Liverpool City Council commissions early design work on a permanent cruise liner building

The city council has appointed an international consultancy team led by Arup and including KKA Architects, Royal Haskoning DHV Engineering and cost consultants Turner and Townsend to produce a concept design.

They will come up with a robust, fully costed plan for a terminal capable of handling 3,600 embarking and disembarking passengers with baggage – three times as many as the existing facility. The site would include passport control, passenger lounge, café, toilets, taxi rank, vehicle pick up point, coach layover area and a car park.

The former Princes Jetty at Princes Parade, close to the landing stage, is preferred location and a potentially suitable site.

The world famous Cunard line – which describes the city as its spiritual home – has said the development could lead to the reintroduction of its transatlantic crossings from Liverpool, which last took place regularly in 1968.

It follows a doubling in the number of vessels visiting Liverpool since it became a turnaround facility in 2012 – up from 31 to 61. Passenger numbers are up from 38,656 four years ago to an expected 86,365 this year.
Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson said: “I am determined to see huge continued growth in the cruise liner industry in Liverpool. To do that we need a permanent building to replace the facility we have at the moment which has limited space.

“We are now commissioning detailed plans which will give us a clear picture of how much of a commitment we are going to have to make. Clearly there will be a cost to the construction of the facility, but the figures speak for themselves in terms of the economic boost we get from cruises coming to the city.”

Garry Banks, Director of Arup and Project Director for the team “We are delighted to have been awarded the contract – we’re a Liverpool-based team and it really helps that we understand the strategic context of this project and its importance to the city region economy.

“The current facility has delivered an award winning service and it’s now our challenge to look at how we can deliver a permanent cruise terminal design that ensures Liverpool can continue to deliver an award winning cruise experience and capitalise on this growing sector whilst accommodating larger ships with greater passenger turnaround.

“Projects such as this also enable us to continue to develop our teams in the city, employing local graduates and apprentices; meaning we not only grow and improve as businesses but we also contribute to the success of the city in the long term.”

The cruise liner terminal is estimated to have generated £7 million for the city’s visitor economy last year, up from £1.3 million when it was a port of call destination.

In May 2015, the Cunard fleet arrived on the River Mersey, creating an unprecedented Three Queens spectacle and once-in-a-lifetime event that was seen by more than a million people lining both sides of the waterfront.

Liverpool was named the UK's best port of call for two years running in 2013 and 2014 and scooped Destination of the Year by Seatrade Global in September 2015.

Later this year, Disney Cruise Line will be coming to Britain for the first time and Liverpool is one of just two English destinations they will sail in to.

Assistant Mayor and Cabinet member for culture, Councillor Wendy Simon, said: "The River Mersey is hugely close to the hearts of local people and there is always a buzz when a big liner is in port.

"Much of what Liverpool has to offer cruise-ship visitors is right in the city centre, alongside the waterfront where ships dock. The location, along with the warm welcome people receive when they arrive in the city, means Liverpool as a destination goes from strength to strength.

"We know there is an appetite from the cruise lines to come to Liverpool and it is vital that we give passengers the best experience that we can. A larger, permanent facility would enable us to do that."

Work will be completed on the study by the end of June and a final decision taken over the project later in the year.