

Embargoed for 00.01 Thursday 12th March

**330,000 SQ FT OF SPECULATIVE OFFICE SPACE AT BIRMINGHAM'S PARADISE REFLECTS
CONFIDENCE IN UK REGIONAL MARKETPLACE**

Visitors to global real estate show MIPIM will today (Thursday 12th March) hear further details of one of Birmingham's most keenly anticipated developments.

The first phase of the Paradise project, which is set to totally transform the city centre, includes 330,000 sq ft of speculative office space aimed at meeting demand from the growing Business, Professional and Financial Services (BPFS) sector and addressing the lack of new supply in the city.

A new cityscape of Paradise's Chamberlain Square will be displayed on the Greater Birmingham stand at MIPIM, to an audience of international investors, developers and property experts.

The first phase of the £500m Paradise development started on site in January 2015 and includes the demolition of a number of the existing buildings to clear the city centre site and prepare it for the construction of the first two speculative office buildings together with extensive new public realm. New road layouts to improve connectivity across the city and open up routes for both pedestrians and road users are also part of the works underway in this first phase.

Birmingham City Council Leader Sir Albert Bore said: "Paradise presents a huge opportunity for Birmingham. This major scheme will revitalise its city centre and provide much-needed high quality office space for companies wanting to expand or locate here. The ambition behind Paradise, and the transformation of Birmingham city centre, is clear. We are presenting Paradise to the world's top investors at MIPIM, to ensure that it gets the global profile it deserves. The scheme is a key factor in realising Birmingham's future growth and success."

A public exhibition on the first two buildings from award winning architects' practices Glenn Howells and Eric Parry Architects will be held after Easter, when the public will be able to see the design of both buildings for the first time, prior to a detailed planning application being submitted.

This significant development is being brought forward through Paradise Circus Limited Partnership (PCLP), the joint venture company between Birmingham City Council and BT Pension Scheme, managed by Hermes Investment Management with Argent as development manager. The enabling and infrastructure works have been funded through the approved £61m investment by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP).

Paradise is part of the Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone (EZ) that was set up to support the accelerated delivery of growth in the City Centre with a range of incentives including simplified planning, business support and investment in infrastructure.

Chris Taylor, CEO of Hermes Real Estate, said: “Hermes’ significant investment in this landmark project reflects our confidence in the commercial marketplace in Birmingham – the city was recently identified as the most important UK destination for property investors by PwC/Urban Land Institute’s 2015 Investment Prospectus Report. Paradise will be a central part of both Birmingham and the region’s growth by bringing new office accommodation of the very highest quality to the heart of the city to meet anticipated demand from the Professional and Financial Services Sector.”

The majority of the public realm will be completed as part of the first phase, while the first two buildings are due to be completed in 2018 and will overlook a refurbished Chamberlain Square.

Andy Street, chair of the GBSLEP, commented: “A landmark scheme within Birmingham’s EZ, Paradise demonstrates how the plans to revive Birmingham city centre are coming to fruition. Through Birmingham’s EZ, GBSLEP and Birmingham City Council have created a new funding model, supported by borrowing against the future uplift in business rates, to ensure that construction work on the site started this year. The EZ has already brought tangible benefits to Birmingham. As well as the visible work now underway at Paradise, £18 million of EZ investment has helped to deliver 600,000 sqm of developments in the city centre in the past year. Future investment from our £275m EZ Investment Plan will include sites outside of the city centre, helping to drive economic growth across Greater Birmingham.”

Paradise will be presented to MIPIM’s delegates during an event at the Greater Birmingham stand, ‘Meeting the Demand of Financial and Professional Services’. The event will look at what space is available to Greater Birmingham’s BPFs sector – the largest in the UK outside London – and features Erik Simonsen, Head of Deutsche Bank Birmingham; Jon Neale, Head of UK Research at JLL; Neil Rami, CEO of Marketing Birmingham; and Rob Groves, Senior Project Director at Paradise’s development manager, Argent.

Managing Partner of Argent, David Partridge, believes Paradise will prove to be an exemplar city centre scheme: “Argent and Hermes have great experience of place-making in city centres. You need only look at examples of our work in Kings Cross in London, One St Peter’s Square in Manchester and closer to home at Brindleyplace to recognise the great importance we place on good design, effective and attractive public space and high quality materials. With architects of renown already

appointed for the first two buildings, Paradise will be a place that attracts high calibre occupiers and one that Birmingham can be proud of.”

A website showcasing the proposals for Paradise can be viewed at www.paradisebirmingham.co.uk.

-Ends-

Media contacts

- MIPIM: Rebecca Bannister, PR manager, Marketing Birmingham – 07903 924 896 / 0121 202 5112, rebecca.bannister@marketingbirmingham.com
- Paradise/Argent: Stephen Osborne-Brown, Core Marketing - 0121 232 5000, stephenosborne-brown@core-marketing.co.uk
- Hermes Investment Management: Clare Hartshorne, Redwood Consulting - +44 (0)7515 050 335, clare@redwoodconsulting.co.uk

Hermes Investment Management

Hermes is focused on delivering superior, sustainable, risk adjusted returns for our clients – responsibly.

Hermes manages assets on behalf of more than 200 clients* across equities, fixed income, alternatives and real estate, with £28.6 billion* assets under management. In Hermes EOS, we have the industry's leading engagement resource, advising on more than £134.0 billion* of assets.

We believe in **Excellence, Responsibility** and **Innovation**

- **Excellence:** We aspire to excellence in everything we do. This manifests itself most visibly in our investment performance. We will only offer products to our clients where we believe there is a strong investment thesis and where we can deliver sustainable alpha.
- **Responsibility:** We believe it is our responsibility to lead discussion and debate about the fiduciary responsibilities of fund managers to our clients, their stakeholders and, ultimately, society at large. We have always sought positive engagement with the firms in which we invest.
- **Innovation:** We have the entrepreneurial culture to identify forward-looking products that meet those needs, along with the resources and speed-to-market mentality to develop them rapidly.

Our structure gives clients globally the benefit of access to a broad range of specialist, high conviction investment teams operating within an established and robust operating platform.

Hermes' investment solutions include:

- **Equities:** Global, Emerging Markets, Small & Mid Cap, Europe, Asia Ex Japan, Greater China
- **Fixed Income:** Inflation-Linked, Government Bonds, Investment Grade, High Yield
- **Real Estate:** Segregated, Unitised, Debt, UK, US Residential, European, UK PRS
- **Alternatives:** Multi Asset, Infrastructure, Private Equity

*Please note the total AuM figure includes £3.7bn of assets managed or under an advisory agreement by Hermes GPE LLP (“HGPE”), a joint venture between Hermes Fund Managers (“HFM”) and GPE Partner Limited. HGPE is an independent entity and not part of the Hermes group. £0.4bn of total group AuM figure represents HFM mandates under advice. Source: Hermes as at 31 December 2014.