

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Kirklees Our Cultural Heart Venue Feasibility

Stage 1 Report by IPW...

June 2025



Basis of Information

It is not possible to guarantee the fulfilment of any estimates or forecasts contained within this report, although they have been conscientiously prepared based on our research and information made available to us at the time of the study.

Neither IPW..., nor the authors, will be held liable to any party for any direct or indirect losses, financial or otherwise, associated with any contents of this report.

We have relied in a number of areas on information provided by the client (and other organisations) and have not undertaken additional independent verification of this data in all cases.

Confidentiality

The contents of this paper are confidential to the parties it was prepared for only (Kirklees Council) and is not to be shared outside these organisations without the express permission of IPW... and Kirklees Council.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

The Borough of Kirklees (the Council) has developed a vision for the regeneration of Huddersfield Town Centre, known as the Our Cultural Heart (OCH) project, which includes the development of a new venue, alongside new cultural facilities.

The Council has appointed IPW... to advise on the venue development, as part of the Delivery Team with Turner & Townsend (T&T).

IPW... is exploring the future feasibility of a new multi-use venue in Huddersfield Town Centre to support the Council’s strategic, cultural, financial and regeneration aspirations. IPW... is undertaking an initial market assessment to identify a recommended venue facility mix/scale.

E.S.1 Project Objectives

The following project objectives were identified at the start of this study:

- Venue to **drive footfall** into Huddersfield Town Centre to maximise the economic benefits, especially in the evening
- Operationally **self-financing** scheme with no long-term subsidy requirement – Council may be prepared to offer initial support/rent free period, depending on scale and facility mix
- **Long-term lease** agreement with commercial operator – preference for a stable national/ international operator with relevant experience
- **Diverse programme** of events which appeals to local market
- **Enhancement of the cultural offer** of Kirklees.

E.S.2 Catchment, Competition and Content

- **Large catchment** around Huddersfield with 30-minute drivetime catchment of c.1.3million and 45-minute drivetime catchment of c.4.2million
- Propensity to consume events in line with the national average. **Propensity to consume theatre content** more than once a month significantly higher (15%) than national average, which suggests strong regional audiences for theatre content
- Huddersfield is located between major urban centres, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford and Manchester, which results in Huddersfield having an overlap in catchment, with some access to a unique catchment at a 30-minute drivetime but lack of a distinct catchment at a 45-minute drivetime
- Local venues in Kirklees are smaller scale with a limited programme of events which is made up of mainly live music/tribute bands (46%), followed by Musicals (8%), Comedy (7%) and Family shows (6%)
- **Regional market is crowded**, with many of venues of varying capacities, so a new venue in Huddersfield will compete with venues in Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Bradford for content and audiences
- Significant **touring content in the region but little comes to Huddersfield** due to lack of appropriate venue. Touring theatre content goes to regional theatres - no venue in Kirklees that can host such events of scale currently
- **Operator and promoter** feedback suggests opportunity for managed multi-use venue with capacity and capability to host touring theatre content
- **Opportunity for a new venue in Huddersfield capable of hosting a large mixed programme of events including entertainment, e-sports, sports (boxing, snooker, darts), weddings, banquets, parties, conferences and exhibitions**
- A larger capacity venue bringing new content would further establish Huddersfield as a cultural heart and **improve opportunity for all of the existing venues** by bringing a new potential audience to the town

- Further analysis around **potential event programme and commercial arrangements would be undertaken in Stage 2** of the feasibility.

E.S.3 Wider Infrastructure

- **Good local transport links** and connections to regional hubs, with supporting services to encourage visitors
- **2 current hotels** in the immediate vicinity (10-min walk time from the site), accounting for over c.75 bedrooms and new George Hotel under construction with 108 rooms
- Visitors have potential to utilise the existing car park provision, however, this assumption needs to be tested further with a **car parking study** which would feed into the Stage 2 report

E.S.4 Consultations

- Soft Market Testing at this stage identified **three significant operators** with a genuine interest, with others suggesting they wouldn't consider until nearer a commissioning date
- A number of operators would be interested in operating the **venue subject to a fly tower and staging** being included in the design. This approach **might add 30-50 events** to the annual calendar and bring significant footfall and audiences to the Town
- Further **operators are looking for venues to complement their wider portfolio** of facilities in the UK and the North.
- A number of operators have commented that a venue proposition would potentially be **more attractive to the market if the phasing of the venue could be brought forward**
- There was some **nervousness from existing venues** that a new venue in

Huddersfield with theatrical capability might impact on their own outputs. However, it might be anticipated that a complementary facility to existing ones would encourage a new audience to the smaller and existing facilities. A new venue would enable audiences to view Huddersfield as destination for more theatre content benefiting all providers

- Parties have raised some **concern regarding comedy content** which could play in a number of venues in the town. A purpose-built multi use facility would maximise the content in the Town for all content types.

E.S.5 Venue Recommendation

Following the market assessment exercise and the soft market testing conducted with the selected venue operators, we would recommend the following be tested at Stage 2:

- **A venue with capacity of 1,200 in a fully seated mode and a maximum capacity of 2,000 using a standing floor and seated balcony which would best meet the OCH project objectives**
- Design should also accommodate the **ability to split the main auditorium into two spaces** so that a smaller capacity secondary space can be created
- A **fully flexible venue** with the ability to accommodate as many event types as possible including entertainment, theatrical content, business events, public events, sports and e-sports
- The inclusion of a **Fly Tower and staging** (subject to further testing with potential operators in Stage 2)
- Potential to be equipped to be able to run an **immersive attraction** based upon Council's own IP and dovetail with the Museum and Gallery programmes
- An **exterior digital advertising and content screen.**

E.S.7 Next Steps ...

- A **Multi Use Venue with a theatre capability has the potential to be successful in Huddersfield** due to commercial demand from venue operators and a catchment with a strong propensity for theatre content
- There is a window of opportunity to test the recommended venue mix and identify and quantify the programming and content **opportunity to bring regional audiences to Huddersfield who might not have otherwise come to the town**
- IPW... believe that market conditions mean this is **potentially a better opportunity than the Council's previous investigation**; while there are challenges to be considered around catchment and competition this is a proposition where content is the driving feature when considering the three C's of content, catchment and competition
- IPW... recommends that the Council should **test the venue opportunity further during Stage 2** to confirm the market interest with detailed venue specific discussions
- Stage 2 works would include developing the **venue planning, siting, venue costing, programming and business plan which will establish the throughputs for the venue and financial viability**. This analysis will provide the necessary robust and rounded analysis of the commercial and strategic implications of the recommended venue
- We will then have **clarity on whether this window of opportunity is deliverable and whether this is a major opportunity** as part of Our Cultural Heart to change perceptions of Huddersfield and bring in people and improve the economics of the scheme and the region.



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1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 Introduction

The Borough of Kirklees (the Council) has developed a vision for the regeneration of Huddersfield Town Centre and has a multi-year capital budget plan of c.£262 million for new cultural facilities known as the Our Cultural Heart (OCH) project, which includes the development of a new venue.

The Council has appointed IPW... to advise on the venue development, as part of the Delivery Team with Turner & Townsend (T&T), who are undertaking the project management and cost management for the scheme.

IPW... is exploring the future feasibility of a new multi-purpose venue in Huddersfield Town Centre to support the Council's strategic, cultural, financial and regeneration aspirations. IPW... is undertaking an initial market assessment to identify a recommended venue facility mix/scale.

1.2 Structure of this report

The structure of this report is as followed:

- Section 2: Background & Context
- Section 3: Catchment, Competition & Content
- Section 4: Wider Infrastructure Review
- Section 5: Consultations
- Section 6: Market Assessment Findings
- Section 7: Venue Recommendation
- Section 8: Summary & Next Steps.



2. PROJECT BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES



2.1 Project Background

The OCH project is a key Council led regeneration scheme in Huddersfield Town Centre. OCH is the flagship development within the Council's wider Huddersfield Blueprint which provides a 10-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day town centre. The OCH project is set to transform Huddersfield Town Centre into a vibrant cultural hub of leisure, heritage, music and arts.

The role of town centres is changing nationally, with residents and visitors seeking more experiences through leisure and culture. OCH is seen as a catalyst for change in the town centre, by bringing together Kirklees Council's current cultural services into a holistic experience. The project has the potential to enhance the existing leisure and cultural offer available and attract more residents and visitors to the town centre, especially in the evening.

The Council has approved plans for the first phase of OCH, which is now currently on-site and under construction. This first phase of the masterplan concentrates on the major refurbishment of the historic former Queensgate Market building, which will be transformed into a vibrant new food hall. A brand-new library will be incorporated within the existing east wing of the same building, with a new glass-fronted extension to the north. This phase is due for completion in summer 2026.

Both the food hall and new library will directly feed out to a new public square, with enough space for 3,000 visitors. The square will bring people together and suit a range of community and cultural events – from food festivals and live music to outdoor cinema and theatre.

The second phase of OCH will see a new art gallery and museum brought together under one roof in the striking Grade II Listed building off Princess Alexandra Walk, which previously housed the town's library. Funding has been approved for this phase, with a construction starting by Spring 2026 and the new facilities are due to open by Q1 2029.

Figure 2.1 Nighttime aerial view of OCH site



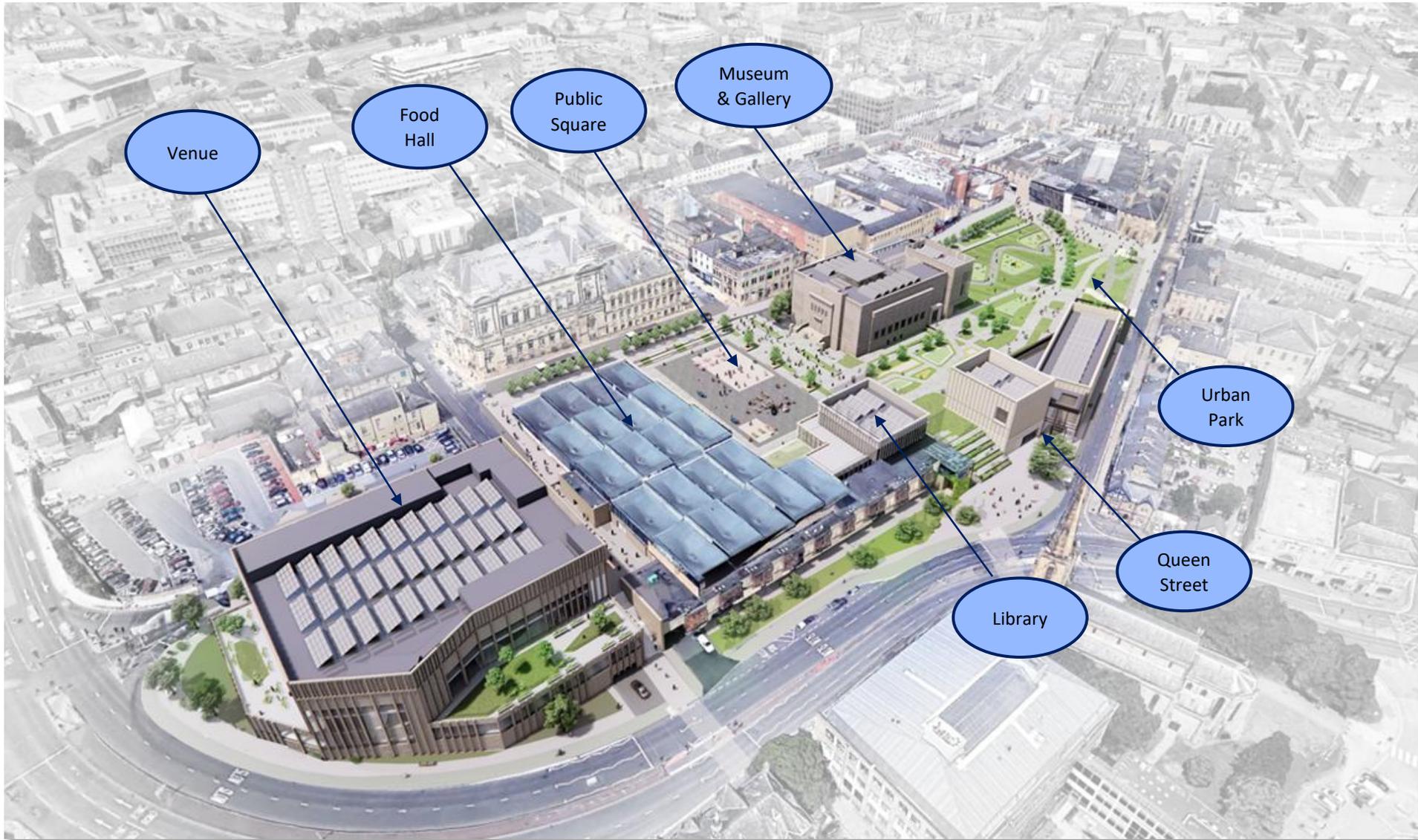
The new venue will be developed as part of the subsequent phases of the OCH project. There is a long-term ambition for Huddersfield to deliver a brand-new live entertainment venue. A vacant parcel of land to the south of the site, formerly occupied by a municipal car park before its demolition in 2021, has been earmarked for the new venue. The capacity of the venue and the scale of the facility mix is still to be determined.

The subsequent phases will also consider various enabling development options on a plot of land on the edge of the site adjacent to Queen Street, with options including educational facilities, residential, a hotel or offices. It will also see the development of an urban park and public realm which will act as a key link between the scheme and the wider town centre.

Figure 2.2 overleaf outlines the masterplan for OCH project and shows the adjacencies of the various elements of the scheme.



Figure 2.2 OCH Masterplan



2.2 Council Objectives

A number of project objectives were developed by the Programme Board during the last iteration of this study. We re-engaged with the Council to understand if their strategic priorities were still the same or if they had changed over time.

Following conversations with the Council, the objectives identified were:

- Venue to drive footfall into Huddersfield town centre to maximise the economic benefits, especially in the evening
- Operationally self-financing scheme with no long-term subsidy requirement – Council may be prepared to offer initial support / rent free period, depending on scale and facility mix
- Long-term lease agreement with commercial operator – preference for a stable national/ international operator with relevant experience
- Diverse programme of events which appeals to local market
- Enhancement of the cultural offer of Kirklees.

There were no specific timeframes proposed for the development to be either commenced or completed.



3. CATCHMENT, COMPETITION & CONTENT



3.1 Industry Dynamics – what drives demand?

As part of identifying demand for entertainment events in Kirklees, it is important to consider the key interrelated factors that impact upon the demand for an entertainment venue. These are:

- **Catchment:** a venue requires a strong population catchment in order to maximise ticket sales and attendances. This is both in terms of the number of people that can access the venue within an acceptable travel time and also the propensity for people to attend and pay for events/ tickets.

The strength of the business and academic communities is also typically very important from a business events perspective.

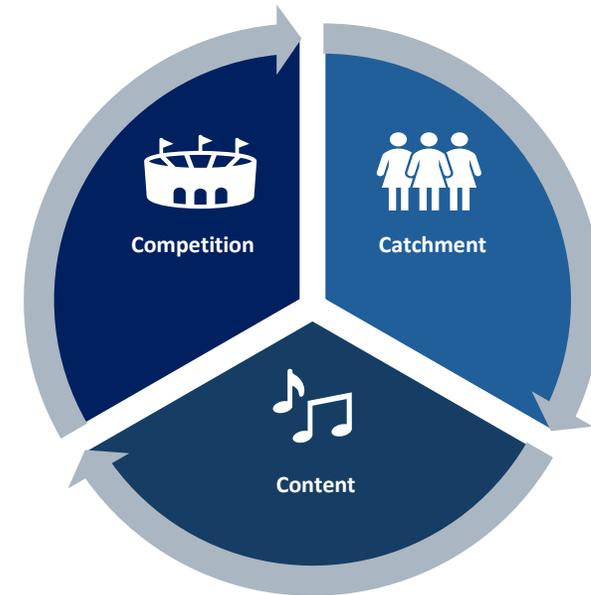
- **Content:** a venue requires ‘content’, i.e. events to fill its annual calendar, which could include theatre shows, concerts, conferences and exhibitions, banquets etc. As a general rule the more content a venue can secure, the more commercially successful it will be (subject to the quality and commercial appeal of the events) and the more indirect benefits it can drive for the city and its people and businesses.

- **Competition:** competition for a venue applies to both the catchment and the content.

Example of content competition: there are a finite number of shows, musicians etc. touring in one year, playing a certain number of concerts in a geographical area (which could be Europe-wide or across the UK).

The venues the shows/ artists choose to play is heavily dependent on the promoter view of the potential to maximise ticket sales. Factors affecting promoters’ choice of venue are shown below right.

Figure 3.1 The Dynamics of Demand



- Key factors affecting venue choices**
- Facilities
 - Location
 - Cost
 - Ambience & Genre
 - Configuration
 - Reputation & Quality
 - Capacity

3.2 Catchment

The catchment range varies depending on the scale of the venue in question (and the overall geography of specific locations) with larger venues typically attracting audiences from greater distances. The view that catchment size increases by seat number/ capacity is also supported by data reported by the Audience Agency.

Based on our experiences nationally, we would typically assume that mid-scale entertainment venues (i.e. below a large arena level) in a location like Huddersfield would draw the vast majority of their audiences from within a 45-minute drivetime (subject to scale and product), though some events will attract audiences from beyond this.

On this basis, we have analysed the catchment demographics for 30 and 45-minute drivetimes from Queensgate Market (Huddersfield), compared with the national average (England).

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 graphically demonstrate the scale of the 30 and 45-minute drivetime catchments.

The **30-minute drivetime catchment for Huddersfield is c.1.3million**, with the adult population (15+) being c.1.1million.

Looking further afield, the **45-minute drivetime catchment is c.4.2million** with the adult population at c.3.4million.

Both the 30-minute and 45-minute drivetime catchments are considered to be large in relation to mid-scale venues.

Figure 3.2 30-minute drivetime population from Queensgate Market

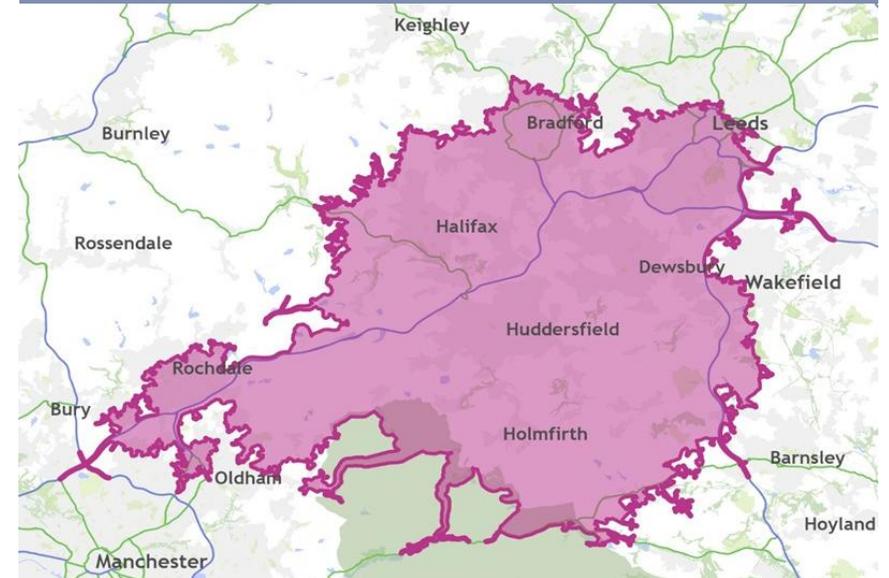
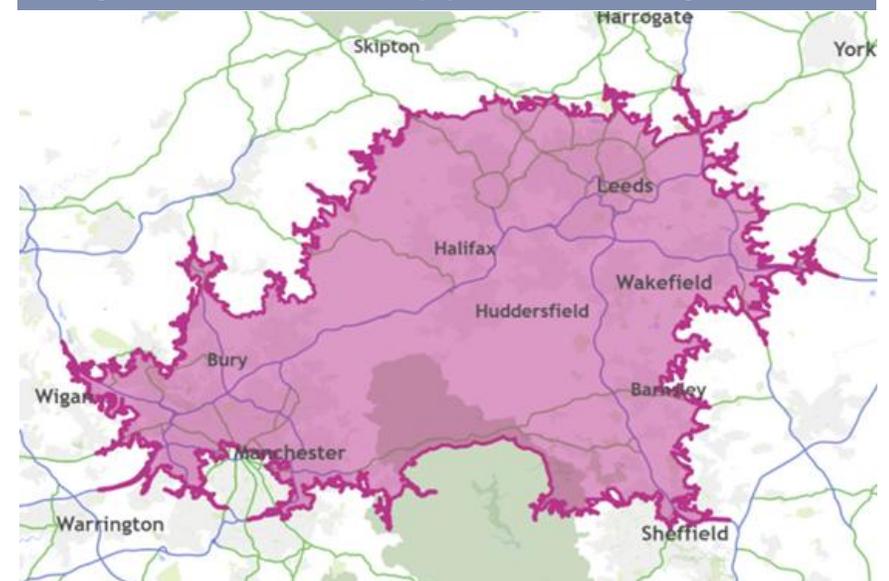


Figure 3.3 45-minute drivetime population from Queensgate Market



3.2.1 Distinct Catchment

Huddersfield is located between two major urban centres, Leeds and Manchester, each with its own established market and venue infrastructure. As a result, while Huddersfield benefits from a theoretically large 30-minute and 45-minute catchment, there is overlap with neighbouring markets. Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5 illustrate the extent of this overlap.

At the 30-minute drivetime, Huddersfield's catchment area (highlighted in red) overlaps with about half of Leeds 30-minute catchment, and to a much lesser extent, has some minor overlaps with the fringes of Manchester's 30-minute catchment.

At the 45-minute drivetime, Huddersfield's catchment has significant overlaps with the catchments of both Leeds and Manchester, with little distinct audience reach at this level.

This indicates that **Huddersfield has some access to a unique catchment at a 30-minute drivetime but lack of distinct catchment at a 45-minute drivetime.**

It is also relevant to note that Bradford Live, a new 3,800-capacity venue scheduled to open later this year (2025) in Bradford, will further increase regional competition for both audiences and touring product.

Huddersfield's geographic location offers access to a large regional audience but a new venue in Huddersfield will operate within a competitive market, drawing from the same audience base as existing venues in Leeds, Manchester, Bradford and to a lesser extent Sheffield.

Figure 3.4 30-minute drivetime Overlapping Catchments

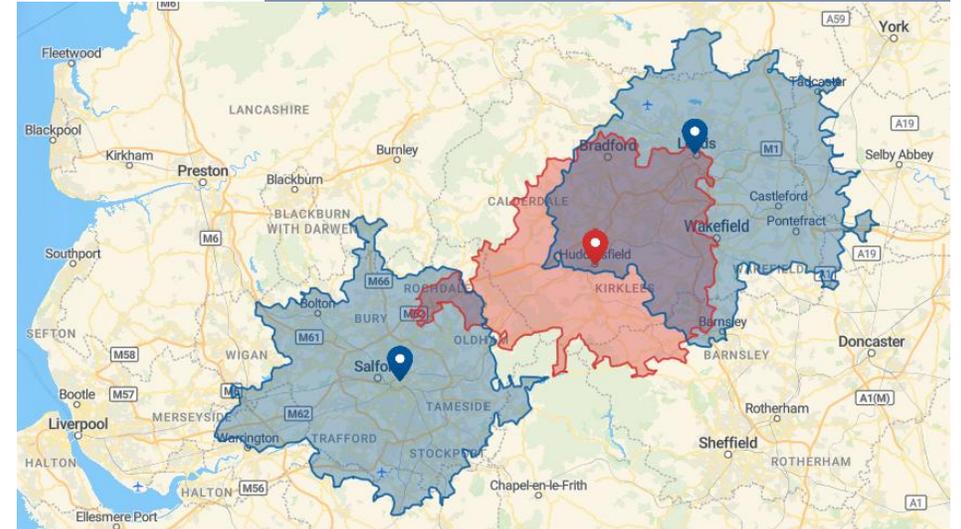
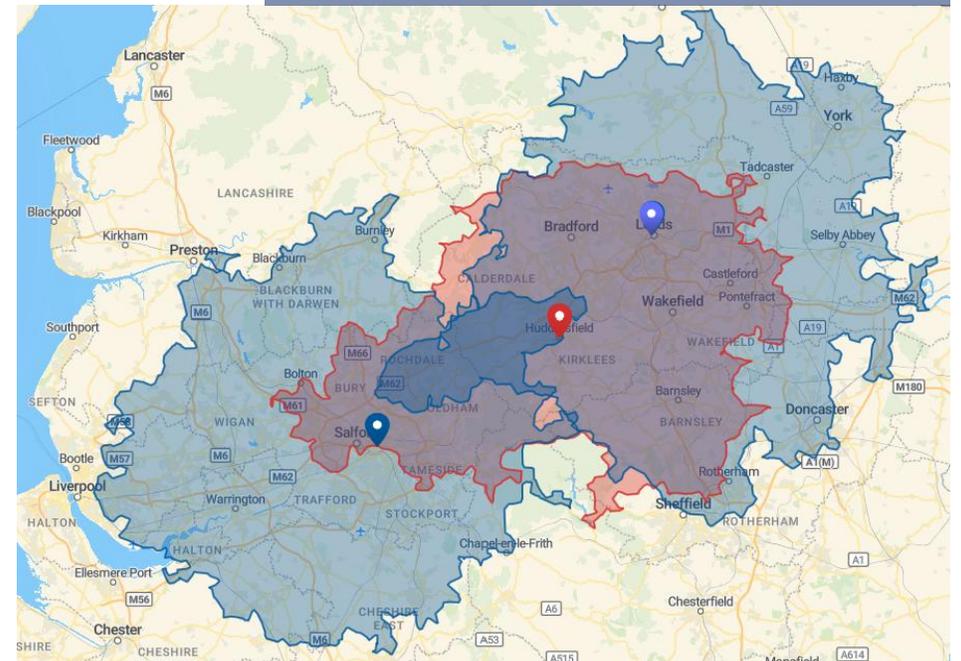


Figure 3.5 45-minute drivetime Overlapping Catchments



3.2.2 Propensity to attend arts events

The Audience Agency Area Profile reports contain data on resident populations and provide insight into the demographics and cultural engagement of specific areas, using information derived from Experian population data, BMRB International’s Target Group Index Survey and the Census. The report gives an overview of the size and demographic characteristics of the population and, the number of adults with a propensity to attend live music performance, go to the theatre or visit other cultural events.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 shows the attendance levels for each event activity within the 30-minute and 45-minute catchments, compared to the attendance level for that activity in England.

At 30 and 45-minute drivetime catchments, the **population exhibits similar levels of cultural and arts engagement to the national average**. The most popular forms of live entertainment, relative to the national average are:

- **Theatre: 44%** - 3% lower than the national average
- **Popular/ rock concert: 43%** - 2% higher than the national average
- **Musicals: 37%** - in line with the national average

The index figures show whether each activity is over or underrepresented in the catchment area compared to the UK population. Any index findings within +10/-10 of the national level (100) are considered in line with the national average.

When considering the index, at 30-minutes whilst all the activities are considered in line with the national average, **popular/rock concerts (106), comedy (103) and contemporary dance (102) are the strongest performers**. This also correlates when looking at the 45-minute catchment.

For both catchments, **attending the theatre at least once a month is shown to be above the national average (+15%)**, with the remainder of the activities, including those that a new venue would likely programme are in line with the national average. This demonstrates the population has a desire to engage in culture and the arts which will benefit the new venue.

Table 3.1 Propensity to consume arts events, 30-min drivetime

Attended in past 12 months	30-minute drivetime from HD1 2UJ		England		Index	
	Count	%	Count	%	Value	Indicator
Art galleries	342,795	30%	15,242,106	32%	94	-6
Art gallery once a month or more	54,075	5%	2,031,488	4%	112	12
Ballet	215,772	19%	9,405,562	20%	96	-4
Classical concerts	215,540	19%	9,816,203	21%	92	-8
Comedy shows	350,875	31%	14,339,371	30%	103	3
Contemporary dance	207,731	18%	8,560,889	18%	102	2
Jazz concerts	188,034	17%	8,741,088	18%	90	-10
Musicals	420,946	37%	17,707,746	37%	100	0
Opera	193,892	17%	8,627,076	18%	94	-6
Plays	387,034	34%	17,140,027	36%	95	-5
Popular/rock concert	491,854	43%	19,529,917	41%	106	6
Theatre	494,419	44%	22,261,617	47%	93	-7
Theatre once a month or more	119,730	11%	4,369,407	9%	115	15
Adults 15+ estimate 2023	1,132,043		47,494,117			

Table 3.2 Propensity to consume arts events, 45-min drivetime

Attended in past 12 months	45-minute drivetime from HD1 2UJ		England		Index	
	Count	%	Count	%	Value	Indicator
Art galleries	1,042,037	30%	15,242,106	32%	94	-6
Art gallery once a month or more	148,555	4%	2,031,488	4%	100	0
Ballet	670,026	19%	9,405,562	20%	97	-3
Classical concerts	670,208	19%	9,816,203	21%	93	-7
Comedy shows	1,061,408	31%	14,339,371	30%	101	1
Contemporary dance	630,038	18%	8,560,889	18%	101	1
Jazz concerts	591,617	17%	8,741,088	18%	93	-7
Musicals	1,271,265	37%	17,707,746	37%	98	-2
Opera	602,693	17%	8,627,076	18%	96	-4
Plays	1,184,323	34%	17,140,027	36%	95	-5
Popular/rock concert	1,475,518	43%	19,529,917	41%	103	3
Theatre	1,514,973	44%	22,261,617	47%	93	-7
Theatre once a month or more	358,291	10%	4,369,407	9%	112	12
Adults 15+ estimate 2023	3,471,121		47,494,117			

3.2.3 Audience Spectrum

Audience Spectrum is a population profiling tool which describes attendance, participation and engagement with the arts, museums and heritage, as well as behaviours, attitudes and preferences towards such organisations. Figure 3.6 outlines key findings from the audience spectrum profile

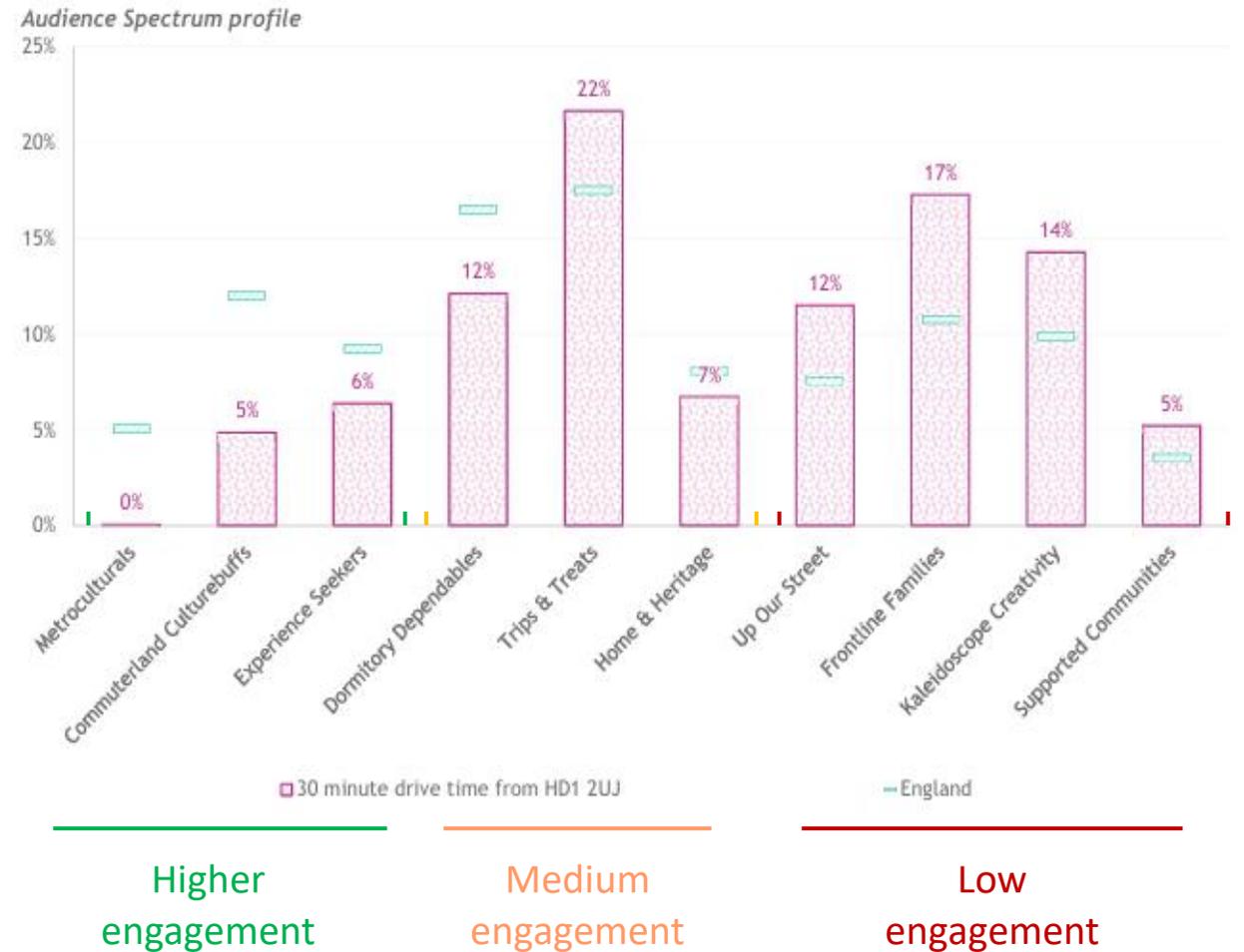
The most prominent Audience Spectrum segments in the 30-minute drivetime catchment area are Trips & Treats, Frontline Families and Kaleidoscope Creativity - 53% of adults in the catchment area belong to one of these three segments, compared with 38% of adults in the base population.

- **Trips & Treats 22% (medium engagement):** Suburban households, often with children, whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out or treat
- **Frontline Families 17% (low engagement):** Harder pressed suburban and semi-urban households for whom arts and culture plays a small role
- **Kaleidoscope Creativity 14% (low engagement):** Urban and culturally diverse, their arts and cultural activity happens in their community and outside

The target area contains **lower 'high engagement' people** (11% compared to 26%) and a **greater number of 'low engagement' people** (48% compared to 33%). The percentage of 'medium engagement' people is in line with the base area (41%).

This shows that 52% of the target area has a medium to high level of engagement, below that of the base area (67%), whilst also having a greater percentage of lower engagement people than the base area. Overall, the **level of participation and engagement is slightly lower when compared to the national average**. These figures are also consistent with findings from the 45-minute catchment.

Figure 3.6 30-minute catchment Audience Spectrum segment breakdown



Higher engagement Medium engagement Low engagement

Source: Audience Agency

3.3 Entertainment Competition

For most leisure and cultural facilities, competition can be defined within a specific geographical area. However, this is not strictly the case for performance venues. Whilst attendance will be impacted by geography (accessibility, catchment size) and the competing facilities within a defined radius, securing product and events is subject to local, regional and national competition.

3.3.1 Local Competition

There are a number of small-scale local entertainment venues in Huddersfield and the surrounding areas. Local competitor venues were identified as venues within the Borough of Kirklees and that have a capacity of at least 400. Each venue is detailed in Table 3.3 and located Figure 3.7. It should be noted there are multiple smaller venues (<400 capacity) that contribute to the live entertainment landscape in Kirklees, but venues of this scale won't compete for content due to their size.

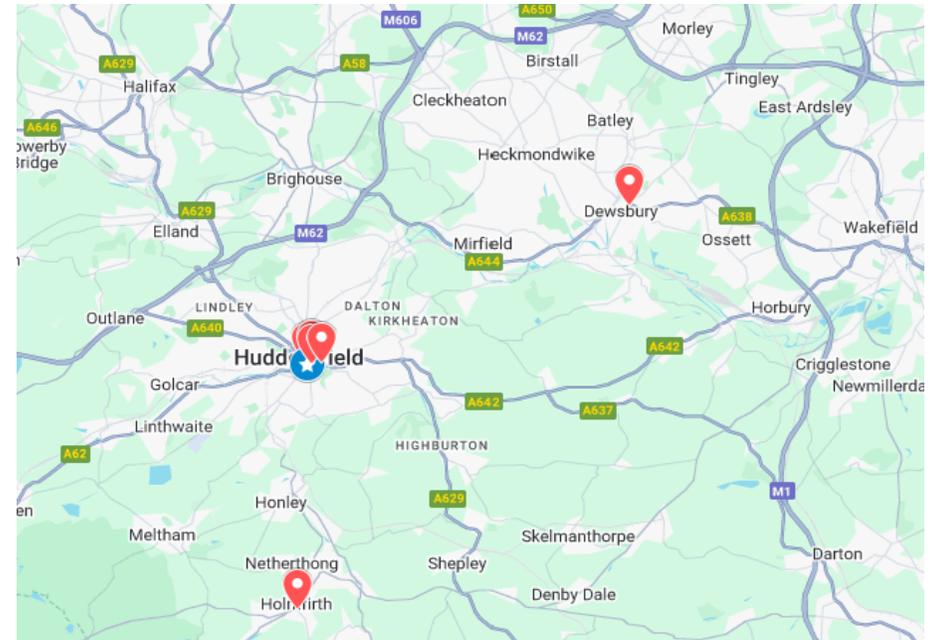
Huddersfield Town Hall is an orchestra hall which holds up to 1,100 people and is the largest entertainment facility in Huddersfield. It hosts events ranging from comedy, live music, weddings, conferences, award ceremonies and multi-cultural events. Despite its size and location (adjacent to Queensgate Market), this venue is not seen as a direct competitor to a new venue in Huddersfield. The Town Hall is considered not fit for purpose for large standing concerts and the venue has other limitations. It is seen as a facility that can support the entertainment infrastructure in Huddersfield alongside a new multi-purpose venue.

The Lawrence Batley Theatre is a small-scale theatre based in the centre of Huddersfield, housed in a Grade II* listed building, that presents a wide-ranging year-round programme of in-house and visiting productions from drama and contemporary dance to circus and pantomime attracting over 70,000 people a year. The building has three performance spaces – the Main House seating 460 people, the Cellar Theatre with up to 120 seats, and the Attic Theatre, with up to 60 seats. This is another venue that is adjacent to the OCH site and is considered to be an important facility which will support the wider entertainment infrastructure of Huddersfield and should be considered as part of the Cultural Heart project.

Table 3.3 Local Competitor Venues

Local Venues	Drivetime from site (mins)	Capacity
Huddersfield Town Hall	1	1,100
Lawrence Batley Theatre	2	460
St Pauls Hall, Huddersfield University	2	400
Smile Bar and Venue	5	750
Holmfirth Picturedome	15	650
Dewsbury Town Hall	22	700

Figure 3.7 Local Competitor Venues



St Paul's Hall is located within Huddersfield University's campus and is a converted Georgian church built in 1829 that now provides a 400-capacity venue for a range of events. In November, each year the Hall also hosts many events as part of the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

Smile Bar and Venue opened its doors in 2022 as a new live music option in Huddersfield. Online radio station Smile Radio are based at the site aiming to provide a platform to upcoming and unsigned artists. The performance hall has a capacity of 750 for standing live music events. The current programme features predominately tribute acts and other live concerts.

The Holmfirth Picturedome is an entertainment venue with a capacity of around 650. The venue hosts live music and touring bands, DJ nights and stand-up comedy.

Dewsbury Town Hall is a Victorian town hall that stands in front of the old marketplace in the centre of Dewsbury. The venue contains a 700-seat concert hall, function and meeting rooms, and an old court room. It is a Grade II* listed building.



Huddersfield Town Hall



Lawrence Batley Theatre



Smile Bar and Venue

3.3.2 Regional Competition

Alongside the local competition, there are also numerous mid to large-scale venues in West Yorkshire and the wider region, with venues concentrated mainly around Leeds and Manchester.

27 key regional entertainment venues, with a capacity of over 750, have been identified. These are summarised below and further detailed in Appendix A.

As shown in Table 3.4, of the 27 venues identified, 14 are in Manchester with the remainder split between Huddersfield’s West Yorkshire neighbours Leeds (7), Bradford (3), Halifax (2) and Wakefield (1).

Just over half of the venues identified land in the 1,000 – 2,000 capacity range, with seven falling in the mid-scale venue range (2,000 – 5,000). From the venues identified as having 5,000+ capacity, three are large scale arenas (two in Manchester and one in Leeds), one is a multi-purpose venue in Manchester (Aviva Studios) and the other one is a large outdoor events space in Halifax (Piece Hall).

Figure 3.8 shows the split between different types of venues that exist within the region. There are seven theatres with a capacity of over 750, which attract touring content, with their programme also supplemented by other events and acts.

The closest regional theatre to the OCH site is the Alhambra Theatre (1,400) in Bradford and Victoria Theatre (1,875) in Halifax. There are also two theatres in Leeds, the Leeds Grand Theatre (1,466) and Leeds Playhouse (1,100), and three theatres in Manchester, Palace Theatre (2,000), Opera House (1,900) and Lyric Theatre (1,700).

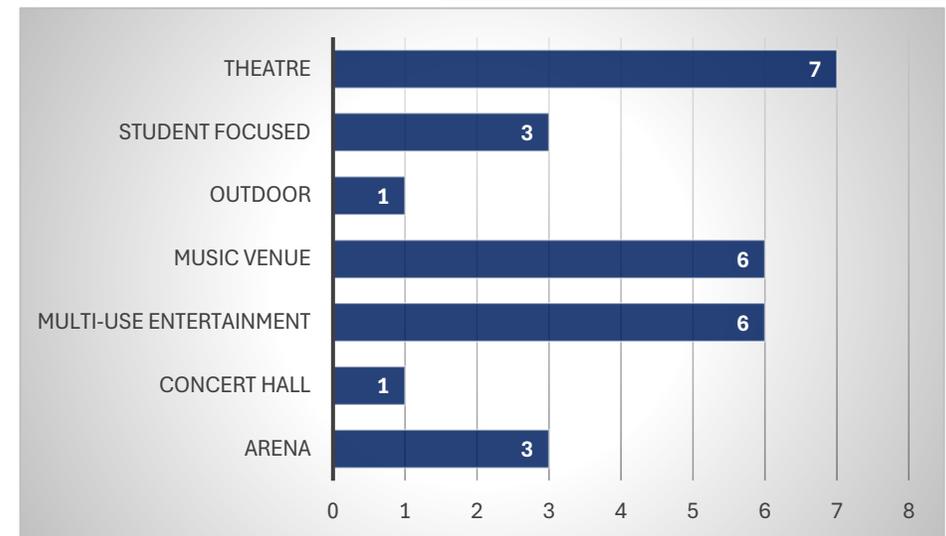
There are six dedicated music venues in the region, with the closest ones located in Leeds, O2 Academy Leeds (2,300), and Wakefield, Venue 23 (850). The remaining four are located further afield in Manchester, O2 Victoria Warehouse (3,500), O2 Ritz (1,500), Manchester Academy (2,600) and New Century Hall (1,300).

There are also six multi-use entertainment venues in the region which have a diverse programme of events. There are two in Bradford, including the highly anticipated Bradford Live (3,800), which will open in 2025 and St Georges Hall (1,500). There is one in Leeds, Leeds Town Hall (1,500) and three in Manchester, Aviva Studios (5,000), O2 Apollo (3,500) and the Albert Hall (1,900).

Table 3.4 Regional Competitor Venues by Location and Capacity

Location	Capacity			
	750 - 999	1,000 - 1,999	2,000 - 4,999	5,000+
Bradford	-	2	1	-
Halifax	-	1	-	1
Leeds	-	5	1	1
Manchester	-	6	5	3
Wakefield	1	-	-	-
Total	1	14	7	5

Figure 3.8 Regional Venue Types



Some of the key competing facilities identified as part of our audit are listed in Table 3.5 and further detailed below.

Bradford Live is the redeveloped former Odeon and is set to open later this year (2025). The 3,800 capacity multi-purpose venue is expected to attract 300,000 visitors each year and will host a calendar of 200+ music, comedy and family entertainment events as well as providing conference, meeting and banqueting spaces, including a 500-capacity ballroom.

St George's Hall (1,500) is a Grade II* listed Victorian building. It is one of the oldest concert halls still in use in the United Kingdom. The venue was refurbished in 2019 and hosts one of the UKs longest running Orchestral Seasons, with the Hallé described as the venue's 'resident' orchestra. St George's Hall also hosts other entertainment events, children's shows and amateur productions.

The Alhambra Theatre (1,400) is another entertainment venue in Bradford and hosts a range of events including international dance, musicals, drama and pantos. It is also a member of The Dance Consortium, a group of theatres who work together to bring the best in international dance to the UK.

Victoria Theatre was originally built in 1901 as a concert hall before being converted for theatrical use in 1960. The theatre has the capability to host a wide range of events creating a varied programme. Its maximum capacity is 1,875 standing whilst also able to accommodate a seated capacity of 1,512. The Grade II listed building has undergone several renovations to bring it up to modern audience and performance standards.

Leeds Grand Theatre is a theatre and opera house and was opened in 1878. The theatre is a large-scale receiving house and hosts touring productions of West End and Broadway musicals and plays as well as comedy and music events. The theatre is also home to Opera North and is regularly visited by Northern Ballet.

The Grade I listed Leeds Town Hall (1,200), is currently undergoing £17million refurbishment. When it reopens, it will continue to host live music, comedy, film screenings, other live entertainment and many of the city's renowned arts and cultural events.

Leeds Playhouse (1,100) is one of the leading producing theatres in the UK. Since 1970 the playhouse has strived to support and develop new theatre productions, developing a high-quality programme for its audience.

Table 3.5 Regional Competitor Venues

City	Venue	Type	Capacity	Operator	Drivetime from OCH
Bradford	Bradford Live	Multi-use	3,800	Trafalgar Entertainment	25
Bradford	St George's Hall	Multi-use	1,500	Bradford Theatres	28
Bradford	Alhambra Theatre	Theatre	1,400	Bradford Theatres	25
Halifax	Victoria Theatre	Theatre	1,500	Calderdale Council	24
Leeds	Leeds Town Hall	Multi-use	1,200	Leeds City Council	25
Leeds	Leeds Grand Theatre	Theatre	1,466	Leeds Heritage Theatres	30
Leeds	Leeds Playhouse	Theatre	1,100	Leeds Theatre Trust	40
Manchester	O2 Apollo	Multi-use	3,500	Academy Music Group	54
Manchester	Palace Theatre	Theatre	2,000	ATG	57
Manchester	Opera House	Theatre	1,900	ATG	54
Manchester	Lyric Theatre	Theatre	1,700	Lowry Arts Centre	50
Manchester	Albert Hall	Multi-use	1,900	Trof	55

The O2 Apollo Manchester is a Grade II listed Art Deco concert venue. The venue has both seated and standing areas, with a capacity of 3,500 for standing events and 2,693 for seated events. The venue hosts a wide range of popular music-based concerts, comedy shows and other events throughout the year.

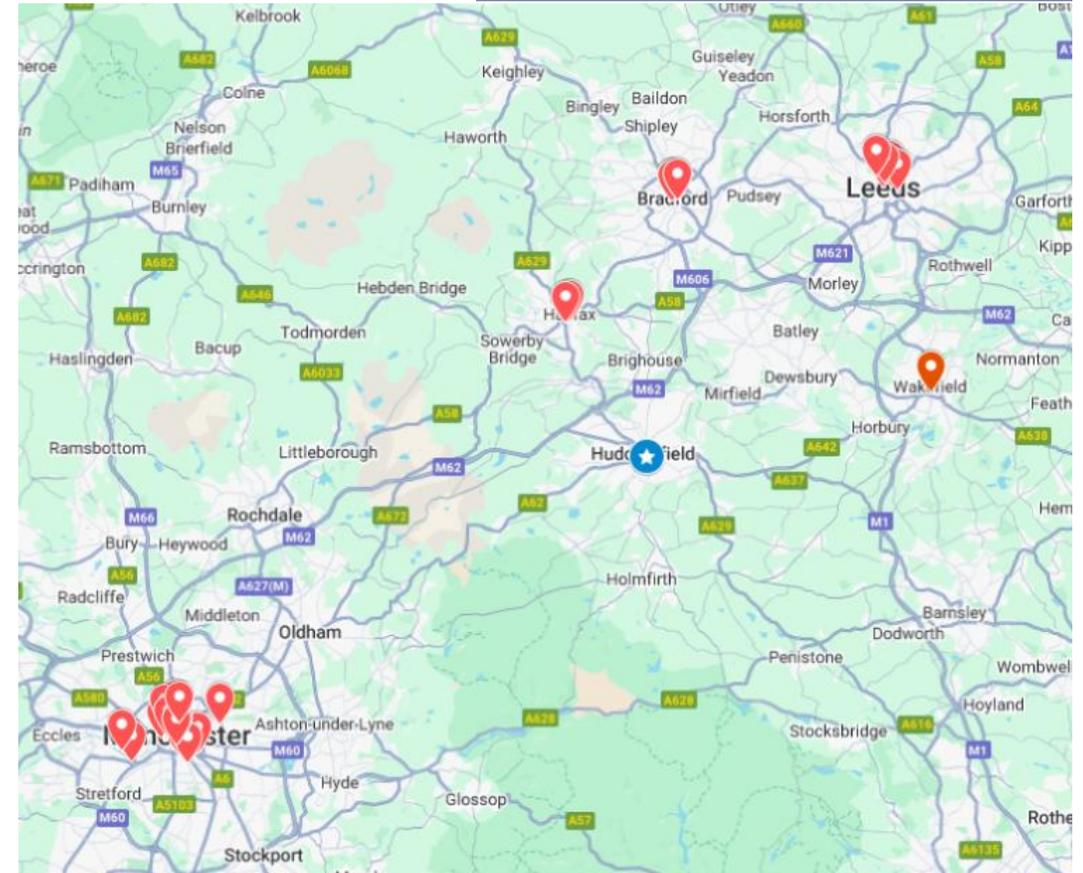
Palace Theatre Manchester opened in 1891 has a capacity of 2,000 seats. It is owned and operated by ATG, along with its sister venue the Manchester Opera House, which has a capacity of 1,900. Both theatres are prominent venues in Manchester for live entertainment, hosting a wide variety of musicals, opera, plays, comedy, dance, concerts, Christmas pantomime and children's shows. They are both some of the largest and well-equipped theatres outside London. They have hosted numerous landmark productions over the years and continue to be a receiving house for major touring product.

The Lyric Theatre at The Lowry in Salford is a prominent venue for live performances, events, and conferences, offering a capacity of up to 1,700 guests. The theatre hosts touring plays, comedy, musical events and Opera North. It features a large stage, modern design, and state-of-the-art facilities, including tiered seating and adaptable lighting. The Lyric Theatre is a central part of The Lowry, a popular theatre and gallery complex in Manchester.

Manchester's Albert Hall has a maximum capacity of 1,900. The Grade II listed former chapel in central Manchester was closed for 40 years before being reopened in 2013. It now hosts a variety of music and club events whilst also having the capacity to host corporate and other business events.

It should also be noted that there is a new venue under construction in Doncaster as part of the Hex complex at Yorkshire Wildlife Park. The Hex complex is a conferencing, retail and social hub that includes a 104-room hotel. Construction of the venue is currently paused whilst an operator for the 2,500-capacity venue is sourced. The selected operator will input into the final design and take over once the venue is operational. It is expected that the venue will become operational in late 2026.

Figure 3.9 Regional Competitor Venues



3.4 Business Events Competition

When assessing the options for development of an entertainment or multi-use venue, it is important to consider whether there is any potential to generate additional usage of the facilities through business events. The additional usage, revenue and economic benefits of attracting these events, can be achieved at a comparatively low cost when making specific adjustments to a multipurpose venue to ensure it is attractive to business events.

The term business events covers a wide range of events, including conventions, association conferences, conferences and corporate events, meetings, exhibitions, and trade shows, consumer exhibitions and incentive programmes.



3.4.1 Local Competition

There are a number of existing business event facilities in close proximity of the new proposed venue. The key competing local business event venues are detailed in Table 3.5 and illustrated in Figure 3.10, which is colour coded to show the different types of venue being used, which includes conference and exhibition facilities, hotels, sports venues, educational sites, unique and other venues.

There are two facilities with dedicated conference and/or exhibition space within a 15-minute drivetime of the OCH site, with a range of differing capacities.

The largest in terms of maximum capacity is Cathedral House with a c.1,250sqm exhibition space capable of hosting 1,500 delegates, with five other spaces catering for capacities from 40 to 160. Bertie's is capable of hosting 250 delegates in its crystal ballroom space.

Currently there are two hotels within a 15-minute drivetime of Huddersfield which provide conferencing facilities. The largest of these is the 4* Cedar Court Hotel, which offers a range of conferencing facilities in 15 versatile spaces, capable of hosting up to 400 delegates. Holiday Inn Leeds Brighouse is a 3* Hotel, providing conferencing facilities for up to 200 delegates and is suitable for meetings, product launches and corporate events.

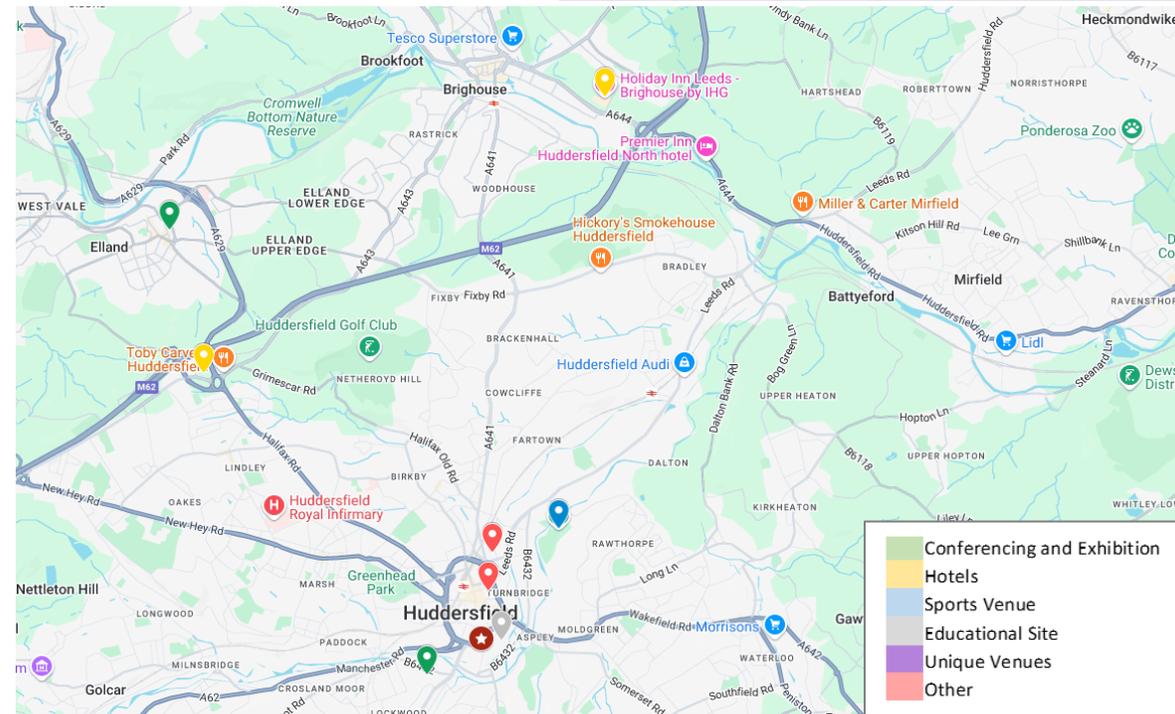
Conference and exhibition spaces are also provided by Huddersfield University and John Smith's Stadium. Located under a mile from the site, Huddersfield University offers a range of meeting rooms and lecture theatres, providing conferencing facilities for up to 280 delegates. John Smith's stadium is home to Huddersfield's professional sports teams, Huddersfield Town Football Club and Huddersfield Giants Rugby League. The stadium has multiple space the largest of which can host up to 750 guests.

Other venues with meeting facilities include Huddersfield Mission (180 delegates) and spaces at the Hudawi Centre (200 delegates).

Table 3.5 Local Competitor Business Event Venues

Local Venues	Type of venue	Drivetime from site (mins)	Capacity (max)
University of Huddersfield	Educational	3	280
Hudawi Centre	Other	4	200
Huddersfield Mission	Other	5	180
Cathedral House	Conference and exhibition	5	1,500
John Smith's Stadium	Sports	9	750
Cedar Court Hotel	Hotel	12	400
Bertie's	Conference and exhibition	15	250
Holiday Inn Leeds Brighouse	Hotel	15	200

Figure 3.10 Local Competitor Business Event Venues



3.4.2 Regional Competition

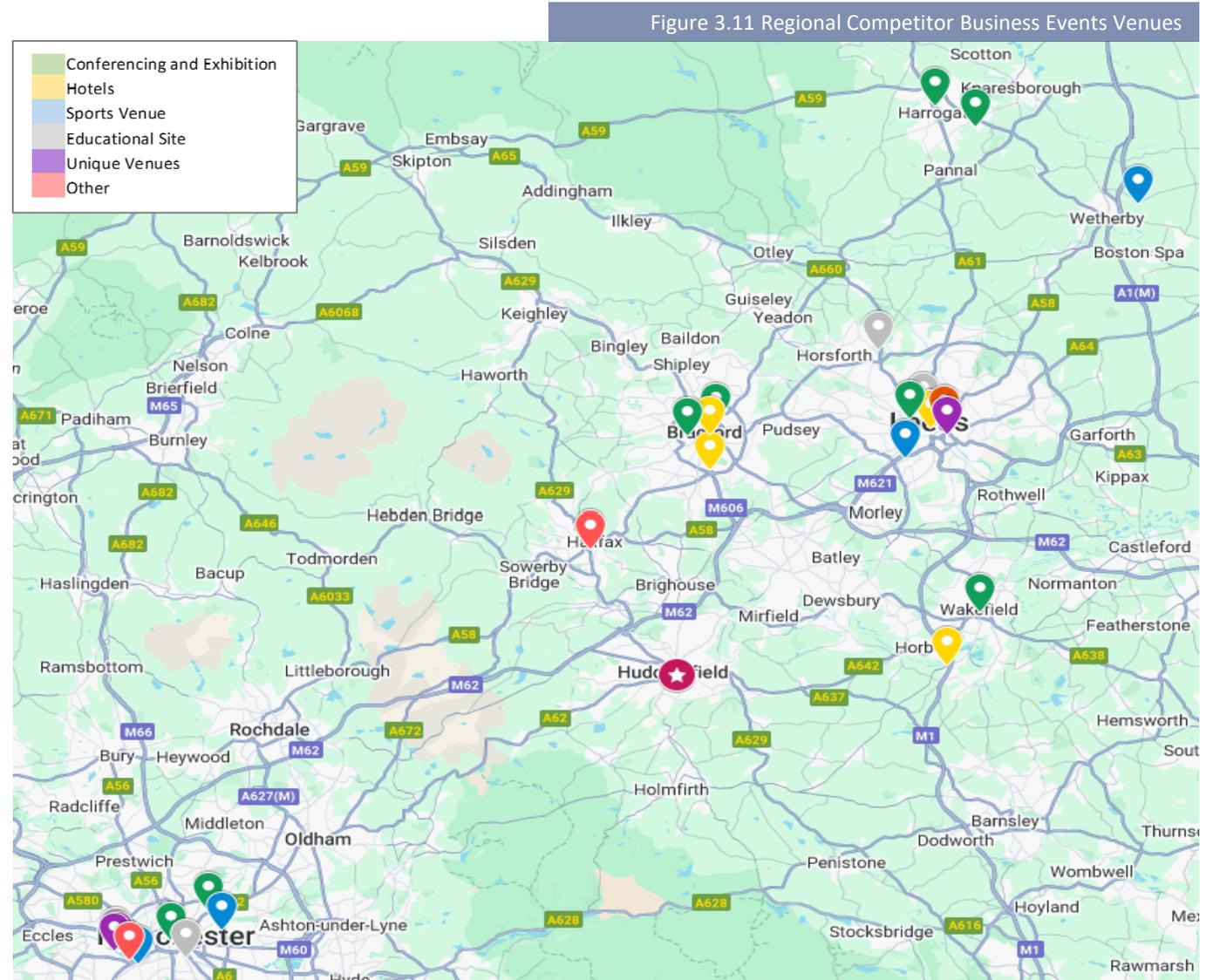
Due to the nature of the conference and events market, not only will a new multipurpose venue in OCH compete locally for events but also regionally and to an extent nationally. This section summarises the existing regional business event facilities in the market presented in Figure 3.11.

For the regional audit, only venues with a capacity of more than 500 delegates, within a 60-minute drivetime of OCH were considered. The regional venues have also been categorised in the same way as the local competitor venues.

There are nine purpose-built conference and exhibition centres facilities. The largest of these is Manchester Central, capable of hosting 10,000 delegate though the venue is primarily used for large exhibitions. Yorkshire Events Centre in Harrogate has the next largest capacity (3,000) though again is primarily intended for exhibition style events. Harrogate convention centre is more versatile, capable of accommodate up to 2,000 delegates. It has 10 event halls and provides 16,500m² of exhibition space. However, Harrogate is c.1-hour drivetime from Huddersfield and is arguably less well connected. Other smaller dedicated conference facilities are available in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield.

There are four hotels (3* to 4*) captured in the audit that offer conferencing facilities, with seating capacities ranging from 500-800 delegates. The hotel providing the largest delegate capacity is the Cedar Court Hotel Bradford (800), with The Bradford Hotel (700) and The Queens (Leeds), and Cedar Court Hotel Wakefield (500) also providing business event spaces.

Often sports venues offer various hospitality spaces to be used on non-matchdays as conference and exhibition facilities. There are three professional football stadiums in the region that offer such facilities in addition to one cricket stadium and one horse racing course.



The largest sports venue conferencing offer is provided by Leeds United Football Club at Elland Road (1,600), followed by the Etihad Stadium (1,500) of Manchester City Football Club and Old Trafford of Manchester United Football Club (1,200). The other offerings is at the Emirates Old Trafford (1,200), home to Lancashire County Cricket Club and Wetherby Racecourse (500).

There are four educational sites providing conferencing facilities. The largest conferencing offers are provided by the University of Manchester campus and the University of Salford campus, both can host up to 1,000 delegates. Then there is the University of Leeds campus (850) and finally the Grammar School at Leeds (600).

Also in the region are more unique venues that provide a conferencing offer. These venues are not traditional sites for business events but due to their distinctive offers, they will attract audiences. In the region there are three such sites captured by the audit including the Royal Armouries and its adjacent New Dock Hall has the flexibility to host up to 2,500 delegates. The Lowry Salford Quays, can hold up to 1,700 delegates in its large array of flexible event spaces, whilst the Imperial war Museum North has capacity for 500 delegates.

There are three other venues within the region that offer conferencing facilities in some capacity, though their primary purpose is to host live entertainment events. The largest of these other venues is the Victoria Warehouse which is adjacent to the O2 academy music venue of the same name. It has the flexibility to host up to 5,000 delegates by combining its array of spaces and is capable of hosting all types of corporate events. Next, the Victoria Theatre in Halifax can host 1,500 delegates whilst the Leeds Playhouse has capacity for 750.



3.5 Content

A venue requires ‘content’, i.e. events to fill its annual calendar – typically concerts and entertainment shows in the case of large arenas; meetings, conferences and exhibitions in the case of confex facilities and, in the new wave of Mid-Scale Venues, a mixed programme of events. Theatres typically also host a more varied programme of different types of entertainment and community events.

We have assessed the current content provision of the local venues in Kirklees as well as some regional venues that could compete with a new venue in Kirklees given their size and typical programming.

St Paul’s Hall has been excluded from the local venues list given there is not a readily available programme of events, but it’s noted that it predominantly hosts student concerts as well as several events during the annual Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival every November.

Table 3.6 shows the different venues analysed for this content assessment. When assessing the content provision, we have considered all events that were on sale online for each venue from March 2025 through to the end of the year.

Table 3.6 Comparable Venues for Content Analysis

Local		
Venue	Drivetime from site (mins)	Capacity
Huddersfield Town Hall	1	1,100
Lawrence Batley Theatre	2	460
Smile Bar & Venue	5	750
Holmfirth Picturedrome	15	650
Dewsbury Town Hall	22	700
Regional		
Venue	Drivetime from site (mins)	Capacity
Alhambra Bradford	25	1,400
St Georges Hall, Bradford	28	1,500
Victoria Theatre, Halifax	24	1,875
Leeds Grand Theatre, Leeds	30	1,466
O2 Apollo, Manchester	54	3,500

3.5.1 Content Analysis

Figure 3.12 provides an overview of the current content provided by the local venues in Kirklees from March through to the end of 2025.

It's clear that live music events make up the majority of content in the local venues in Kirklees. In particular, tribute bands account for 28% of total content with other concerts next at 17%. Excluding the Lawrence Batley Theatre's Christmas pantomime run, Classical (8%), Comedy (7%) and Musicals (7%) are the next most prominent genre of live entertainment put on by venues in Kirklees.

Table 3.7 overleaf shows that The Lawrence Batley Theatre (LBT) puts on the most events and also has the most variation in terms of different genres. This in part will be down to the venue having three different spaces available which increases the amount of, and types of, content it can host, highlighting the potential importance of the facility mix and flexibility of a new venue in Huddersfield to maximise the amount of content it can attract. The LBT is the current major provider of comedy shows in Kirklees.

Huddersfield Town Hall (58) and Dewsbury Town Hall (21) have the fewest number of events remaining this year. Both these venues play a prominent role during the annual Kirklees Concert Season that runs between September and June, and thus classical music events account for the majority of their programming.

The Holmfirth Picturedome is the preeminent venue in Kirklees for live music. Currently 81 shows are on offer for the rest of 2025, and these are exclusively made up of Concerts (46%), Tribute shows (43%) and DJ events (11%). The venue however is 15 minutes from the centre of Huddersfield and its capacity will also limit the types of artists that it could attract.

Figure 3.12 Spread of Content in Local Kirklees Venues

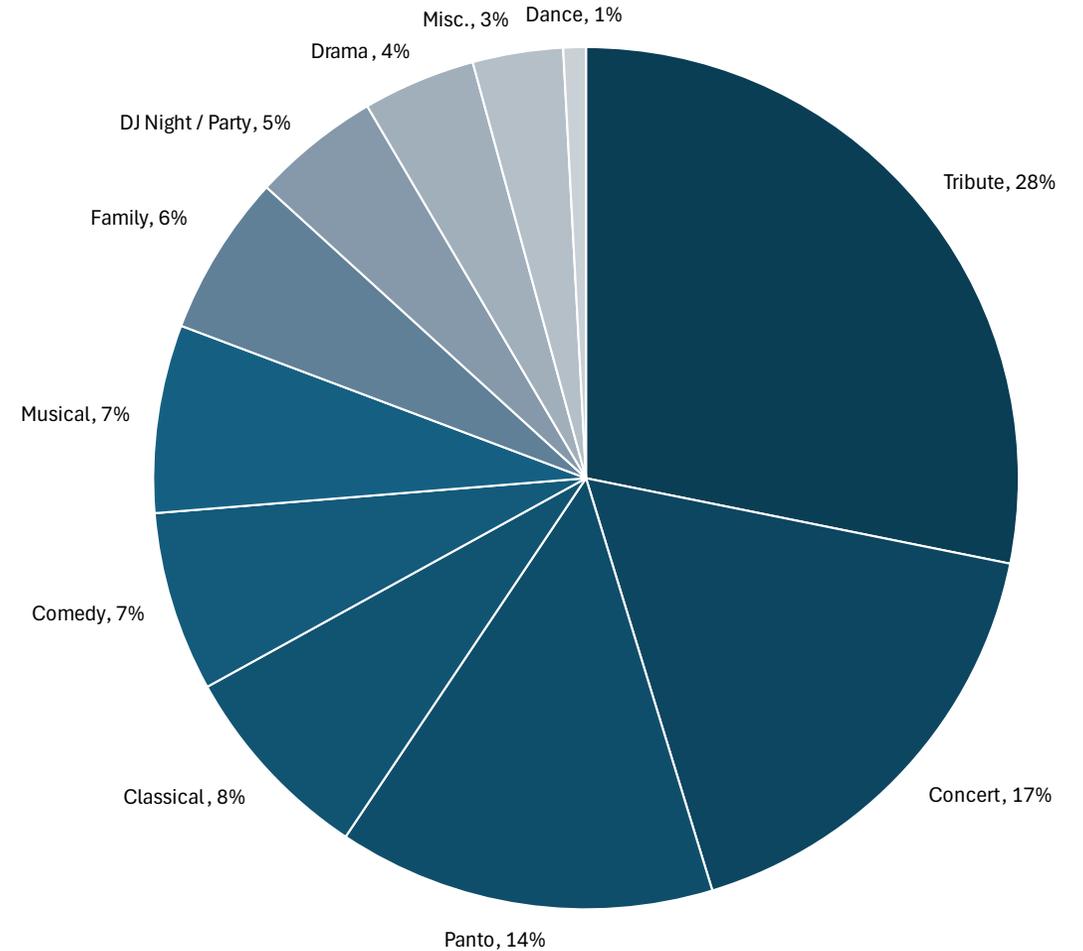


Table 3.7 Content Comparison in Local Kirklees Venues

Smile Bar’s top genre of content is live music, though unlike the Picturedome, Tribute shows account for a large majority of this at 73% of the total programming. The venue also occasionally hosts family and other miscellaneous events such as special guest quizzes.

Analysing the local content offer, there would appear to be a gap in the market for a larger venue in Huddersfield capable of hosting a large number of events encompassing multiple genres.

A larger venue would be able to capture touring content that currently wouldn’t play existing venues in Kirklees. Comedy and higher-profile concerts would especially benefit given the restrictions of current local venues.

Genre	Lawrence Batley Theatre		Holmfirth Picturedome		Smile Bar & Venue		Dewsbury Town Hall		Huddersfield Town Hall	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Classical	2	1%	-	-	-	-	6	29%	23	40%
Comedy	19	13%	-	-	1	2%	3	14%	2	3%
Concert	8	5%	37	46%	4	6%	3	14%	12	21%
Dance	3	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DJ Night / Party	2	1%	9	11%	4	6%	3	14%	-	-
Drama	16	11%	-	-	-	-	1	5%	-	-
Family	17	11%	-	-	5	8%	-	-	1	2%
Misc.	7	4%	-	-	4	6%	-	-	3	5%
Musical	22	14%	-	-	-	-	4	19%	1	2%
Panto	52	34%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tribute	5	3%	35	43%	48	73%	1	5%	16	28%
	153		81		66		21		58	

3.5.2 Regional Content

Based on our analysis of the local content offer, we’ve decided to focus on regional venues suited to hosting a varied schedule of events and that are a step up in terms of capacity from what is currently available in Kirklees. These venues will provide a good picture of the types of content that a new, similar scale of venue in Huddersfield could seek to attract.

Table 3.8 shows a breakdown of the content on show in the chosen five regional comparator venues.

3.5.3 Theatre Venues

Bradford’s Alhambra Theatre and the Leeds Grand Theatre have the highest number events. Whilst predominantly theatrical productions (drama, musicals and pantomime) other event genres including comedy, live music and dance contribute to their content mix, adding more diversity to their respective programmes.

A new venue in Huddersfield could benefit from having the capability to host touring theatre shows that are too large for the LBT though other theatres like the Alhambra and Leeds Grand are in close-proximity and are both in larger markets with already established audiences and reputations.

With this in mind, an events programme akin to that of the Victoria Theatre in Halifax might be more successful, still attracting theatrical shows but supplementing these with more comedy, concerts and other events.

Including the aforementioned venues, in the wider region there are seven theatres in the 1,000 – 2,000 capacity range.

Table 3.8 Content Comparison of Regional Venues

Genre	Alhambra Theatre		Victoria Theatre		Leeds Grand Theatre		St. George’s Hall		O2 Apollo	
Classical	-	-	2	2%	1	1%	6	10%	3	4%
Comedy	-	-	18	17%	11	6%	3	5%	10	15%
Concert	2	1%	14	13%	6	3%	17	27%	45	67%
Dance	15	8%	3	3%	25	14%	3	5%	-	-
DJ Night / Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5%	-	-
Drama	22	12%	1	1%	47	26%	3	5%	-	-
Family	9	5%	6	6%	-	-	2	3%	4	6%
Misc.	5	3%	9	9%	10	6%	11	18%	4	6%
Musical	89	47%	14	13%	77	43%	1	2%	-	-
Panto	43	23%	26	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tribute	4	2%	11	11%	1	1%	13	21%	1	1%
	189		104		178		62		67	

3.5.4 Multi-Use and Music Venues

St George’s Hall is an example of multi-use venue that doesn’t specialise in theatrical content. It predominantly hosts concerts (27%) and tribute shows (21%) with miscellaneous events such as live podcasts and talk shows accounting for the next largest event genre. The Hall hosts all genres of events, with the exception of a pantomime.

The O2 Apollo has 67 shows currently on offer for the remainder of 2025. It is largely focused on hosting live music concerts accounting for 45 shows. The remaining events consist of 10 comedy shows, four family shows, four miscellaneous events, three classical and a tribute show.

The Apollo is the largest venue compared here at 3,500 capacity which will influence some of the content that it receives, especially when it comes to concerts. However, there are an abundance of other regional venues whose sole focus is live music.

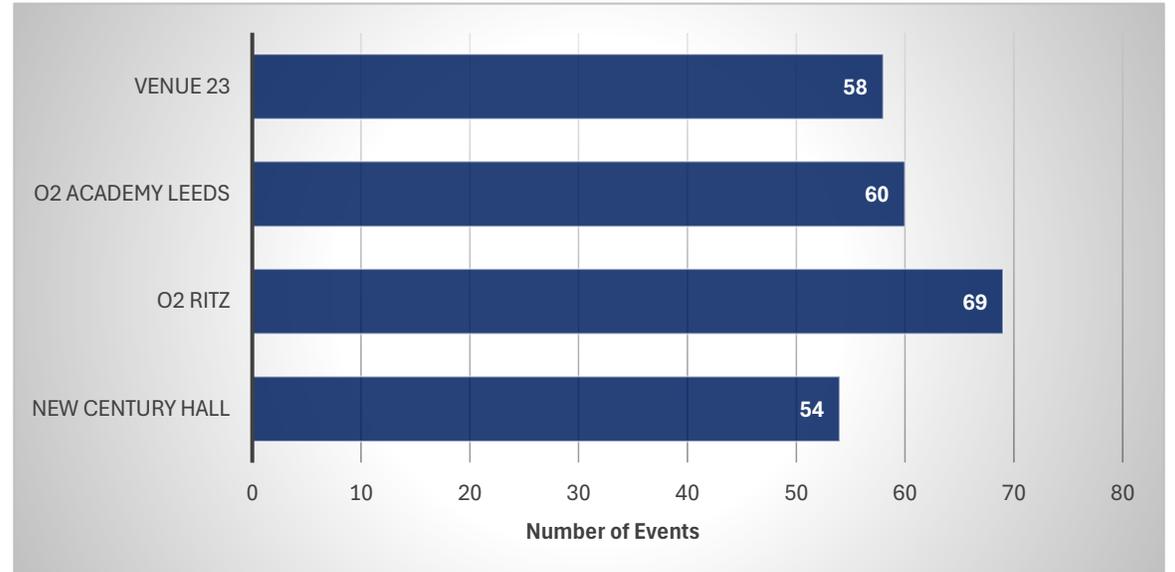
These venues include Venue 23 in Wakefield (850), O2 Academy Leeds (2,300) and in Manchester there is the O2 Ritz 1,500 and New Century Hall (1,300). These venues are more comparable to a new venue in Huddersfield from a capacity perspective than the O2 Apollo or O2 Victoria Warehouse which are both 3,500 capacity.

On average for these venues there are 60 shows currently on sale in 2025 consisting almost exclusively of concerts, tribute shows and DJ/ Club Nights. This shows there is an abundance of live music acts touring that could play Huddersfield provided there is a suitable venue to play. The number of shows in these venues is displayed in figure 3.14.

Table 3.8 Content Comparison of Regional Venues

Genre	Alhambra Theatre		Victoria Theatre		Leeds Grand Theatre		St. George’s Hall		O2 Apollo	
Classical	-	-	2	2%	1	1%	6	10%	3	4%
Comedy	-	-	18	17%	11	6%	3	5%	10	15%
Concert	2	1%	14	13%	6	3%	17	27%	45	67%
Dance	15	8%	3	3%	25	14%	3	5%	-	-
DJ Night / Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5%	-	-
Drama	22	12%	1	1%	47	26%	3	5%	-	-
Family	9	5%	6	6%	-	-	2	3%	4	6%
Misc.	5	3%	9	9%	10	6%	11	18%	4	6%
Musical	89	47%	14	13%	77	43%	1	2%	-	-
Panto	43	23%	26	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tribute	4	2%	11	11%	1	1%	13	21%	1	1%
	189		104		178		62		67	

Figure 3.14 Number of events at Regional Live Music Venues



As part of our analysis, we have also considered the type of touring acts and events that are currently playing the regional venues, and that Kirklees currently misses out on. Table 3.9 shows events which toured Leeds, Bradford and Manchester but did not visit Huddersfield.

Table 3.9 shows that of the two or more of the acts playing regional venues, only one has played a night in Kirklees - Chris McCausland at Huddersfield Town Hall. Five other acts play one of the regional venues plus a show in Kirklees; four are tribute acts as well as a comedy show.

The table shows that Kirklees is missing out on three touring comedy shows and one touring concert. These are the types of act that could play in Huddersfield should there be a suitable venue. The other venues these acts are playing are larger than what is currently available in Kirklees, and although Huddersfield Town Hall is over 1,000 capacity, it is not considered as fit for purpose for large standing concerts.

Kirklees also misses out on touring theatrical content going to the regional theatre venues. A new venue could tap into this market providing it had the technical/ design capability to do so.

Though Manchester, Leeds and Bradford are more primary markets than Kirklees, if there is sufficient and excess demand, then artists and promoters could look to play an additional night.

A new premier venue in Huddersfield would hope to host these types of major touring acts, specifically comedy and concerts, whilst having the flexibility to host other event genres and possibly theatrical shows dependent on the design, facility mix and operator aspirations.

Attracting more high-profile events, would shift the local content offer away from tribute shows, creating more diversity for local residents. A larger capacity venue would also reduce the competition for content between a new venue and the existing venues, providing a complementary offer to the borough's arts and culture scene and allowing the other local venues to operate with minimal interference. It is not uncommon for a range of venues, in scale and type, to coexist and thrive in the same town.

Appendix B outlines two case studies for venues of similar capacity and market position.

Table 3.9 Touring Events

Event	Genre	Alhambra Theatre	O2 Apollo	Leeds Grand	St George's Hall	Victoria Theatre	Kirklees
Chris McCausland	Comedy			✓	✓		Huddersfield Town Hall
Dara O'Brien	Comedy			✓		✓	
Jason Manford	Comedy			✓	✓	✓	
Mo Gilligan	Comedy		✓				Huddersfield Town Hall
Paul Chowdhry	Comedy		✓		✓		
Matt Goss	Concert		✓	✓			
Cirque: Reimagined	Misc.	✓		✓		✓	
Calamity Jane	Theatre	✓		✓			
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang	Theatre	✓				✓	
Matilda	Theatre	✓					
Miss Saigon	Theatre			✓			
Six	Theatre	✓		✓			
The Book of Mormon	Theatre	✓		✓			
Illegal Eagles	Tribute				✓		Huddersfield Town Hall
Luke Combs UK	Tribute					✓	Smile Bar
Rob Lamberti: Perfectly George	Tribute					✓	Smile Bar
TaylorMania	Tribute				✓	✓	Huddersfield Town Hall

3.6 Catchment, Competition and Content Summary

Having considered the key interrelated factors that will impact upon the demand for a new venue in Huddersfield, we would conclude the following:

- Large catchment around Huddersfield with 30-minute drivetime catchment of c.1.3million and 45-minute drivetime catchment of c.4.2million
- Propensity to consume events in line with the national average but propensity to consume theatre content more than once a month significantly higher (15%) than national average, which suggests strong regional audiences for theatre content
- Huddersfield is located between the major urban centres Leeds, Manchester, Bradford and Sheffield which results in Huddersfield having an overlap in catchment, with some access to a unique catchment at a 30-minute drivetime but lack of a distinct catchment at a 45-minute drivetime
- Local venues in Kirklees are smaller scale with a limited programme of events which is made up of mainly live music/tribute bands (46%), followed by Musicals (8%), Comedy (7%) and Family shows (6%)
- Regional market is crowded, with lots of venues of varying capacities, so a new venue in Huddersfield will compete with venues in Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Bradford for content and audiences
- Lots of major touring content in the region but currently very little comes to Huddersfield, which also misses out on touring theatrical content which goes to the regional theatre venues – no venue in Kirklees can currently host such events
- Opportunity for a new premier venue in Huddersfield capable of hosting a large number of events with a varied programme encompassing multiple genres
- With the right facility mix and offer, a new venue in Huddersfield would be able to capture more major touring content that currently wouldn't play existing venues in Kirklees – if there is sufficient and excess demand, then artists and promoters could look to play an additional night
- A new venue would be capable of attracting more higher-profile comedy events and concerts, which would especially benefit given the restrictions of current local venues. It could also tap into more touring theatrical content, given market demand, providing it had the technical/ design capability to do so.
- The venue will also have the flexibility to host other event types including e-sports, sports (boxing, snooker, darts), weddings, banquets, parties and more
- Attracting more high-profile events would shift the local content offer away from tribute acts, creating more diversity for residents and drawing in audiences to Huddersfield
- A larger capacity venue would reduce the competition for content between a new venue and the existing local venues, providing a complementary offer to the borough's arts and culture scene and allowing the other local venues to operate with minimal interference
- Further detailed analysis around potential event programme for a new venue in Huddersfield to be undertaken in Stage 2 of this study.

4. WIDER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW



4.1 Wider Infrastructure Review

When developing a new entertainment venue in a town, it is crucial to consider the town's wider infrastructure, as these factors significantly impact the venue's success and overall visitor experience.

Efficient transport infrastructure, including public transport, roads, and parking facilities, ensures that guests can easily access the venue, attracting a wider audience from both local and distant areas.

Adequate hotels and accommodations are essential for visitors travelling from outside the town, encouraging overnight stays that boost the local economy.

Additionally, business event supporting services, such as destination management/marketing and convention bureaus enhance the venue's appeal for corporate events, concerts, and exhibitions, increasing its revenue potential.

By carefully planning these elements, the entertainment venue can thrive as a popular and sustainable destination, benefiting both the local community and the economy.

These elements are explored further in Figure 4.1 overleaf.



Figure 4.1 Wider Infrastructure Review

Transport



Rail

- TransPennine Express and Northern operate regular train form Huddersfield
- More than 100 stations can be reached in less than an hour
- There are four trains per hour to Leeds with 5 trains an hour running west from Huddersfield to Manchester
- Plans for improved connectivity for the region in the future

Drivetimes

- Approx 25 minutes to Bradford
- Approx 30 minutes to Leeds
- Approx 50 minutes to Manchester
- Approx 55 minutes to Sheffield

Car Parking

- Over 2,300 spaces across various council owned car parks and on-street locations in Huddersfield
- Additional private car parking available including 650 spaces at Kingsgate Shopping Centre

Hotels/ Accommodation



Hotels

- Two current hotels in the immediate vicinity (10-min walk time from the site), accounting for over c.75 bedrooms
- At five-minute drivetime from the site there are 7 hotels accounting for over 300 bedrooms
- 4* - One hotel, accounting for approx. 25 rooms
- 3* - Six hotels, accounting for approx. 285 rooms
- Huddersfield's iconic George Hotel is undergoing renovation works and is set to become a Radisson Red hotel with 108 rooms
- More variety of hotels with varying ratings to accommodate both business and leisure events at 15-minutes drivetime from the site

Supporting Service Functions



West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

- Part of Visit England's national portfolio of LVEP's and are recognised as the official body for the region's visitor economy
- The LVEP encourages partnership across all West Yorkshire destinations including Kirklees, providing strong local leadership and governance with a vision of adding value and delivering exciting projects to engage and attract visitors whilst supporting the region's tourism sector

West Yorkshire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

- Developed by West Yorkshire LVEP, the DMP establishes frameworks to better the regions visitor economy
- It sets out their ambition to increase the awareness and appeal of the region as a destination, develop product and places, and collaborate to grow its £5.77 billion visitor economy
- A new venue in Kirklees can help achieve these goals with the hosting of events (entertainment and business) cited in the DMP as fundamental to the visitor economy

4.2 Car Parking

There are two primary considerations in relation to the provision of car parking for entertainment venues:

- Planning obligations in terms of minimum number of parking spaces required based on the type and scale of development
- Sufficient car parking spaces within walking distance to cater for the likely parking demand generated by events

Based on our experience of other projects, including operator survey data on car trips and occupancy, and assumptions adopted for Planning Applications, we would apply the following parameters to determine likely traffic generation for each of the venue scales. Assume that for a maximum capacity event, c.75% of people will travel by car and there is an average occupancy per car of 2.5 people. These figures result in the car parking requirement set out in Table 4.1.

It should be noted that not all events that take place at the venue would serve the maximum capacity with only a few shows per year hitting this mark. Visitors could utilise the existing car park provision, however, this assumption needs to be further tested with a car parking study.

4.3 Rail Travel

The propensity for audiences to travel by rail is heavily impacted by the proximity of a rail station to the venue. Based on IPW... benchmarks, between 3% and 36% of audiences travel by rail to events at a venue that has a nearby station, with an average of 16%.

If you assume that between 10% and 20% of audiences will travel by train, this creates the passenger demand for a full capacity event in the potential venue sizes as can be seen in Table 4.2.

There are currently four trains per hour to Leeds with five trains an hour running west from Huddersfield to Manchester. There are plans for improved connectivity for the region in the future. There are currently five trains running to Leeds after 10pm and the last is at c.11.50pm. There are seven trains scheduled to depart post 10pm to Manchester with the latest at c.12.45am.

Further considerations will relate to the capacity of the station and the platforms with regards to crowd control. This is unlikely to present any issues for people travelling to the venue as this is typically a dispersed timeframe, but this will need to be carefully managed at the end of shows/events where a larger number of people will be leaving at the same time. There are a range of management strategies that can be applied to alleviate major issues.

Table 4.1 Likely level of car parking demand generated by venue size

Max capacity of a show	1,200	1,600	2,000
Percentage of audience by car	75%	75%	75%
Average passengers per car	2.5	2.5	2.5
Number of cars	360	480	600

Table 4.2 Train Passenger Generation

Venue Capacity	1,200	1,600	2,000	1,200	1,600	2,000
Max capacity of a show	1,200	1,600	2,100	1,200	1,600	2,100
Percentage of audience by train	10%	10%	10%	20%	20%	20%
Number of passengers	120	160	200	240	320	400

5. CONSULTATIONS



5.1 Operator Consultations

As part of this process IPW... reached out to industry leading operators and promoters to gain their perspective on the appropriate scale/facility mix for a venue in Huddersfield, what content it may be able to attract and the potential interest in operating the venue. A summary of questions put to operators are set out below.

Eight operators were approached and three of those operators showed an interest in the Kirklees proposal. An overview on the interested operators is provided as an addendum in Appendix C.

Emerging themes and trends from the consultations are summarised in Figure 5.1 on the following page.

- Do you have a view on the appropriate scale/ capacity or facility mix for a venue in Huddersfield?
- How do you think a new venue would fit within the local, regional and national event context from both an entertainment and conferencing perspective?
- In your opinion what kind of content could the new venue attract and programme?
- Are you interested in operating the proposed venue? If so on what basis?
- What kind of contract structure and term would you be looking for?
- There is potential to programme content into an outdoor events space (3,000 capacity). Would this interest you and any thoughts on potential content?
- Any views at this Stage on what the potential financial return to the Council might look like?

Table 5.1 Operators approached for Consultation

Operators	
	
	
	
	

5.2 Local Consultations

At this Stage of the work, a detailed consultation exercise with all the local stakeholders was not undertaken (as was included the previous study).

However, alongside the Soft Market Testing exercise, IPW... did undertake consultations with some of the key local stakeholders, to understand their perspective on a new venue being developed as part of the OCH project.

The key local stakeholders who were consulted included:

- Lawerance Batley Theatre (LBT)
- Huddersfield Town Hall (HTH)
- University of Huddersfield (UoH)

These local stakeholders were consulted due to their very close proximity to the OCH site, and therefore the likelihood that a new venue will impact on these venues.

The key points raised by the key local stakeholder consultations are summarised in Figure AC.1 in Appendix C.



5.2.1 Impact on Local Venues

As identified in the consultations with the key local stakeholders, a new venue in Huddersfield will have an impact on local venues including the Lawrence Batley Theatre and Huddersfield Town Hall. Both these venues have expressed concern that a new venue would have a negative effect on their business.

The Lawrence Batley Theatre and Huddersfield Town Hall both host a range of events throughout the year, but their current offers are not seen as a direct competition for the new venue being proposed at the OCH site.

The Lawrence Batley Theatre is a small-scale theatre (400 capacity) and does not have the infrastructure to attract major touring acts, so is limited in its scope of events.

Huddersfield Town Hall is not considered fit for purpose for large standing concerts due to its acoustic limitations and the venue being on the first floor (which also comes with challenges when it comes to loading and unloading).

Due to the close proximity of both venues to the OCH site, they are seen as facilities that can support the overall entertainment infrastructure in Huddersfield alongside a new multi-purpose venue.

Further detailed financial work will need to be undertaken to test if a new venue in Huddersfield will have a significant impact on the existing venues. This includes programming and P&L projections which would highlight both successes for the OCH venue and potential impacts on the other local venues.



5.3 Flytower and Theatrical Content

Through the Soft Market Testing exercise, some operators have indicated that the facility would be more attractive if it included a flytower as part of the facility mix. This opportunity was highlighted by operators with a background in managing theatre venues.

Two of the interested parties are very interested in exploring this commercial opportunity for themselves, the audiences and Huddersfield, if a flytower was in place. Such an approach might add 30-50 events to the annual calendar in a multi-use venue.

A flytower is a structure above a stage used to house and operate a rigging system that allows for flying scenery, curtains, lighting, and other stage elements. It is a vital component in modern theatrical productions, enabling the efficient movement of these elements in and out of view of the audience.

Consequently, should any future operator procurement secure interest from operators with a theatre venue background, then the potential to include a flytower in the facility mix may form part of any future lease and/or management arrangements for the venue.

Developing a venue of the scale proposed, with the potential to stage theatrical productions, will result in the venue competing with the larger theatres in West Yorkshire and wider 45-minute drivetime catchment. This would include the Alhambra in Bradford (c.1,400 capacity) and Leeds Grand Theatre (c.1,450 capacity), both of which are independently operated on behalf of their respective local authorities. Accordingly, Kirklees Council may wish to consider whether it wants to promote a competing theatre with a commercial operator, into the established West Yorkshire market.

In addition, should Kirklees wish to explore this option further it is recommended that Subsidy Control issues potentially arising are considered at the next Stage of the scheme's development.



6. MARKET ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



Summary of Market Assessment

Significant catchment size at both 30 and 45-minute drivetime, with levels of cultural engagement in line with national average



Catchment areas overlap significantly with Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford; all are larger markets



Local venues in Kirklees are smaller scale and will provide a differing offer to new proposed venue



Regional market is crowded, with lots of venues of varying capacities all competing for content and audiences



Current local content is dominated by tribute acts; new larger venue could bring higher profile shows, akin to regional venues of similar scale



Good local transport links and connections to regional hubs, with supporting services to encourage visitors; hotel stock and car parking to be tested further



Operator feedback notes Huddersfield as a potentially challenging market so optimising facility mix will be crucial to attracting content and producing a profitable venue



Recommendation for a 1,200 – 2,000 capacity multi-use venue, with a mixed programme of events, including theatrical content – to be tested at Stage 2



7. VENUE RECOMMENDATION



7.1 Introduction

This section of the report sets out the emerging themes of what a potential venue should be as part of the OCH development. It sets out the size and scale of the venue and the key elements that should be included in any design.

This section also compares the proposed venue with what was previously proposed, highlighting any key differences to the previous study.

Additionally, it looks at the potential of a sports arena with a c.5,000 capacity at the OCH site which might provide a home for some of the West Yorkshire indoor sports teams.

7.2 Proposed Venue

Following the market assessment exercise and the soft market testing conducted with the selected venue operators, we would recommend a venue of capacity of 1,200 in a fully seated mode and a maximum capacity of 2,000 using a standing floor and seated balcony to best meet the OCH project objectives.

The design could also accommodate the ability to split the main auditorium into two spaces so that a smaller capacity secondary space of c.400 can be created (see below).

From the discussions with operators, it is very important that the venue is designed to be as flexible as possible and can accommodate a wide variety of events. All of the operators indicated that Kirklees would be a challenging market for them and to that extent the venue needed to be capable of holding as many different types of events as possible.

To that end, two of the operators who expressed an interest stated that for them it would be particularly beneficial and attractive if a proscenium arch and a flytower were included in the design. This would enable the venue to hold touring theatrical events. These would be in addition to the concerts, other entertainment events and the daytime business events such as conferences that could be part of a programme.

The inclusion of a digital screen to the exterior of the building should also be considered for the venue. The venue's position, with considerable passing traffic, could generate significant sums from advertising revenue as well as providing a platform for advertising events at the venue and OCH in general. To maximise any revenue the screen should be fully functional with the ability to show moving images. The newly renovated Bradford Live venue included such a screen which is a significant source of revenue for the landlord. However, it is understood that the inclusion of any such screen would be subject to obtaining suitable planning permission. Additional analysis will be undertaken with a sector specialist company at the next Stage of work.

7.2.1 Second Space

If a smaller temporary space were created at the venue, then this would be useful for smaller events, rehearsals and community activities. From other consultations conducted, a second space would be an attractive space for other Kirklees cultural users such as Musica Kirklees.

In addition, the space could be used for overflow activities from the museum, library and gallery. It could create a meeting and event space linked to the museum and gallery in particular.

There is also the potential to create an immersive space in the smaller space with the use of screens and projection. The space would allow for imaginative and inventive curation of an extended programme from the museum, gallery and other Kirklees inspired cultural events. We anticipate that these immersive spaces will become more popular for both cultural events and more commercial activities in the future.

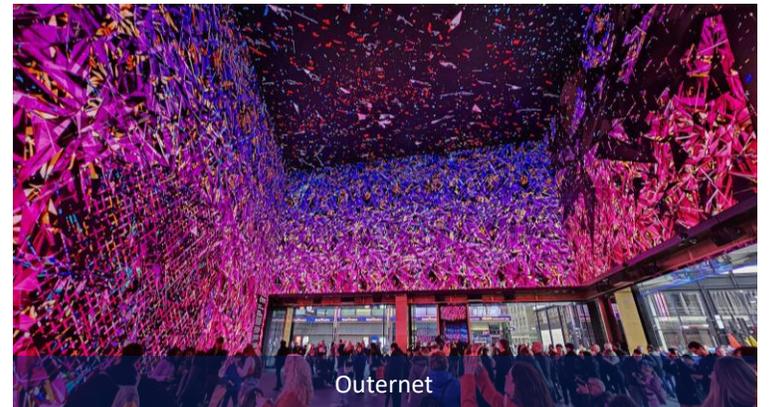
The cost of the required technology has fallen significantly since the first of these immersive venues were established. Immersive spaces work well if there is ownership of interesting intellectual property (IP). Kirklees potentially has this with its museum and gallery antiquities, as well as the festivals that it regularly programmes.

Content could include a range from an artist's immersive, a brass band immersive, textiles and mills or the history of industry in the Yorkshire towns.

The costs of such content is principally in digital production. These would be offset by entrance fees and benefactors supporting programmes. Once the content has been created it is then available to produce a long-term programme when the second space is available i.e. when not being used as part of the main event auditorium.

Current examples of major immersives include: the Lightroom at Coal Drops Yard Kings Cross, Frameless at Marble Arch, London and Outernet at Tottenham Court Road, London. There are planned immersives in both Liverpool and Leeds as part of new venues celebrating major IP from those cities.

The immersive spaces also provide an excellent venue for product launches (as seen at Outernet and Excel London). In discussions with these venues, we recognise there is demand for northern based spaces for product launches. This might create an additional revenue stream for the venue, albeit in competition with other spaces/ venues we anticipate to come on stream.



7.2.2 Venue Recommendation Summary

In summary, at Stage 1 of the work undertaken, we would recommend the following for the proposed venue to be included as part of the OCH development:

- A capacity of 1,200 fully seated and 2,000 seated and standing;
- A fully flexible venue with the ability to accommodate as many event types as possible including entertainment, theatre content and business events;
- A secondary space created from dividing the main auditorium;
- The inclusion of a Fly Tower (subject to further testing with potential operators);
- Potential to be equipped to be able to run an immersive attraction (subject to further testing);
- An exterior digital advertising screen (subject to planning)

The venue design will be further developed as part of Stage 2 which will see a full sketch up model being developed as well as setting out the venue's key features including the juxtapositions of the various spaces for both front and back of house.



7.3 Proposed Venue Compared to Previous Venue Design

Table 7.1 opposite sets out the key features of the current proposed venue compared to the previous design highlighting similarities and differences. It should be noted that the previous design was at much more advanced Stage than the current venue proposal.

The previous venue design was based on a very detailed facilities description setting out detailed capacities for each event type and for each of the spaces. It also included detailed VIP numbers and spaces as well as ancillary spaces for conferencing. This level of detail will only be developed as part of Stage 2 of the process.

As the table highlights, the proposed venue is of a very similar size and scale to the one proposed before, but importantly it would now have the ability to hold touring theatrical content.

In addition, the venue exterior would now potentially include a digital advertising screen, and the second space would be equipped to host digital immersive experiences.

Table 7.1 Comparison of Current and Previous Venue Design

	Current Venue	Previous Design	Comments
Seated Capacity Main Auditorium	c.1,200	1,250	In practice no material difference at this Stage
Full Capacity Main Auditorium Seated and Standing	c.2,000	2,200	In practice very little difference to 2,200 at this Stage
Second Space Capacity	c.400 split to be determined	440 Standing 320 seated	In practice no material difference at this Stage
Includes Fly Tower	Yes	No	Feature was not included in previous design
Can accommodate Touring Theatre Events	Yes	No	Previous design could not do Theatrical content
VIP Offering	To be determined	200 VIP seats with lounge access	To be developed during Stage 2
Business Events including Conferences	Yes	Yes	Would look to run a similar business events programme
Conference break out rooms	To be determined	3 x 50 person rooms plus divisible 300 person VIP space	To be developed during Stage 2
Immersive Capability in second space	Yes	No	To be tested in Stage 2
External Digital Advertising Screen	Yes	No	To be tested in Stage 2 and with planning authority
Additional Features outside facilities description	None assumed	Sky Bar included	Current assumption is that there will be no additional features
Gross Internal Area	To be determined	Last FCB design c.7,700 sqm	To be developed during Stage 2

7.4 Indoor Sports Venue

We are aware that there are discussions taking place within West Yorkshire about a potential new indoor sports focussed arena for the West Yorkshire conurbation.

We understand that there is demand from the existing netball franchise held by the Leeds Rhinos for a permanent facility in which they can hold their home games. Under the current league rules any new home venue for an existing or new netball franchise should be a minimum size of 5,000 capacity.

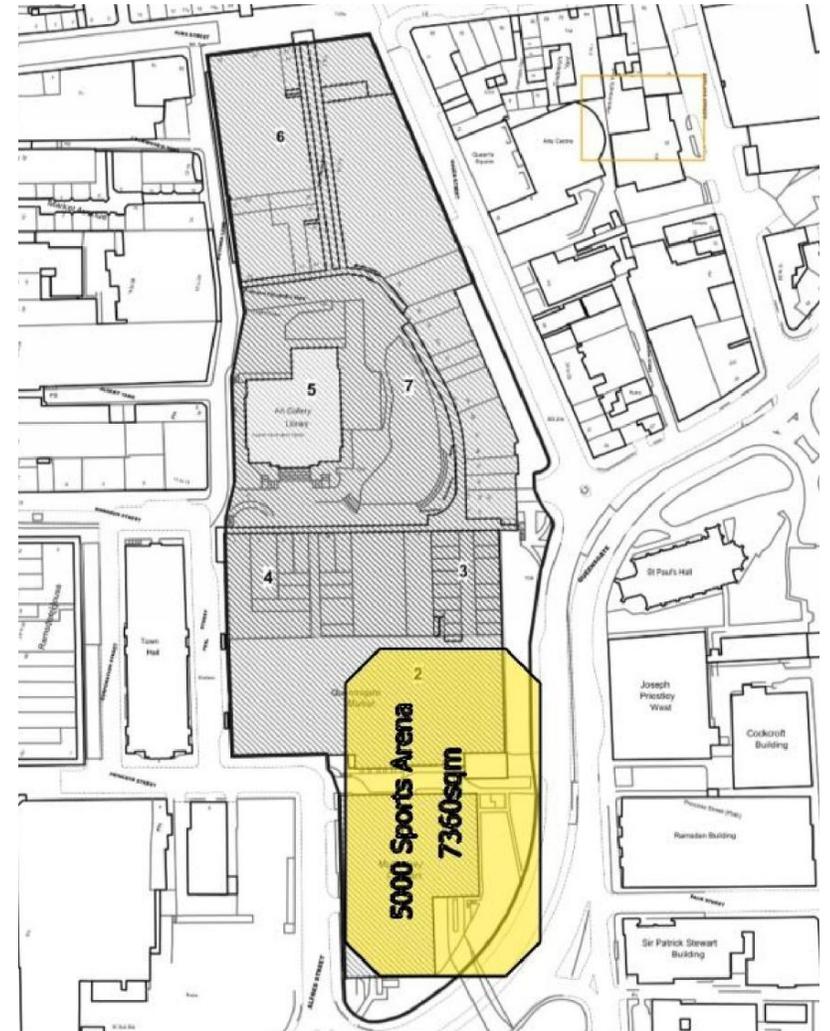
In addition, following a reorganisation, the sport of basketball is looking to set up a new West Yorkshire franchise to compete in the new top UK basketball league. It is likely that the new basketball team would also want a suitable facility for home matches.

The stated position of the leagues is that the aim is to have a 5,000-spectator capacity for any new facility serving as a franchise home venue. As a result, the current position is that the leagues would only consider proposals that meet the minimum spectator capacity requirement.

In order to achieve this the venue would need a gross footprint of 7,360 sqm in a rectangular shape to accommodate 5,000 spectators and the playing area of a netball court. In addition, front and back of house facilities that would be necessary to support 5,000 spectators. It should be noted that a basketball court is slightly smaller than a netball court and so would not determine the overall venue size.

We have plotted what a 5,000-capacity sports arena would look like on the current OCH site. As can be seen in figure 7.1, a venue of this scale would not fit on the site for the proposed venue. The 7,360 sqm footprint is far too big to be accommodated. Any sports venue would have to be of a substantially smaller scale to fit on the OCH site. That size of the sports venue would then be outside the league requirements and also unlikely to be attractive to either the teams or the leagues.

Figure 7.1 5,000 Capacity Sports Venue Overlaid onto OCH Venue Site



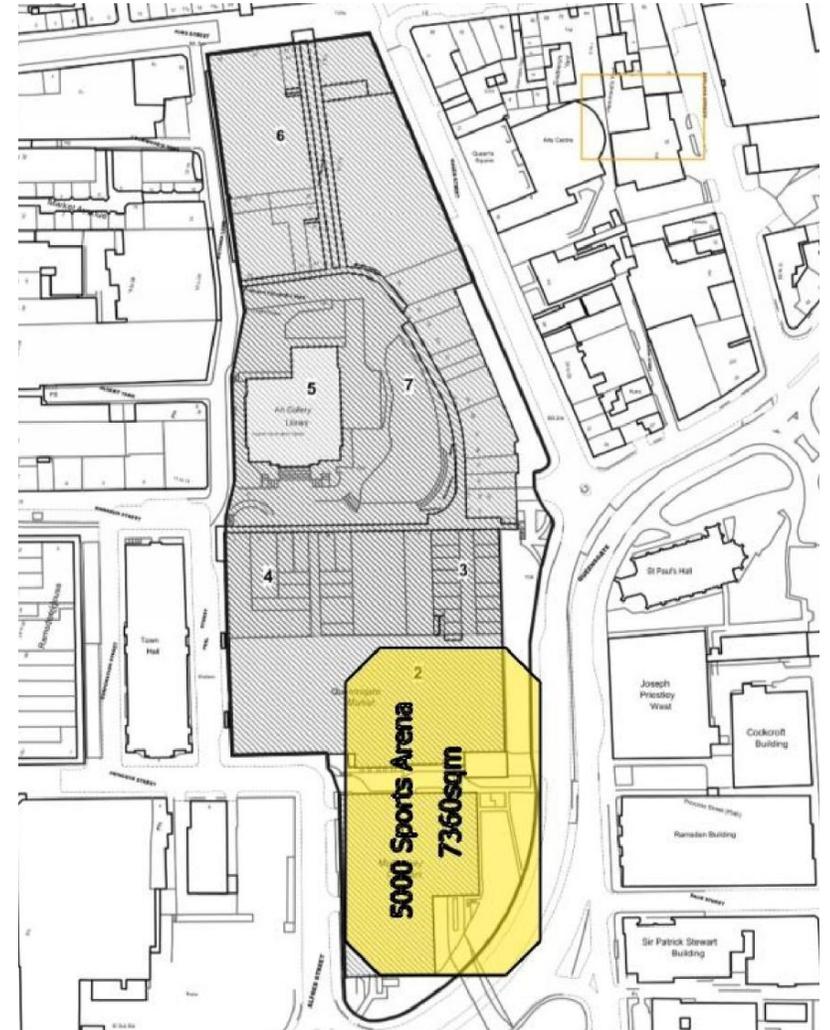
7.4.1 Franchise Appetite

We have also had a number of conversations with the Netball Super League, Leeds Rhinos netball club, the Super League basketball and the current owner of Huddersfield Town Football Club who owns several sports franchises in the USA.

- Both Leagues stated there is very little / no appetite for a franchise based in Huddersfield;
- Leeds represents a much stronger market for prospective franchise owners;
- The current netball franchise , Leeds Rhinos do not want to move to Huddersfield;
- The netball league won't grant another franchise in West Yorkshire;
- The owner of the Huddersfield football club is not interested in a basketball franchise in Huddersfield
- The basketball league is not aware of any investors with an appetite for Huddersfield

However, there may be scope to accommodate a lower-level basketball team such as the current university team if there was any demand from them at the new venue. The spectator capacity in the venue for any basketball match would be in the hundreds, not thousands of people.

Figure 7.1 5,000 Capacity Sports Venue Overlaid onto OCH Venue Site



7.5 Operating Commentary

From the operator Soft Market Testing exercise conducted with the eight operators identified in Section 5 above, some key themes that have emerged in relation to the operation of a venue in Kirklees are:

- All the operators we spoke to identified that operating a venue in Kirklees would be a challenge due to its lack of a distinct catchment, its proximity to the major markets of Leeds and Manchester and the level of competition from existing regional venues
- Any venue would have to be well designed and flexible and be able to accommodate many different types of events
- Two operators were potentially interested in a long-term lease on the venue with a term of potentially 25 years
- Both operators stated that the inclusion of a flytower would be an important feature to them which they felt would enable them to run a profitable event programme
- The other interested operator would need to consider the venue further before any decision on whether it would offer a lease or management fee deal. In addition, the timescales for the development of the venue would need to be shortened if they were to give it serious consideration
- A key feature brought out by all operators was that the venue would be loss making initially and they would be looking for support from the Council as landlord in the early years of operation. All felt that this would only be required in the short term until the venue was established
- Other potential operators stated that the venue was still a long way off being built they would only look at it as proper opportunity nearer the time. The current phasing is beyond the current horizon for most operators.



As outlined above operators would be looking to the Council as landlord for short term financial assistance. This assistance could take many forms including providing a rent-free period. It may be possible to include this short-term cost as part of the capital cost of the venue thereby avoiding it as a revenue cost. Further consideration of any short-term funding requirement will be undertaken in Stage 2, which may include discussions with the Council finance team.

It should be noted that operator strategies change over time and that individual operators may change their position over the timeframe currently envisaged. This would include the theatre operators who expressed a positive interest in the venue. During Stage 2 we will hold further dialogue with these operators to test the added value of the flytower and to solidify their position on the opportunity.

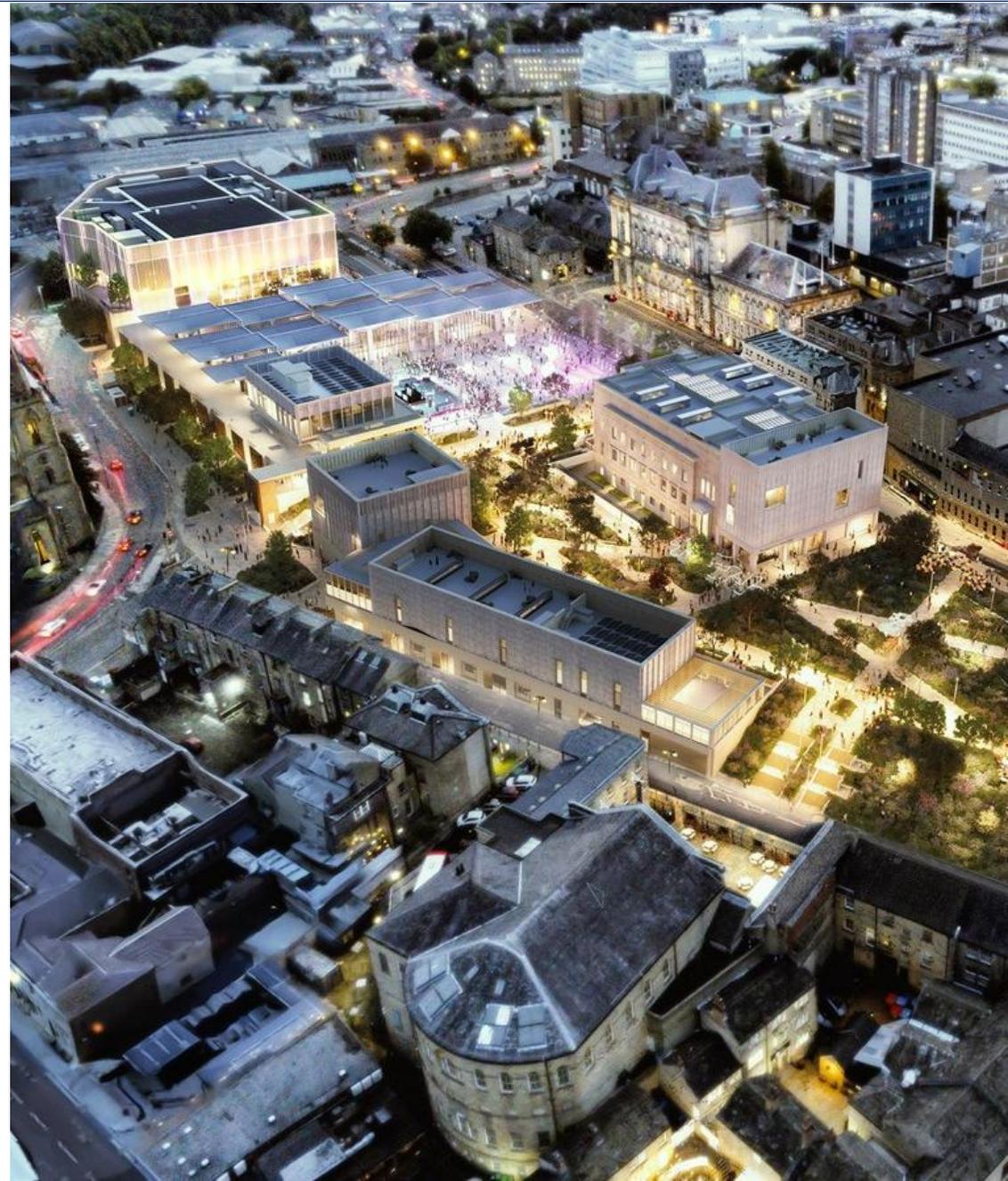


8. SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS



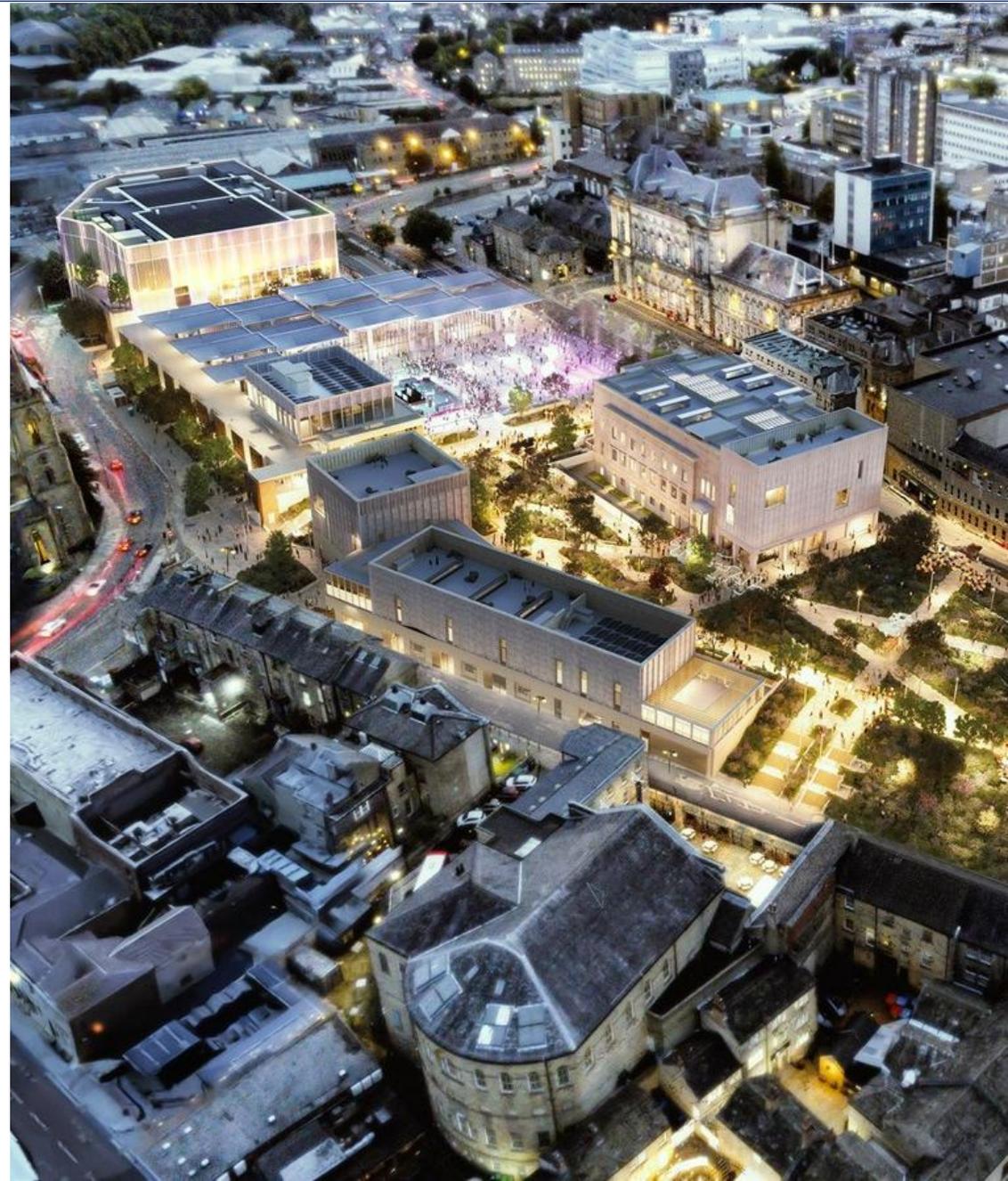
8.1 Market Assessment Summary

- A new venue in Kirklees would have a large catchment area around Huddersfield to attract audiences, within a 30 and 45-minute drivetime, though the unique catchment is limited given the proximity of core cities and other medium size towns and cities
- There is some local competition and significant regional competition due the numerous mid to large-scale venues in West Yorkshire and the wider region
- There is significant regional competition for conferences and business events
- The local population exhibit similar levels of cultural and arts engagement to the national average, but an above average propensity to attend the theatre, which suggests strong regional audiences for theatre content
- Analysing the local content offer, there seems to be a gap in the market for a larger venue in Huddersfield capable of hosting a large number of events encompassing multiple genres
- Three out of eight operators we spoke to are potentially interested in operating a venue, though Huddersfield is not currently a priority market
- Two interested operators stated that the inclusion of a flytower would be an important feature to them which they felt would enable them to run a profitable event programme in time and would greatly enhance the footfall of the venue
- Operators would be likely looking to the Council as landlord for short term financial assistance. This assistance could take many forms including providing a rent-free period.



8.2 Venue Recommendation Summary

- We would recommend a venue of capacity of 1,200 in a fully seated mode and a maximum capacity of 2,000 using a standing floor and seated balcony as best for the OCH project
- A larger venue would be able to capture touring content that currently wouldn't play existing venues in Kirklees
- Comedy and higher-profile concerts would especially benefit given the restrictions of current local venues
- A larger capacity venue could also reduce the competition for content between a new venue and the existing venues
- The design should also accommodate the ability to split the main auditorium into two spaces so that a smaller capacity secondary space can be created
- If a smaller temporary space were created at the venue, then this would be useful for smaller events, rehearsals and community activities
- We believe that a secondary space also has the potential for immersive content, perhaps utilising IP from the museum and gallery
- Consideration should be given as to whether the venue is made suitable for touring theatrical content by the inclusion of a flytower.

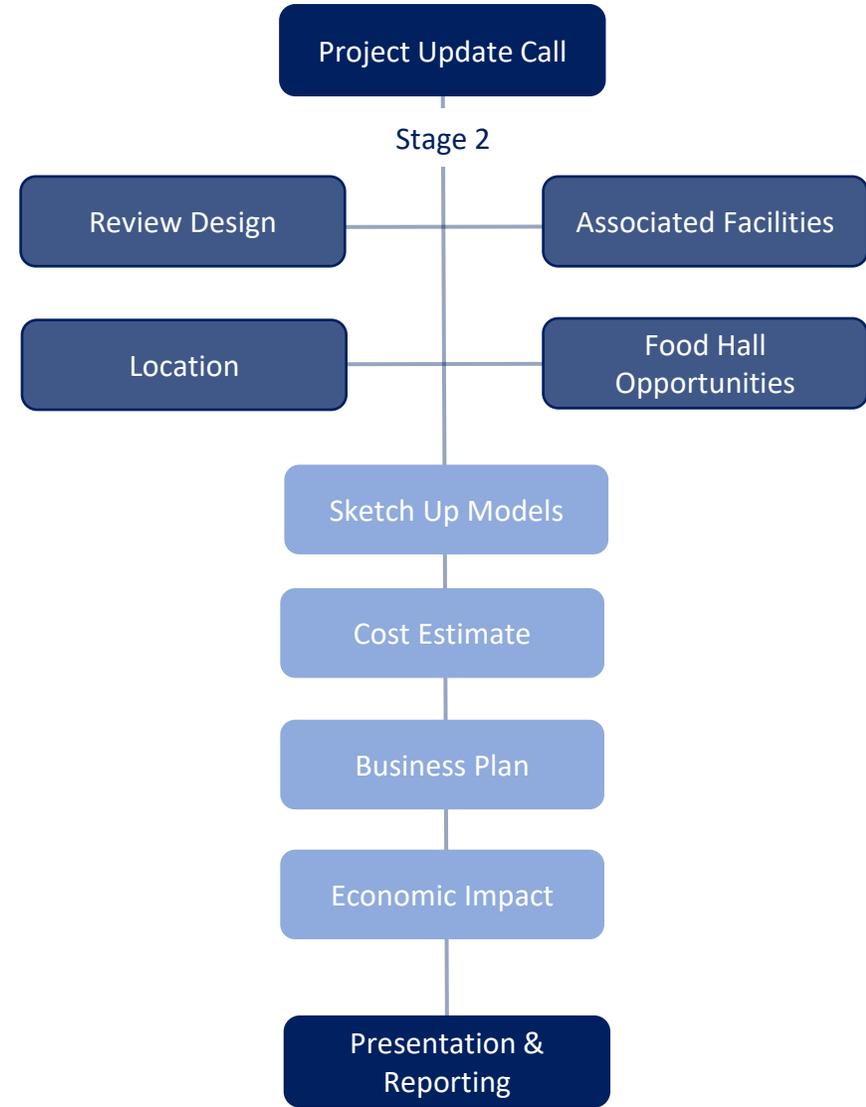


8.3 Next Steps: Assessment of Proposed Facilities

As part of the assessment of original proposed facilities and consideration of opportunities to, we will:

- Review design and delivery solutions as originally presented
- Assess the need for and impact on associated facilities including Food Hall, car park and hotels
- Assess if car park could be provided elsewhere and the impact on:
 - Design
 - Business Plan
 - Opportunities to support the OCH
- Liaise further with operators on the potential for a flytower in the facility
- Create a sketch up model of the proposed venue
- Provide a cost estimate (with support from T&T cost management) and our own IPW... benchmarks
- Produce a Business Plan for the facility
- Look at the location of any venue in the Masterplan, but assuming the existing programmed site
- Look at opportunities and provide commentary on impacts on the Food Hall and the temporary outdoor facilities
- Produce a commentary on Economic Impact of OCH
- Produce a delivery plan for the facility including approach to operator procurement, planning, venue design and construction
- Produce report and present findings to the appropriate Board/Committee of the Council.

Figure 8.1 IPW... Approach to Stage 2



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APPENDIX A: REGIONAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES



Region	Venue	Drivetime from site (mins)	Capacity (max)	Venue Type	Operator
Bradford	Bradford Live	25	3,800	Multi-Use Entertainment	Trafalgar Entertainment
Bradford	St Georges Hall	28	1,500	Multi-Use Entertainment	Bradford Theatres
Bradford	Alhambra Theatre*	25	1,400	Theatre	Bradford Theatres
Halifax	Piece Hall	22	5,500	Outdoor	The Piece Hall Trust
Halifax	Victoria Theatre*	24	1,875	Theatre	Calderdale Council
Leeds	First Direct Arena	30	13,000	Arena	ASM Global
Leeds	O2 Academy Leeds	32	2,300	Music Venue	Academy Music Group
Leeds	Leeds Grand Theatre*	30	1,466	Theatre	Leeds Heritage Theatres
Leeds	Leeds Town Hall	25	1,200	Multi-Use Entertainment	Leeds City Council
Leeds	Leeds Playhouse*	40	1,100	Theatre	Leeds Theatre Trust Ltd.
Leeds	Stylus	30	1,000	Student Focused	Leeds University Union
Leeds	Leeds Beckett Student Union	30	1,020	Student Focused	Leeds Beckett Student Union
Manchester	AO Arena	45	23,000	Arena	ASM Global
Manchester	O2 Victoria Warehouse	55	3,500	Music Venue	Academy Music Group
Manchester	The Bridgewater Hall	45	2,300	Concert Hall	Manchester Concert Hall Ltd.
Manchester	The Union @ Manchester Met	52	1,000	Student Focused	Manchester Metropolitan University
Manchester	Aviva Studios	55	5,000	Multi-Use Entertainment	Factory International
Manchester	Co-op Live	56	23,500	Arena	Oak View Group
Manchester	O2 Apollo	54	3,500	Multi-Use Entertainment	Academy Music Group
Manchester	Manchester Academy	57	2,600	Music Venue	SJM Concerts
Manchester	Palace Theatre*	57	2,000	Theatre	ATG
Manchester	Opera House	54	1,900	Theatre	ATG
Manchester	O2 Ritz	56	1,500	Music Venue	Academy Music Group
Manchester	The Lyric Theatre (The Lowry)*	50	1,700	Theatre	Lowry Arts Centre
Manchester	New Century Hall	50	1,300	Music Venue	Federated Hermes International
Manchester	Albert Hall	55	1,900	Multi-Use Entertainment	Trof
Wakefield	Venue 23	35	850	Music Venue	Venue 23 Ltd.

* Venues with a Flytower