

## DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

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### **BIRMINGHAM'S PARADISE TRANSFORMATION TO START ON SITE IN JANUARY 2015**

Confirmation that construction of Birmingham's most anticipated new development scheme – the transformation of 17 acres at Paradise Circus in the heart of the city centre - will start on site in January 2015 has been made today, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

The £500m development is being brought forward through the joint venture company, Paradise Circus Limited Partnership (PCLP), a partnership between Birmingham City Council and BT Pension Scheme, managed by Hermes Real Estate with Argent as development manager.

The first phase of the development works will include major demolition, significant infrastructure changes and enhancements to the public realm, including improvements to Chamberlain Square. Importantly, the first two office buildings overlooking Chamberlain Square will also be speculatively developed, bringing over 300,000 sq ft of office space to the market to help address the city's lack of new Grade A offices. A detailed planning application for the buildings will be submitted in early 2015.

The development will now be known simply as 'Paradise', reflecting the fact that the 'circus' element of the site will disappear when the section of Paradise Circus Queensway road running alongside Birmingham Town Hall from Great Charles Street is pedestrianised as part of the approved scheme.

Chris Taylor, Chief Executive, Hermes Real Estate, said: "This is the moment we have all been working towards during the years of planning this transformational project. We are now in the position to move the development forward rapidly and with absolute certainty.

"The transformation of this significant site at the civic, cultural and historic heart of the city will start with a programme of enabling and infrastructure works funded through the approved investment by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)."

These works, which include changes to the highways surrounding the development, will begin from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015.



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Andy Street, chairman of the GBSLEP, said: "The long awaited transformation of Paradise is truly exciting and has been made possible by a £61M investment from the Enterprise Zone. This is an excellent example of how the GBSLEP and its partners have worked together, using innovative financial mechanisms, to help unlock a major development within the city. Paradise will revitalise this part of Birmingham; creating a substantial number of jobs and helping to attract significant commercial investment."

Leader of Birmingham City Council, Sir Albert Bore believes Paradise will prove to be a pivotal development for the city: "Birmingham is building a growing reputation as the country's leading international business and tourist destination outside London. This will be further boosted in 2015 when we all start to benefit from the many significant improvements to the city's infrastructure together with the commencement of a number of important projects.

"Paradise is, perhaps, the most strategically important of these. Not only will it attract new businesses and jobs, it will draw new visitors, open up the city and give our historic buildings the high quality setting they deserve – and Birmingham City Council is proud to be an integral part of it."

Argent is managing the design and delivery of the site works on behalf of PCLP as well as being the development manager for Hermes Real Estate on the commercial buildings. Carillion was selected earlier this year as the contractor for the first phase of infrastructure works, due to start in January. Full details of these works, which include changes to the roads around the site, will shortly be announced.

Managing Partner of Argent, David Partridge said: "The Argent team has been working closely with BCC across a number of departments for many years to reach this important milestone. Now that we are delivering the first phase of the development, people will start to see the city's landscape change as this momentous project gets underway."

Glenn Howells Architects and Eric Parry Architects have been appointed to design the first two office buildings which will be delivered for 2018. Grant Associates is the landscape architect responsible for creating a world class public realm to complement the listed historical and contemporary new buildings at Paradise.



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Joint agents for the scheme are GVA and CBRE.

A website showcasing the proposals for Paradise can be viewed at [www.paradisebirmingham.co.uk](http://www.paradisebirmingham.co.uk).

**-Ends-**

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## Editors Notes

### About 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 £27.9 billion\* assets under management. In Hermes Equity Ownership Services, we have the industry's leading engagement resource, advising on more than £120.3 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 £3.6bn 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 30 September 2014.

## Argent

Argent (Property Development) Services LLP is one of the UK's best respected property development companies.

Argent developed and managed Brindleyplace which offers more than 1.1 million sq ft of office space, 30 restaurants, bars and cafés as well as leisure and recreational facilities. Brindleyplace is internationally recognised as an award winning benchmark for urban regeneration and has been responsible for leading the way in Birmingham's continued transformation.

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The Argent team – now restructured as a Partnership - has been developing for 30 years. Argent has built a strong track record in mixed use developments that combine office, residential, retail, leisure, hotels, cafés, restaurants and managed open space; and has become a leading practitioner of city centre regeneration. It aims to be the most respected and successful developer in the UK.

Argent focuses on just a few, exceptional schemes at any one time, working with landowners and other partners. In addition to the eight million sq ft emerging at King's Cross in London, Argent's CV includes the rejuvenation of Piccadilly (One Piccadilly Gardens, Piccadilly Place, The Hub, The Hive) and One St Peter's Square in Manchester; Brindleyplace and Paradise Circus in Birmingham; the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Thames Valley; and major commercial developments in the City of London.

For further information visit: [www.argentllp.co.uk](http://www.argentllp.co.uk)