

Cruise to bring Liverpool £30M economic boost in next two years

As ships docking in the city return to pre-pandemic capacity, tourism numbers are on the up and that could spell good news for Liverpool, a city council report has identified. More than 100 operations are expected into Liverpool Cruise Terminal during 2022, this busiest season to date.

With more than 200,000 passengers expected to contribute to the visitor economy, an impact of around £15m is expected to benefit the city this year. A further £16m is being forecast for 2023, with 109 cruise operations slated for next year.

A report to the local authority's culture and visitor economy committee, to be heard on Thursday, said £2.25m is generated through Fred Olsen Cruise Lines annually alone, with the firm operating on the Mersey for almost two decades. The report added that the Suffolk-headquartered firm had continued to commit 30 operations per year into Liverpool and had made reservations as far in advance as December 2024. It added:

"Current cruise bookings show 109 cruise operations are scheduled for 2023. There is still some post-pandemic re-positioning globally and re-positioning from the Baltic, so some bookings are relatively recent, and this figure may increase.

"This is expected to generate £16m of economic impact from cruise tourism." It is estimated that the cruise industry will take a further "one to two years" to fully recover, according to the report, with one firm falling by the wayside during the pandemic – Cruise and Maritime Voyages – who were a "loyal client of Cruise Liverpool."

In 2021, Liverpool Cruise Terminal welcomed over 90 cruise calls. The terminal, along with other UK cruise ports, were "instrumental" in lobbying government to include domestic cruising from May 17 last year. The utilisation of the ACC complex as a satellite cruise terminal has now been stood down, but the long-stay passenger parking element has been retained at the new Kings Dock car park, generating a new income stream to the local authority.

"Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the council is currently assessing timescales and likelihood of market growth for taking this scheme forward to the next stage but remains committed to developing Liverpool Cruise Terminal to support growth."

It is expected a further £1.2m is to be generated at the terminal from berthing fees, the strongest year to date, with an economic impact of around £14m. The report said: "Significant strides are being made to identify other sources of income such as working vessels at the cruise terminal.

"Through additional calls from working vessels and the Royal Navy, Liverpool Cruise Terminal will generate circa £80,000 income from non-cruise business."