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Big names boost for Yes! project

PLANS for a £300m entertainment and leisure complex on a former pit site next to Rother Valley Park edged closer this week as two more big players added their names.

Developer Oak Holdings has signed Sony United Kingdom Ltd and Venue Solutions to help bring the YES! project to fruition on the 300-acre site near M1 junction 31.

"A world-class tourist destination" that will create thousands of jobs and clean up industrial land is being promised on the Rotherham/Sheffield border.

It includes a 2,000-seater theatre capable of staging full scale West End productions, a hotel, an extreme sports centre, swimming pools, a spa, shops, bars and restaurants.

Council and business leaders in Rotherham believe it will provide a massive boost for the regeneration of the area.

But Sheffield City Council has already made clear its opposition, claiming that the development would hit business on its side of the border and contravene green belt rules.

In particular the proposed theatre, with the same seating capacity as the City Hall and capable of staging productions that sometimes go to the Arena, is causing concern at Sheffield Town Hall. Oak Holdings, however, remains committed, pointing to the calibre of Sony United Kingdom and Venue Solutions.

"To receive the support of such a global brand is testimony to the recognition that

South Yorkshire is on the verge of a truly international venue," said Oak Holdings Plc chief executive Steve Lewis. "We are excited to be working with Sony and its proposed participation marks an important milestone.

"We are committed to delivering excellence and leading edge facilities in YES! and Sony with Venue Solutions create the perfect alliance for this."

Venue Solutions would provide "unique and sophisticated" venue management software, which utilises Sony equipment.

A decision on planning permission for the Yes! project will eventually be made by Rotherham District Council because the land falls within its boundaries.