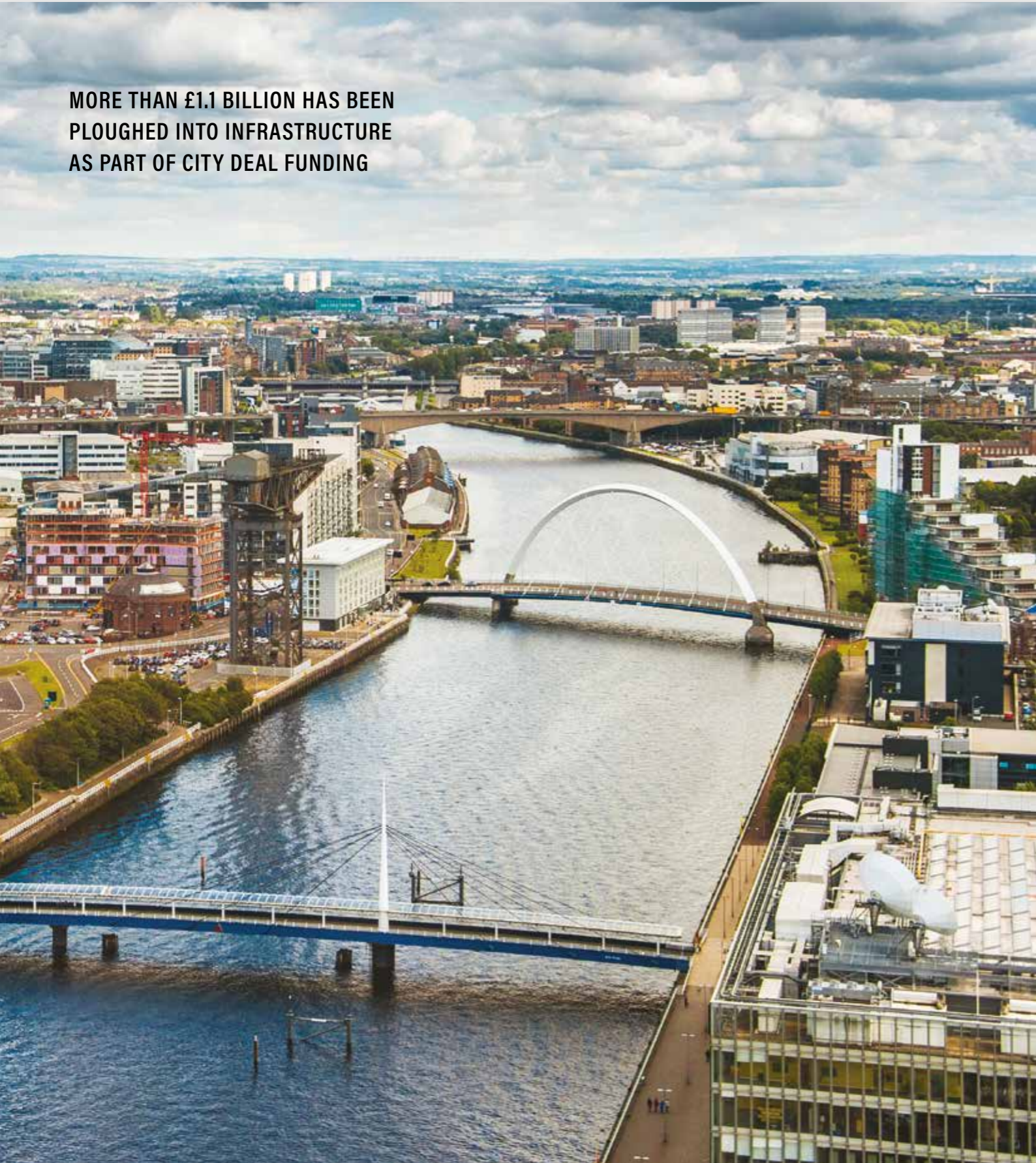


MORE THAN £1.1 BILLION HAS BEEN PLOUGHED INTO INFRASTRUCTURE AS PART OF CITY DEAL FUNDING



GLASGOW

The mighty city recently gained Scotland's first Innovation District, and major infrastructure projects are in the offing. **Jools Stone** reports

**D**eemed the world's friendliest city by Rough Guides in 2016, Glasgow offers no shortage of assets for event planners. The city's mercantile heritage has blessed it with handsome venues, alongside scores of cultural attractions and world-beating knowledge institutions. Add in its proximity to stunning national parks, a range of design-conscious hotels and a surfeit of hospitality venues, and it's hard to see what, if anything, the city's missing.

Not that there's any complacency here, as evidenced by the £200 million expansion of the Scottish Event Campus (SEC), which will see new facilities and outdoor spaces at the SSE Hydro, Armadillo and the former Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, expected to generate £123 million for Glasgow. The city is one of Europe's leading conference destinations. According to Aileen Crawford, Glasgow Convention Bureau's head of conventions, its success can be attributed to expertise and institutional heritage. "Glasgow is a conference city that understands the importance of its knowledge hub economy," she says. "More than 60 per cent of conferences taking place in the city this year are linked to areas of world-class research from our academic institutions."

The medical sector is especially well represented. Glasgow is hosting numerous conferences this year with markedly strong and direct public health messaging, such as the European Congress on Obesity, the British Association for the Study of the Liver and the British Association of Sport and Exercise Medicine. The Convention Bureau plans to drive the conversation resulting from these events out into the community, showing how conferences not only benefit a city's economy but also have a wider impact.

More than £1.1 billion has been ploughed into the city's infrastructure as part of the Glasgow City Region City Deal, creating Scotland's first Innovation District earlier this year. This area is already home to the Technology and Innovation Centre but also promises to deliver a hotbed of new technologies and ideas, hopefully attracting conferences linked to the region's

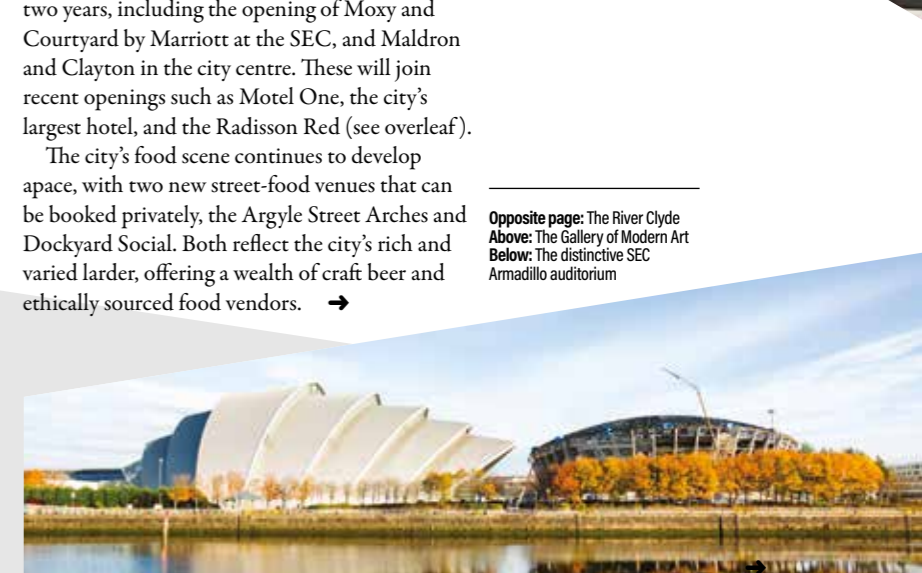
internationally renowned centres for offshore renewable energy, transport systems, space applications and high-value manufacturing.

In addition to a raft of projects completed thanks to City Deal funding (these include Medicity Scotland in North Lanarkshire, Tontine in Merchant City and the University of Glasgow's Imaging Centre of Excellence, to name just a handful), the city is also expecting a range of transport improvements, including an upgrade of Motherwell train station and the creation of a new bridge crossing the M8 motorway in Sighthill.

Glasgow airport serves just under ten million passengers a year across more than 100 routes. In April, the airport made Scottish aviation history with Emirates introducing the nation's first scheduled A380 service. Further developments are expected later this year, when the airport launches its 2040 Master Plan.

Glasgow's already sophisticated hotel offering will be further strengthened by an influx of more than 2,000 new rooms arriving in the next two years, including the opening of Moxy and Courtyard by Marriott at the SEC, and Maldron and Clayton in the city centre. These will join recent openings such as Motel One, the city's largest hotel, and the Radisson Red (see overleaf).

The city's food scene continues to develop apace, with two new street-food venues that can be booked privately, the Argyle Street Arches and Dockyard Social. Both reflect the city's rich and varied larder, offering a wealth of craft beer and ethically sourced food vendors. →



Opposite page: The River Clyde  
Above: The Gallery of Modern Art  
Below: The distinctive SEC Armadillo auditorium

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### MOXY HOTEL MERCHANT CITY

Scotland's second Moxy hotel, Marriott's millennial-courting brand, opened last November with an equal emphasis on fun and tech, welcoming weary travellers with a complimentary cocktail on check-in and superfast wifi in its 181 rooms. There's table football and a host of other games in the lobby. [moxy-hotels.marriott.com](http://moxy-hotels.marriott.com)

### DAKOTA DELUXE

The Dakota does low-key opulence rather well, with dark wood interiors, leather furnishings and intimate lighting creating a highly refined ambience through its public areas and 83 rooms. There's a champagne room, a private dining room and a boardroom that seats ten, with a 55-inch interactive flatpanel display and table service making it the perfect environment for high-level corporate meetings. [glasgow.dakotahotels.co.uk](http://glasgow.dakotahotels.co.uk)

### RADISSON RED

The brand's UK debut certainly makes a bold entrance with a frontage that changes colour and contours echoing the cranes that dotted the shipyards not so long ago. The glass-walled rooftop Red Sky Bar provides fine views, while the location in the SEC's Finnieston Campus, with both BBC Scotland and STV just across the Clyde, means it's well placed for glitzy media events. The 174-room hotel offers four event spaces, some with game studios, which accommodate between 30 and 100 guests. [radissonred.com](http://radissonred.com)

### THE CLYDESIDE DISTILLERY

Located on Queen's Dock, Clydeside is the first dedicated single malt whisky distillery to open in Glasgow for more than a century. A swish tasting room seats up to 50, while the restored pumphouse offers state-of-the-art AV. The distillery is available for exclusive hire, catering for a maximum of 200 people for drink receptions. [theclydeside.com](http://theclydeside.com)



Clockwise from top: Moxy Hotel Merchant City; Radisson Red; The Clydeside Distillery; Dakota Deluxe