



Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' Borealis in Liverpool. Credit Stratus Imagery.

## Future of Liverpool Cruise Terminal looks bright

Global Ports Holding Plc (GPH), the world's largest independent cruise port operator, has signed a 50-year agreement with Peel Ports Group's subsidiary, The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Ltd, to operate services at Liverpool Cruise Terminal.

Subject to the granting of appropriate permits and licenses, GPH plans to invest up to £25 million in the terminal's infrastructure, doubling its operations and unlocking the port's future potential.

The investment will include the addition of a new floating pontoon that will increase capacity and allow for the simultaneous berthing of two 300-metre ships and up to 7,000 passengers a day.

The funding injection will also see the construction of a new terminal building that will enhance passenger experience and provide waterfront retail and hospitality offerings that will cater not just to cruise travellers, but also to local tourists and residents.

The historic deal has been enabled by Liverpool City Council, which this week officially surrendered the lease of the award-winning operation it established and has managed since 2007.

The decision to hand back the lease to Peel Ports Group, was made by the Council to ensure the multi-

million-pound upgrade of the cruise facility. Over the last 16 years, the city has welcomed more than 800 vessels and one million passengers, generating more than £110m to the city's visitor economy.

GPH signed the historic deal, recognising that Liverpool is a key location for tourism and is well positioned to participate in the growing Northern European, British Isles and Irish cruise markets, with the potential for significant growth in passenger volumes.

With two major international airports within an hour's drive of the cruise facility, it is felt this connectivity will provide significant potential for the port to act as a gateway to the Northern European and round Britain cruise markets for American and European passengers, as well as being well-positioned to act as a home port for the domestic passenger market.

In 2023 alone, Liverpool welcomed 102 cruise ships and over 186,000 passengers. This is expected to increase to over 200,000 passengers in 2024 and exceed 300,000 per annum once the new infrastructure works are completed.

Liverpool City Council currently employs the Cruise Liverpool team which has provided successful day-to-day management of the terminal for the past 17 years. Under a service agreement between the Council and GPH, some of the existing team members and service providers will continue to support GPH as it significantly expands operations.

The team are currently preparing for the new cruise season, the highlight of which will be the naming ceremony for Cunard's newest ship, Queen Anne, on Monday, 3 June.

Andrew Lewis, Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council, said: "Liverpool City Council is delighted to have helped enable this historic agreement between Peel Ports and Global Ports Holdings Plc. Responsibility for Liverpool's cruise operations now passes to a world-leading operator, with ambitious plans to grow Liverpool's position as an excellent cruise and tourism destination. We look forward to working closely with GPH to support their ambitions, and to extending a warm welcome to many more visitors to Liverpool."

Mehmet Kutman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Global Ports Holding Plc said: "The addition of Liverpool Cruise Port, our first cruise port in the British Isles, to our network marks another important milestone in GPH's ongoing development and growth. I would like to thank Liverpool City Council and Peel Ports Group for their support throughout the process. Liverpool boasts a rich maritime heritage, and the GPH team looks forward to working with all stakeholders to further enhance the success of this remarkable destination."

David Huck, Chief Operating Officer at Peel Ports Group said: "We are proud to be embarking on a new strategic partnership with Global Ports Holding as it takes over operations at the Liverpool Cruise Terminal. Liverpool City Council's stewardship of the Terminal over the last two decades has truly transformed Liverpool into a thriving cruise tourism destination. We see this new chapter as an opportunity for us to build upon that legacy. We look forward to making that vision a reality, alongside GPH through a strategic partnership and our combined maritime and cruise expertise."