

Local government and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

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Introduction

The LGA runs a programme of work to support local government engagement with the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are working with 90% of councils on this agenda. The LGA is committed to ensuring that local government fully embraces – and is recognised for – its role as a key delivery partner for the Games.

LGA Key Messages

- **The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are about more than a summer of elite sport in London in 2012. Local government is working hard to spread the benefits from the Games across the whole country in the run-up to 2012, during the Games and for many years afterwards.**
- **As such, government's arrangements to support delivering a UK-wide legacy must visibly recognise local government's key delivery role.**
- **Local authorities across the country, not just in London, are already using the inspiration of the Games to deliver wider social and economic benefits to their communities.**

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are about more than a summer of elite sport in London in 2012. Local government is working hard to spread the benefits from the Games across the whole country in the run-up to 2012, during the Games and for many years afterwards.

Not surprisingly, the local authorities who have been engaged with the 2012 agenda the longest are those most directly affected by the Games: the host boroughs in London and the nine venues outside London, and local authorities in Essex, Hertfordshire and Kent who are in close proximity to London. These local authorities are heavily involved with the detailed planning that goes with hosting world sporting events, and are working with the LGA to share their learning with other councils.

However, the LGA's work has focussed on motivating all the other local authorities in the country, however far from London or a venue, to understand how their communities could also play an active role in the Games. This is the real prize up for grabs - the opportunity to deliver their communities' objectives bigger, better and faster through the focus of the greatest show on earth.

The LGA believes that councils are best-placed to lead the development of a shared vision about how a locality can contribute towards the Games and what kind of legacy local people and partners want to secure. And in the absence of lots of extra money, local authorities are in control of the services and spending that can best be aligned with the Games. For example, councils spend about £2 billion every year on cultural, sporting, tourism, leisure and recreation services.

So, the Games provide a unique catalyst to reach new groups of people, motivate people to change their behaviour, and bring new partners to the table, but precisely how this pans out will vary between localities depending upon local context

The LGA has worked with local authorities to identify six potentially UK-wide benefits from the Games where councils are a key delivery partner. These are: inspiring children and young people, raising our sporting game and influencing healthier lifestyles, volunteering, championing culture, generating and supporting tourism and boosting the local economy.

Many of these issues are already important to local communities and local authorities are already working hard to improve performance and service delivery. They also chime with the legacy aspirations set out in the government's Legacy Action Plan and achievement of Public Service Agreement 22 (To deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport).

As such, government's arrangements to support delivering a UK-wide legacy must visibly recognise local government's key delivery role.

The Nations and Regions Group was set up by the London Organising Committee and Government to help deliver UK-wide involvement in the Games and achieve regional and local legacies – the first time a host nation had attempted to explicitly build-in legacy at the start of planning to host a Games.

There are 12 partnerships – one in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and each of the English regions – which bring together representatives from the public, private and third sectors. Each Nations and Regions Group has a Chair and a Coordinator to drive forward work on a regional and local legacy.

The LGA believes it is essential that local authorities, as a key delivery partner, are embedded in the Nations and Regions Groups. Local authorities tell us this is working better in some regions than others. Partly, this is because some councils remain sceptical about the benefits the Games will deliver, but it is also the result of a misunderstanding about the nature of legacy and who will make it happen. Legacy will be local, not regional, and the bulk of it will be delivered by local authorities and their partners, who are already doing excellent work on the very issues we all define as legacy.

At a time when government is reviewing the effectiveness of arrangements it has put in place to spread the benefits from the 2012 Games, the LGA believes local government must be more visible and local areas given the freedom to shape a legacy that reflects the aspirations of local people. Existing vehicles, such as local area agreements, can be used to capture the added value the 2012 Games brings (although measuring this is not without its challenges).

Local authorities across the country, not just in London, are already using the inspiration of the Games to deliver wider social and economic benefits to their communities.

The LGA is encouraging all local authorities to engage with the Games and consider what it might mean for them and their communities. We do this through nationwide networks of councillors and officers who are their local authority's nominated contacts on the 2012 Games. Through our networks we reach 90% of local authorities.

Five councils have recently been awarded Beacon Council status in recognition of

their expertise and innovative approach to using the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to create a legacy of delivering wider benefits for their communities. And over the coming year they will play an important leadership role, sharing their learning with peers across the country.

The five Beacon Councils are Dorset, Essex, Greenwich, Hackney and Kent. They each have a comprehensive local plan but highlights include:

- Dorset (with partners) will host an annual "spirit of the sea" festival to celebrate the area's role as sailing venue for the 2012 Games, giving local people the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities
- The Essex-Jiangsu Cultural Festival runs between July 2008 and March 2009 to celebrate Essex's 20 year relationship with the Chinese province of Jiangsu, which achieved a heightened profile when China hosted the 2008 Games. The festival includes over 100 events that will raise awareness about China, promote cultural, educational, sporting and trade links and contribute towards the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.
- The Greenwich "Sportathon" is a fusion of sport and culture aimed at addressing health inequalities. The event is organised to engage young children in fun sporting activity with the aim of encouraging active sporting interest and creating the lower rungs of a long term active sporting pathway. In the space of three years it has grown to involve nearly all of the borough's primary schools, with over 1,800 children participating.
- Hackney is using the focus of the Games to inspire local people to be more active in local life and events. For example, primary school children competed against their own 'personal best' scores to help increase physical activity and communities living closest to the Olympic site designed and delivered 24 environmental improvements
- In Kent thirty thousand children from 500 primary, secondary and special schools from years 3 - 11 took part in the Kent School Games. Able-bodied children and children with a disability participated in the Games which reflected the Olympic and Paralympic values and encouraged the personal development of young people in Kent. At the finals in July 2008 1,200 medals were contested across 23 sports.

The LGA has also been working with London 2012 to encourage local authorities to participate in national programmes in the run-up to 2012. For example, with local authorities' help:

- More than 400 local celebrations took place across the country in Summer 2008 to mark the handover of the Olympic torch from China to the UK
- In Autumn 2008 around 700,000 people enjoyed around 655 events held in every corner of the UK to try out new activities as part of "Open Weekend". 77 local authorities have already registered local events to celebrate this year's "Open Weekend" in July
- Over 4,000 schools have signed up to the Get Set education programme
- 910 companies have won Games-related contracts (over two thirds are small or medium sized businesses and just under half are based outside London)

A number of memorandums of understanding have been reached between the UK and national Olympic and Paralympic committees to host pre-games training camps in the run-up to the Games, which are either cementing existing relationships, or providing opportunities to forge new ones. For example, Thailand and the Pacific Islands of Oceania look set to base themselves in the North West to acclimatise before the Games, and Manchester City Council is a key partner.