

Sky Studios Elstree receives planning approval



- Work begins this month on world-leading, state-of-the-art film & TV studio – set to open in 2022
- Joint project between Sky, NBCUniversal and Legal & General receives green light from Hertsmere Borough Council
- Investment to bring over 2,000 jobs and £3bn of production spend in the first 5 years alone

Sky Studios Elstree, the UK's new state-of-the-art film and TV studio, has received the green light to proceed with construction works following a unanimous decision last night by Hertsmere Borough Council.

The development represents a significant investment in the UK and European creative economy and will be made with the backing of Sky's owner Comcast and in partnership with sister-company NBCUniversal. Legal & General will be financing and developing the scheme, which is located in the borough of Hertsmere, north of London.

Work to clear the site ready for construction begins this month and will commence with strict safety and social distancing guidelines.

Building the film & TV studio of the future

Over the first five years of operation, it is expected that Sky Studios Elstree will generate up to an additional £3 billion of production investment in the UK's creative economy from Sky, NBCUniversal and other producers

The final design for Sky Studios Elstree now sees 12 sound stages on site, with the ability to merge together and sub-divide multiple sound stages simultaneously, providing flexibility and scalability to accommodate productions of all sizes.

This means that the biggest sound stages on site can now increase to cover 60,000 sqft if needed, or reduce to much smaller segregated studios, simultaneously providing Sky Studios and NBCUniversal a COVID-19-ready set up for the future. The production facilities and digital suites on site will also be set up to facilitate remote working.

Once operational, the scheme will provide much needed space for the ongoing boom in film and TV production in the UK – attracting the European and international creative community to do their best work in Britain. The total area of the site will cover the equivalent of 17 football pitches.

Sky Studios Elstree will become home to a host of Sky Originals, created by Sky Studios, as well as major film productions from Universal Pictures, Focus Features and Working Title, and television series from Universal Studio Group. It will also have capacity to host productions from third party producers.

Creating employment and training opportunities

The construction phase of the build will contribute £230 million to UK GDP in the period 2020 – 2021.

Sky Studios Elstree will lead to the creation of over 2,000 jobs in the local area, including 900 during the construction phase and 1,500 once the studio is operational. The full-time roles will include a significant number of production jobs alongside roles supporting the running of the studio's operations. More broadly, thousands of additional new jobs will be supported in the national supply chain each year, with Sky Studios Elstree helping to fuel the local economy across Hertsmere.

Sky Studios is also committed to supporting the next generation of young and diverse creative talent and will use Sky Studios Elstree to build on its existing work in this area which includes Sky Academy Studios and Mama Youth Project, an initiative that equips young people, aged between 18-25 years of age from under-represented groups, with the necessary skills to work in the TV industry.

Commitment to sustainability

In line with Sky's commitment to become Net Zero Carbon by 2030, and matching Legal & General's drive to deliver major ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) projects, it is expected that Sky Studios Elstree will become the most sustainable film and TV production site in the world when it opens in 2022.

As part of the design process, the businesses have actively looked at all sustainable development opportunities, with the project set to use reduced embodied carbon in construction. It is expected that Sky Studios Elstree will have the capability to generate 20% of its own energy on site through solar energy. No gas or fossil fuels will be used to power day-to-day operations and Sky will also harvest rainwater for use on site.

Sky Studios will not allow any single-use plastics in Sky operations and has planned for how cast and crew will use the studio on a day-to-day basis, including green spaces and landscaping across the site.

In 2006, Sky became the first carbon-neutral media company in the world and Sky Studios Elstree will become a key cornerstone of the company's ambition to become Net Zero Carbon within a decade.

“The film and TV industry plays a vital role in the UK’s economy, with its programming keeping us informed, entertained and connected over the past few months. Sky Studios Elstree will become home to the best-loved films and TV shows of the future, championing British creativity on the global stage. It will also bring investment, jobs and opportunities to people across Hertsmere - cementing Elstree & Borehamwood’s reputation as ‘The British Hollywood’.”

Secretary of State for Culture and MP for Hertsmere, Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP

“We have a long and illustrious reputation for film and television production in our borough. This exciting development means the creative industries will continue to thrive in Hertsmere.

“For local people, it means not just jobs – potentially 2,000 roles being created – but a major injection of skills and expertise, which we hope to harness through educational and training opportunities. And Sky Studios Elstree’s huge production spend will provide a massive boost to the local economy such as retail and leisure sectors and professional services at the heart of our communities in Hertsmere.

“Above all, this is a moment of huge pride for our residents and businesses. With the council-owned Elstree Studios, nearby BBC Elstree and now Sky Studios Elstree, this really does mean the return of the British Hollywood to our borough.”

Cllr. Morris Bright MBE, Leader of Hertsmere Borough Council

“Even during challenging economic times, Sky Studios Elstree represents Sky’s continued commitment to the UK’s cultural economy, as well as our goal to recruit, train and develop the leading creative talent of tomorrow.

“Alongside our colleagues at NBCUniversal and our partners at Legal & General, we will create a world-leading production studio that will turbocharge Sky Studios’ plans to create even more award-winning Sky Originals for our customers.

“We would like to thank Secretary of State, Oliver Dowden MP, Cllr. Morris Bright MBE and Hertsmere Borough Council for supporting the project, providing useful guidance and feedback to ensure the project further boosts the local economy and celebrates the best of British and international creativity.”

Caroline Cooper, Chief Financial Officer, Sky Studios

“This is a critical investment for the UK’s bounce back. Landmark construction projects are rocket fuel for the economy and investing in our creative industries has never been more important. As a global leader, Sky attracts and retains the best talent, continuing to bolster the UK’s entertainment sector whilst driving job creation and economic growth. At Legal & General, we back our pension promises by using society’s capital for society’s benefit. This is a perfect match for our Inclusive Capitalism strategy.”

Nigel Wilson, CEO, Legal & General

“After years of producing great content in London, NBCUniversal is excited to have Sky Studios Elstree, our own production destination for our film and television studios - including Universal Pictures, Focus Features, Working Title, and Universal Studios Group - where we can fully embrace all that the flourishing UK creative industry offers. We look forward to continued collaboration with our colleagues at Sky Studios.”

Helen Parker, EVP of Universal Pictures Content Group, NBCUniversal

Notes to editors

- Sky Studios Elstree will be located at Rowley Lane, just a short walk from Elstree Studios
- Hertsmere Borough Council’s planning committee voted for a resolution to approve the Sky Studios Elstree planning application, subject to receipt of a satisfactory completed Section 106 legal agreement. For further details and to see the committee in action please go to their webcast page https://hertsmere.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/490368

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About Sky

With 24 million customers across seven countries, Sky is Europe’s leading media and entertainment company and is proud to be part of the Comcast group. Our 32,000 employees help connect our customers to the very best entertainment, sports, news, arts and to our own local, original content.

Following the success of Sky originals like Chernobyl, we plan to double our investment in original content by 2024. We're also developing a new TV and movie studio, Sky Studios Elstree, which is expected to lead to the creation of over 2,000 new jobs and generate an additional £3 billion of production investment in UK creative sector in the first five years alone.

Our technology allows customers to watch what they want, when they want, how they want, and as we connect millions of families to content they love, we believe it is our responsibility to do it safely. That's why we offer services like Sky Broadband Buddy and the Sky Kids app. And our online streaming service, NOW TV, brings viewers all the enjoyment of Sky with the flexibility of a contract-free service.

We also believe that a company of our scale has a responsibility that goes beyond our business, and into the community. We recently announced a series of commitments to help tackle racial injustice and improve diversity and inclusion. To ensure the commitments are delivered, Sky will invest £10million per year across its markets for each of the next three years. We're committed to being Europe's first net zero carbon entertainment company by 2030 – two decades before we have to – and we're an inclusive employer recognised by The Times and Stonewall for our commitment to diversity.

About Sky Studios

Sky Studios brings to screen unique stories from the very best talent in Europe.

We develop, produce and fund original drama, comedy and documentary for Sky's 24m customers and beyond, with 52 scripted shows already in production. Building on the success of critically-acclaimed Sky originals including Emmy-winning Chernobyl, Bafta-winning Patrick Melrose and international hits Babylon Berlin and Riviera, Sky Studios is the new creative home of Sky originals, such as The Third Day with Jude Law, ZeroZeroZero from the makers of Gomorrah and The New Pope directed by Academy Award-winning director Paolo Sorrentino.

We're an agile Studio, seeking out the best untold stories from new voices while working in creative partnership with today's best writers, producers and on-screen talent to bring viewers stories they wouldn't find anywhere else.

With commissioning talent and production capability across the UK, Germany and Italy, we understand local tastes across Europe better than anyone else and have plans to more than double our investment in original content by 2024, fully supported and backed by Comcast NBC Universal.

We're also developing a new TV and movie studio, Sky Studios Elstree, which is expected to lead to the creation of over 2,000 new jobs and generate an additional £3 billion of production investment in UK creative sector in the first five years alone.

Sky Studios invests in the cultural economy and global production sector with equity stakes in nine production companies in the UK and the US, including Great British Bake-Off creator Love Productions, and the premiere reality crime producer in the US, Jupiter Entertainment, creator of long-running hit Snapped. Sky Studios has invested in high quality factual specialists Blast Films and True North Productions; entertainment and format expert Znak & Co (US & UK); natural history producer True to Nature; drama producers The Lighthouse and Longboat Pictures; and growth businesses Sugar Films, Chrysalis Vision, and Talos Films (US).

Sky Studios launched in June 2019. The senior leadership team is Chief Executive Officer Gary Davey, Chief Commercial Officer Jane Millichip, Chief Finance Officer Caroline Cooper, Director of Drama UK Cameron Roach, Director of Comedy UK Jon Mountague, Director Original Production Sky Italia Nils Hartmann, and Director Original Productions Sky Deutschland Marcus Ammon.

About NBCUniversal

NBCUniversal is one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies in the development, production, and marketing of entertainment, news and information to a global audience.

NBCUniversal owns and operates a valuable portfolio of news and entertainment television networks, a premier motion picture company, significant television production operations, a leading television stations group, world-

renowned theme parks, and a suite of leading Internet-based businesses. NBCUniversal is a division of Comcast Corporation.

About Legal & General Group

Established in 1836, Legal & General is one of the UK's leading financial services groups and a major global investor, with international businesses in the US, Europe, Middle East and Asia. With over £1.1 trillion in total assets under management, we are the UK's largest investment manager for corporate pension schemes and a UK market leader in pension risk transfer, life insurance, workplace pensions and retirement income. It has also invested over £22 billion in direct investments such as homes, urban regeneration, clean energy and small business finance.