Framework for Development of the Llanelli Coastline contact Rory Dickinson on [redickinson@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:redickinson@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) Mobile: 07799 663044 The Discovery Centre, North Dock, Llanelli SA15 2LF

Expressions of Interest are to be submitted by Friday 3rd May 2013



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## TRAINING

### Oakwood uses Olympics training scheme

More than 100 employees at Oakwood Theme Park in Pembrokeshire have been trained with the same programme used on thousands of volunteers for last year's London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The WorldHost Ambassador training programme, originally developed in Canada to train volunteers for the Vancouver Winter Olympics, was delivered by tourism, travel and hospitality skills educator People 1st.

The customer service training will ensure employees' skills keep pace with the ongoing growth at the park, which will this year unveil £4m of investment. Park director Dominic Jones said: "Last year's Olympics really showed how good



Oakwood Theme Park staff celebrate at the end of their training day

Britain is at delivering world class service and at Oakwood we wanted to use that skill, expertise and enthusiasm to inspire our own staff." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V7j9L>

### IWM lands funds to train volunteers

Imperial War Museum North has received a £528,700 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant that will be used for a new volunteer initiative that aims to measure the impact of volunteering on health and well being.

The project aims to provide personal development opportunities to those who need help reintegrating into society. More than 225 people from diverse backgrounds – including youth and ex-service personnel – will be given the chance to become volunteers and benefit from a bespoke training programme accredited by The Manchester College.

They will get the chance to work with some of the most prestigious heritage venues in the North West, including the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester City Galleries, People's



It's hoped the scheme will benefit volunteers, museums and the society

History Museum, Manchester Jewish Museum, Dunham Massey and Ordsall Hall.

Manchester Museum and IWM North hope the project will demonstrate benefits to volunteers, museums and society. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Co12P>

### Royal Life Saving Society starts 'baby lifesaving course'

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) has introduced a new course which aims to teach vital emergency lifesaving skills to parents and those who regularly work with babies.

The Save a Baby's Life workshops will include practical information on what to do when a baby stops breathing, and dealing with

a choking or drowning situation. Di Standley, CEO at the RLSS UK, said: "We hope that the Save a Baby's Life campaign will raise awareness for the need of basic first aid training for parents across the UK, and encourage more parents to train their babies and children into their local leisure centres from a young age."

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Dianne Eade, Newquay Zoo  
Head of Finance, Human Resources and Administration



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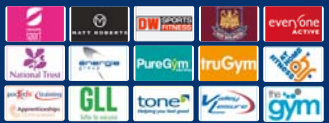
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Swim Team Leader, *Everyone Active, Fareham, UK*  
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## Duke opens £3.6m Tiger Territory

The Duke of Edinburgh has officially opened the Indonesian-inspired Tiger Territory at London Zoo, which will be home to endangered Sumatran tigers Jae and Melati.

The £3.6m project has seen the tigers' home expand five fold to 27,000sq ft (2,500sq m) and has been designed by the conservationists and the zoo's tiger keepers. It includes towering trees and a custom-built swimming pool and is the zoo's biggest investment since the opening of Gorilla Kingdom in 2007.

The Duke officially opened the exhibit on 20 March, unveiling a plaque to commemorate the occasion, before it officially opened to the public two days later.



The Duke officially opens Jae and Melati's new home at London Zoo

The tigers were brought from opposite ends of the earth to their new home at London Zoo, where there are high hopes for them to begin breeding. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f4B8i>

## New Soho hotel One Leicester Street to open in May

International hotel group Unlisted Collection has announced plans for its new project – One Leicester Street – in Soho, London.

With branding by A Practice for Everyday Life and interiors by Universal Design Studio, One Leicester Street will be located

at the former St John Hotel site in the heart of Chinatown. It will offer guests 15 intimate rooms and a bar and restaurant.

The restaurant will be headed by Tom Harris, who was previously head chef at St John Chinatown. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j9o4i>

## 3D film celebrates Preston museum

Preston Park Museum and Grounds in Stockton-on-Tees has hosted an animated 3D film projected on to its façade to celebrate its official re-launch following a £7m revamp. Hundreds turned up to view the night time animation, entitled Lustre, which centred around the hall and its hidden secrets. The restored museum now has a complete redisplay of its collections, an interactive Victorian street and a traditional walled kitchen garden and orchard.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Stockton Borough Council funded the two-year transformation.

HLF trustee and committee member Richard Morris said: "The stunning projection reflected the journey the museum has made and explores the borough's rich heritage. It was an appropriate and creative way to remember



Newcastle design studio Novak created the 3D film

the history of the hall, its people, and above all Stockton's great story as the popular attraction it will certainly be." He said it was fantastic to see so many members of the local community turn up to support the reopening. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D2n2m>

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