

Member Briefing

Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands

Gearing up for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Scanning the horizon beyond 2012 to create a participation legacy

Overview

London hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 and it will undoubtedly provide the pinnacle of many elite sporting careers. Athletes have an affinity to the areas in which they live, play and have grown up in. There is huge potential for utilising every athlete who 'makes it' as a role model to our local communities. From 2008, the Cultural Olympiad, a four-year programme of cultural activity under the Olympic umbrella, will inspire a wide range of cultural activities – museums, libraries, arts, large institutions and small community groups. Local authorities are key to delivering an inspirational and memorable games. A key issue is to how to use the 'greatest show on earth' to mobilise our population to adopt a culture of participation which begins to address the big emerging issues for all our communities e.g. obesity including a generation of children with a lower life expectancy than their parents.

Why it matters

The London 2012 Games is the first to be held in this country since 1948. The impact on the regeneration of East London is clear. Moreover, elite athletes will be drawn from across Great Britain and they will be absolutely driven in their desire to get to the podium. Of course the Games is not just about Summer 2012; following the Beijing Games 2008, teams will regularly visit the country to acclimatise. Members with responsibility for leadership on culture, such as portfolio holders, will need to know how it affects their

authority, and what opportunities are coming up. The regional Co-ordination Group for the 2012 Games recently published a consultation on the 'East Midlands Strategy for the 2012 Games'. Its introduction says, "We hope you share our ambition for the East Midlands: that, long after the Olympic torch has died, our region is remembered for welcoming teams and visitors from across the world; for using the 'buzz' generated by the Games to inspire our young people in sport, the arts and learning: as a catalyst for new businesses to engage in public sector procurement and as a trigger to motivate more people to become volunteers both to support the delivery of the Games and in their local communities"

Key messages

- **Whilst they are based in London, the Games are an international and global event with implications in the East Midlands and other regions**
- **Your authority should consider now how to take part in and benefit from the Cultural Olympiad 2008-12**

Background

The Local Government Association identifies a range of potential benefits from the Games:

- opportunities for tourism and economic development;
- getting our communities active, healthier and safer;
- improved community cohesion from developing a feel good factor and enhanced pride;
- creating a significant cultural and sporting legacy;
- partnerships with local businesses to enhance investment in sporting and cultural facilities.

See <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/gettingontrack.pdf>



The region's Olympics Co-ordinator is based at East Midlands Development Agency. The consultation on 'The East Midlands Strategy for the 2012 Games' outlines a number of areas which were determined by the outcomes from the 'Towards 2012' event held in February 2006. These are 'sport', 'pre-games training camps', 'business', 'tourism', 'the Cultural Olympiad', 'volunteering', 'education' and 'health and well-being'. The aim is to launch a more detailed document by Autumn 2007. The strategy notes that "whilst the Games cannot be a panacea to all ills, they can inspire and engage a range of our people to change their behaviours and aspirations in a positive way."

Your Next Steps

- **Find out what plans exist in your authority or sub-region to engage with the Cultural Olympiad and the 2012 Games themselves. County-based groups are beginning to set up, based on County Sports Partnership boundaries, and you can engage with these as they develop.**
- **Bring forward ideas of how you can use the 'buzz' of the Games to promote greater participation in your local area.**

Case Study: Gearing up for the Games

When London was awarded the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 there was great excitement and anticipation all over the country.

Boston, a small rural port town, chose to seize this opportunity and attract a pre-Olympic training camp, utilising sport as an inspiration to engage both adults and young people in sporting and health-related activity, thus creating the legacy of a healthier community.

A steering group for the pre-Olympic training camp was formed, involving a diverse range of sporting interests, to determine how the games can act as a mechanism for social, cultural and economic benefits. Indeed it is hoped that Boston could be a pre-training camp for one of the smaller countries such as Latvia or Lithuania, where we have a significant local resident population, utilising the Olympic spirit to create a groundbreaking community cohesion project in the town.

Boston has many sporting facilities, one of which was visited by Lord Coe in March 2007 - the Princess Royal Sports Arena (PRSA), a purpose-built sports facility unique in that it provides equal accessibility for disabled and able bodied users. Lord Coe watched children from local schools participate in a variety of sports and commented that "it is great to see so many dedicated groups and individuals in the region working hard to maximise the benefits". Lord Coe described PRSA's facilities as world class - praise indeed!

Mick Gallagher, Chief Executive of Boston Borough Council says "this is a fantastic opportunity for Boston and the PRSA to welcome Olympic and Paralympic athletes to our wonderful town and facility. We can give them the chance to experience competing in the UK before the big day in 2012, whilst at the same time inspiring us all, children and adults, to become more active and healthy by taking part in sport and exercise."



Photo: Lincolnshire Sports Partnership



**Cultural Improvement Partnership
East Midlands**

Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands is delivering a regional programme in 2007-2010 to strengthen local authority cultural services in the East Midlands. The partnership is funded by the East Midlands Improvement Partnership and support agencies for cultural services (Sport England, Arts Council England, MLA and Renaissance). Production of this briefing is funded by Sport England and Communities and Local Government.