

THOUSANDS OF JOBS TO BE CREATED AS OLYMPIC MEDIA CENTRE IS SOLD

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Thousands of jobs to be created as Olympic media centre is sold

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BORIS JOHNSON today claimed the legacy of the Olympic Park had been secured as he announced a deal to take the £300 million media centre off taxpayers' hands, and the creation of thousands of jobs.

The former Olympic broadcast studio, which was home to 20,000 members of the media during the Games, will be converted into one of Europe's largest data storage facilities.

Using the high-capacity digital connections installed for Olympic broadcasters, data specialists Infinity will store information for large corporations on servers at the Hackney site.

A 200-year lease was today signed between the Mayor's Olympic legacy agency and iCITY, a consortium of Infinity and property developers Delancey which also owns half of the Olympic village.

A workforce of 2,000 builders are due to begin the £100 million overhaul of the studios next year.

Other confirmed tenants are Loughborough University, Hackney Community College and BT Sport, which will broadcast live Premier League games from its new studios from August. The

firms will occupy less than half the facility, but its new owners say other tenancy deals are in the pipeline.

Speaking at the Olympic Park today, the Mayor, who installed himself as chairman of the London Legacy Development Corporation shortly after the Games, said: "It is fantastic news that the final piece of the Olympic venues jigsaw puzzle has been put in place.

"With the future of eight out of eight permanent venues secure, London has

delivered on part of the Olympic legacy. iCITY is the final jewel in the crown of the park and is a digital hub that will employ thousands of people."

LLDC chief executive Dennis Hone

said: "We've said there would be no white elephants in the Park and we've kept our promise."

The media centre was touted as the main employment-creation scheme of the £9 billion Olympic project and a shot in the arm for Hackney's economy.

iCITY claimed it would deliver 4,500 jobs by 2018, and Hackney mayor Jules Pipe said the economic legacy of the Games was "well on the way".

BT has signed a signed five-year deal, creating 100 "core" jobs with Infinity with its clients hiring 800 other people. iCITY say 1,200 workers will be on the site by 2015.

Legacy experts say the deal for a new London campus for Loughborough University has greatest potential for creating a community in the park. Some 1,200 students will be enrolled by 2015 for courses in postgraduate teaching, research and enterprise.

iCITY was the sole remaining bidder for the media centre after a shopping centre proposed by Decathlon was ruled out. Other potential bidders were put off by poor public transport links to the site which is in a remote part of the 500-acre park.

Less than a year ago, the Mayor's former Olympic legacy chief Daniel Moylan said the centre was fit for demolition and should be replaced with housing.



New life: an artist's impression of the media centre development, which will include a data storage facility