

2012 OLYMPIC PREPARATIONS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. Why has this report come to the Committee?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Members regarding preparations leading up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. The report explains how Sunderland will link into the national and regional agenda for the 2012 Games and how our communities can be engaged at a local level. The report outlines that the main drivers, at a local level, will be to create a lasting legacy from the Games with a focus on encouraging participation in physical activity, promoting Sunderland as place to visit, supporting talented athletes and increasing opportunities for volunteering in sport.
- 1.2 Sunderland's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2005-2010 sets out how Sunderland's Local Strategic Partnership would contribute to the achievement of this vision, through the development of sport and physical activity opportunities across the city. Promoting sport and physical activity in advance of the 2012 Olympic Games, and beyond, will support increasing participation in sport and physical activity by 1% annually, further reducing the city's health inequalities.
- 1.3 Managed on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership by the Community and Cultural Services Directorate, the city's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will have a measurable impact upon the Sunderland Strategy's agreed key priorities, emphasising the need for sport and physical activity to be developed within the context of a rapidly changing environment.
- 1.4 The Corporate Improvement Plan 2007-2008 articulates Sport and Leisure's commitment to residents stating that "in Sunderland everyone will have access to quality sport and physical activity opportunities to improve their health and well-being at first class community based facilities." This is supported by the development of an Olympic standard swimming pool, as well as more localised sport and leisure facility developments.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2012, London will welcome more than 23,000 competitors and officials from more than 200 countries. Among them will be the world's greatest sportsmen and women. The Olympic Games and Paralympic Games have the potential to inspire people of all ages to become involved in sport and wider community activity. Additionally the Games have the potential to impact upon the local economy, tourism opportunities and associated benefits.
- 2.2 Regional engagement with the London 2012 Games has been formalised through the establishment of a Nations and Regions Group (NRG). Feeding into LOCOG (the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games)

NRG works towards ensuring that the benefits of the London 2012 Games reach all parts of the UK.

2.3 A regional structure supported by OneNorth East and Sport England Northern Region, has been developed which serves as a mechanism for ensuring a coordinated regional approach, harnessing the enthusiasm of a diverse range of partners and 'managing expectations'. Eight themed groups have been established reflecting areas where economic or sporting benefits can be obtained. Some of the themes are led by regional agencies and some have been aligned to wider regional agendas. All groups have 'Communications' as a cross cutting theme.

- Children and Young People
- Health
- Performance Sport
- Facilities and Preparation Camps
- Skills
- Business
- Tourism / Image
- Culture

3. 2012 Olympic Preparations

3.1 Sunderland is certainly on the Olympic map as far as Sport England and the LOCOG are concerned and this has been reflected by recent national interest.

3.2 In July 2006, a London **2012 Games Roadshow** visited the North East, as part of a nationwide tour, to celebrate the first anniversary of the announcement that London had fought off competition from the likes of Paris and New York to win the right to stage the 2012 Games. Olympic sporting greats, ministers and Games organisers were aboard a red London double decker bus, calling at the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, as well as other key sporting venues across the region.

3.3 In addition, **Sebastian Coe** who is chair of the LOCOG, visited the North East in July 2007 to view facility preparations at both the Sunderland Aquatic Centre and at Gateshead Stadium and also to meet talented local athletes. This visit was preceded by **Derek Mapp**, Chair of Sport England, who visited the 50m pool in June 2007 to view preparations.

3.4 A registration of interest was submitted in 2007 to OneNorth East from Sunderland to be included in the London 2012 **Pre Games Training Camp Guide**. In March 2008, the Sunderland Aquatic Centre was identified as a location that may be suitable for international teams to train prior to the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games taking place. By working in partnership with Sunderland University and other partners, a range of facilities would be available in the local area for international teams to use. Attracting international teams to train in Sunderland prior to the Games would help to engage schools and community organisations in sporting opportunities. For Members information a copy has been distributed of the Northern regions Pre-Games Training Camp Guide. This guide is to be made available to other countries in the build up to the 2012 Games and the city will take a proactive approach towards attracting a visiting Olympic swimming team.

The City Council has established an early partnership with key agencies and is a member of the Regional Facilities and Training Camp Board.

- 3.5 Members may be aware that on 24 August 2008, the **Olympic Flag** was handed over from Beijing to London and the UK is now the official host of the 2012 Games. To mark the occasion, local authorities across the country were invited by London 2012 to join in celebrations by 'Flying the Olympic Flag' and creating a local event to mark the occasion. At approximately 2.30pm, local flags were raised to officially mark the moment when the UK became the next host of the Olympic Games. To celebrate the occasion, a special 'open day' was organised within eight city leisure centres, by offering a programme of free activities, between 10am - 5pm on Sunday 24 August 2008. The day was a great success and was attended by the Mayor of Sunderland, with many residents taking advantage of the special taster sessions that were made available. Also in attendance were two potential Olympic swimmers from the City of Sunderland Swimming Club, Laura Breese (16 years) and Phobe Lenderyou (12 years)
- 3.6 A hand over of the **Paralympic Flag** will be made at Portland School on 17 September 2008.
- 3.7 At a sub-regional level, **Tyne and Wear Sport** and its partner local authorities have discussed and agreed **five key areas for focus** in the build up to the 2012 Games.
- i. Increase levels of participation in Sport and Physical Activity, for
 - a. Adults over the age of 16
 - b. Young People, with a particular emphasis on the UK School Games in 2010 (see Section 4.4)
 - ii. Promoting regional facilities as Pre-Games Training Camps
 - iii. Promoting Regional Representation in the 2012 Olympics
This will include engaging potential local Olympians and athletes to inspire others into sport and physical activity.
 - iv. Promoting attendance at and watching the Olympics' in 2012
 - v. Promoting volunteering

4. **Olympic 'Connections'**

- 4.1 The Directorate have met with the Sunnyside Partnership to discuss arrangements for the **Cultural Olympiad launch**. The opening of The Place in Sunnyside has been programmed to coincide with the Cultural Olympiad weekend. Performances and entertainment are scheduled at The Place and Sunnyside Gardens on the 26 and 27 September 2008. The proposed programme includes performances by a local theatre group, musicians and schools, and the weekend will also include a photographic exhibition.
- 4.2 The City Council have been approached by the BBC to be the regional venue to stage the **Children in Need** day on Friday 14 November 2008. The BBC were interested in the Sunderland Aquatic Centre as a regional iconic building that would promote and harness an Olympic theme and viewed Sunderland's Aquatic Centre as the ideal venue.
- 4.3 Sunderland City Council has a long and enviable history of staging events that represent the city's culture. In support of 2012, Community and Cultural Services will explore Olympic connections through its existing special events programme, in

order to promote the Wellness agenda and participation in physical activity, as well as exploring funding opportunities to add value and harness the Olympic theme.

- 4.4 The **UK School Games** in 2010 is being regarded as a 'mini-Olympic Games' and will feature young sporting talent from across the United Kingdom. Sunderland, Newcastle and Gateshead will share the fifth UK Schools Games, an event aimed to inspire young athletes leading up to London 2012. The UK School Games initiative is funded through a combination of Government and Lottery cash, with £9.5m set aside for all annual events until 2011. Swimming events will be held at the Sunderland Aquatic Centre and Gateshead International Stadium will be the venue for the prestigious athletics competition and is also likely to stage the opening and closing ceremonies. Young disabled athletes will compete in Paralympics-style events as part of the Games. The Games will also feature a volunteering programme giving North East youngsters the chance to gain experience as sports officials.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 In the forthcoming years, Community and Cultural Services will continue to provide updates to the Review Committee. Items for consideration will include:
- A policy position regarding potential Olympic athletes, who reside or train in Sunderland and who may require City Council financial support.
 - A policy position to respond to requests for financial support from other organisations, such as local clubs and regional partners, such as OneNorth East.
 - Sunderland's approach to securing an Olympic / Paralympic team to the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, as part of a Pre-Games Training Camp.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The next four years will provide a focus for residents to become more involved in participation, coaching, volunteering and community initiatives. It is vital that we use the Olympics as a platform to inspire local people. It is proposed the following five focus areas underpin the work to be undertaken to maximise benefit from the 2012 Games;

- **Promoting Physical Activity**
Increasing the physical activity levels for people of all ages is important for the health and wellbeing of local residents. Initiatives will be planned which will emphasise the importance of becoming and staying active.
- **Tourism and Image**
Highlighting Sunderland as an area that promotes healthy lifestyles will provide opportunities to encourage visitors from other areas. We will ensure that facilities and services are in a position to welcome athletes, families and supporters into the city.
- **Pre-Games Training Camp**
By attracting an Olympic team to Sunderland as part of a Pre-Games Training Camp, we anticipate that the visiting team will undertake

- School visits and allow schools access to the camp to watch training sessions
- Civic activities eg. dinners
- Regional media activities eg. interviews
- Any associated cultural activities e.g. dance festivals, music events

- **Inspiring People**

By working with regional partners OneNorth East we hope to inspire Sunderland residents to be interested in attending the Olympics in a spectating capacity. One of the ways we can hope to achieve this is by identifying local athletes who may be selected for the 2012 Games, as 'Olympic Ambassadors', such as boxing's Tony Jefferies.

- **Volunteering**

Increased opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer in sport. Maximising the number of volunteers helping to support local activity and being represented at the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will be a major achievement for Sunderland.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Members of the Review Committee are requested to note the content of this report and receive further updates regarding preparation for the 2012 Olympics.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 The following background papers were relied upon to compile this report
- Sport England meeting notes
 - Presentation by OneNorth East 7 August 2008

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