
PRESS RELEASE



MERLIN ANNOUNCES PLANS TO MAKE THE LONDON EYE A PERMANENT FEATURE OF THE CAPITAL'S SKYLINE

One of the UK's most iconic visitor attractions – the lastminute.com London Eye – would continue to be enjoyed by many generations to come, under proposals that would see it retain its permanent residence on London's South Bank.

LONDON 7th Dec 2022: Merlin Entertainments, the UK-based owner and operator of the attraction, has confirmed it is taking steps to secure the landmark's permanent future.

Created in celebration of the millennium, the Eye's planning permission includes a condition which requires the local planning authority to decide whether the attraction can be retained beyond 2028.

Now widely recognised as an iconic and established part of London's visitor offer, the Eye has been visited by millions of Londoners and tourists alike, including celebrities and royalty, and is identified with countless cultural, community, London, and UK celebrations. Through a forthcoming application to Lambeth Council (the local planning authority), Merlin Entertainments will seek to discharge the planning condition to enable the Eye to be kept in place permanently.

Mike Vallis, Merlin's Divisional Director for Midway Attractions in the UK – which includes the London Eye and other attractions on the South Bank – said: *"The London Eye is a UK success story with a global reach. When it first opened at the turn of the century, no-one could have envisaged it would become synonymous with all that is great about our capital city. As the capital's most visited paid for attraction, it continues to be enjoyed by millions of guests every year, it is now time for us to secure its long-term future through this application to Lambeth Council."*

"Over the summer, we have seen a significant (post-pandemic) return of international visitors, set to rise further over the coming years. The London Eye remains one of the top "go to" destinations for those visiting the UK, as these holidaymakers come to enjoy the pods' unrivalled views of the capital."

"Following the recent announcement by the Mayor of London that the New Year's Eve fireworks will be returning to the Eye at the end of this year, it is clear that this attraction has a revitalised place at the heart of the capital's cultural life. Now is the time to ensure the Eye can be enjoyed for generations to come, and we look forward to working with Lambeth Council to secure the necessary amendment to the existing planning permission."

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: *"The London Eye is established as one of our capital's most recognisable visitor attractions, and is a must-see destination for tourists from at home and abroad. It is fantastic news that Merlin Entertainments is bringing forward plans for the Eye's permanent future to secure its place as an integral part of London's long-term visitor offer."*

"I'm delighted that the London Eye will once again be the focal point for our New Year's Eve celebrations as millions of people around the world look to our capital as we welcome in 2023, and together continue to build a better, more prosperous London for everyone."

Merlin Entertainments is currently engaged in pre-application discussions with Lambeth Council and will be submitting a discharge of condition application in spring 2023. The Council will then assess the continued acceptability of the London Eye in this location.

Ends

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Notes to Editors

About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin operates over 140 attractions, 23 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. Merlin's purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its millions of guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its employees.

See www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information and follow on Twitter [@MerlinEntsNews](https://twitter.com/MerlinEntsNews).
