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2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: the final countdown

Purpose of report

For discussion and decision.

Summary

When the Board meets it will be just nine days until the 2012 Games Opening Ceremony. As the very successful Olympic Torch Relay nears its completion, councils across the country are heavily involved in final preparations to ensure that a safe and exciting Olympic and Paralympic Games are delivered.

Councillor Castle, Chair of the LGA 2012 Games Task and Finish Group, will update Members on final preparations, and the Board may also wish to discuss its continued role supporting legacy.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the progress of the Olympic Torch Relay and final preparations for the 2012 Games.
2. Discuss the CTS Board's role in supporting legacy after the Games have finished.

Action

To be taken forward by officers, as directed by Members.

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Background

1. The Board has received regular updates from the 2012 Games Task and Finish Group. This item is also an opportunity to discuss the Board's role supporting councils to maximise wider legacy benefits.
2. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is the largest peacetime operation the UK has organised. Over 14,000 athletes, 25,000 media and broadcasters and a 200,000 workforce (including 70,000 volunteers) will be involved during Games time.
3. Since the UK won the bid to host the Games in 2005, the LGA has supported councils across the country to get involved and represented their interests to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG).
4. The 2012 Games Task and Finish Group was set up by the LGA Executive to make sure that the LGA Boards supported councils to contribute to the success of the Games and to ensure that councils have the latest information and share experience and knowledge of local operational issues. The work of the task group to keep councils informed of any key issues that arise will continue over the summer and a final meeting will be held in October.
5. From the outset the Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board has supported councils across the country to use the inspiration of the Games to encourage participation in sport and cultural activities, to engage young people and to boost the economy through increased tourism.

Latest preparations

6. Whilst councils hosting Olympic or Paralympic events, overnight Torch Relay stops and other large events face all the usual operational challenges that councils are very used to dealing with, nearly every council in the UK will be impacted by the Games in some way – for example, the Olympic Torch Relay, transport interchanges, alterations to delivery times for businesses and public services, counterfeit goods and community celebrations. Although the scale of the Games is unique councils have tried and tested ways of working to respond to the operational challenges the Games present.

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7. The Olympic Torch Relay continues to be a key focus for the Task and Finish Group. Councils are vital to the success of the Relay, which started in Lands End on 19 May 2012, and is nearing the end of its 70-day journey around the UK. Thus far the Relay has been very successful with excellent turnout, good media coverage and many councils supporting spin-off local celebrations and activities. A weekly 'lessons learnt' report is sent to local authorities so that they benefit from the experience of places earlier on the route. The main issue has been larger than anticipated crowd numbers and the need for accurate reporting on crowd numbers. Councils were advised to consider stewarding arrangements around the torch bearer handover points (known as 'kiss' points) and to increase capacity at these pressure points if possible.
8. Transport is an absolute fundamental to making the Games a success and travel advice to the general public is intensifying. Motorists are being advised to avoid Central London and roads leading to the venues from the middle of July, when officials and athletes arrive en masse. The Olympic Route Network lanes become operational on 25 July. The LGA has worked closely with London Councils, LOCOG, Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and Transport for London to address councils' concerns – in particular the slow pace at which local traffic management and parking plans were brought forward and engagement of councils bordering London in transport planning. Regular dialogue is continuing to ensure that disruption during Games time is also kept to a minimum.
9. The National Local Authority Olympic Resilience Programme, which is supported by the LGA, London Councils, London Fire Brigade and funded by the Home Office, continues to provide advice and assistance to councils. During Games time the LGA will be a core part of the Olympic Secretariat, supporting the Cabinet Committee for the Olympics. A small team will provide 24-hour cover and briefing support to local government representatives and ensure that any exceptional issues are escalated appropriately.
10. Following LGA lobbying the opportunity to host a Paralympic Flame Festival was offered to all councils and 36 will be hosting Flame Celebrations over the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

Creation of a lasting legacy

11. The UK's 2012 bid was won on the back of a promise to deliver a lasting legacy for the whole country. As well as working hard to deliver a fantastic Games and an unforgettable summer of culture and sport across the country, long-range planning has been an integral part of the

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Games. Whilst most other organisations will be winding down after the closing ceremonies, for many councils the work most definitely continues. Legacy can only be delivered by democratically elected local government who know what their communities want and who can influence the local public services and other partners that need to be mobilised in support of local legacy priorities.

12. Within the context of tough financial pressures councils across the country have seized the opportunity to use the inspirational power of the Games to engage communities and give added focus to local priorities. This includes boosting participation in sport and culture, encouraging volunteering, inspiring children and young people, supporting local businesses and attracting more tourists.
13. Members will be aware that the LGA has supported councils in a number of different ways, including the Local Legacy Local Leadership Programme, sharing good practice case studies with a national network of councillors and officers, events and a monthly e-bulletin to councils. The CTS Board has consistently highlighted the potential for the whole country to benefit – not just London or the other host cities.
14. Of particular importance has been CTS Board and council engagement with LOCOG's Nations and Regions Groups (NRG), which were set up to bring together partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to plan for a local legacy. The LGA represented councils on the overarching group to ensure awareness about councils' role in legacy, that councils' concerns were addressed at a strategic level and that the NRG engaged councils appropriately.
15. It was through Nations and Regions Groups that major legacy programmes, such as Get Set, Inspire Mark, Local Leaders, UK Volunteers and CompeterFor, were activated and councils have been central to their success. **Annex A** is a small snapshot of how councils across the country have supported these programmes and the focus now is on harnessing this engagement for long-term gain.
16. Although the CTS Board has emphasised that legacy benefits extend beyond sport, supporting councils to use the Games to inspire participation in sport is a priority. The latest figures from Sport England's Active People survey shows that the growth in sports participation continues to be driven by those aged 26 and over and there is still a long-term downward trend for the 16-25 age group. Government has responded with the School Games, which drew heavily on Kent County Council's own initiative. At the last CTS Board, Members heard from David Moorcroft about Join In Local Sport, a new initiative to encourage people to get involved with the sport clubs over the weekend of 18/19

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August. Members also heard from Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, about new funding and support that is available to support local legacy initiatives.

17. Another key focus for the CTS Board has been community events. The 2012 Games, alongside the Royal Wedding and Diamond Jubilee, have showcased councils' vital role making it as easy as possible for communities to come together. The LGA produced several tools to assist councils and communities, including a community events handbook for councillors and top tips for event organisers.
18. The LGA media team has recently undertaken a survey of councils which reinforces positive messages about councils' role in helping communities to come together during the Games. Some headline results from the survey showed that:
 - 18.1 72 per cent of councils were organising their own torch events in addition to those organised by LOCOG.
 - 18.2 26 per cent of councils were organising Big Screens to show the 2012 Games for their local area.
 - 18.3 36 per cent of councils offered grants to support local communities to organise events to celebrate the Games.
19. Members may wish to consider how we can build upon this success to improve further councils support of community events and maintain the interim measures that were introduced for the Jubilee and 2012 Games.
20. Councils are also using the Games to improve local government's understanding of the benefits of major sporting events to local economies and communities beyond 2012 and throughout a decade of sport.
21. Upcoming events include:
 - 21.1 2013 Rugby League World Cup
 - 21.2 2014 Commonwealth Games
 - 21.3 2015 Rugby Union World Cup
 - 21.4 2017 World Athletics Championships
 - 21.5 2019 Cricket World Cup.

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Conclusion and next steps

22. The CTS Board is invited to discuss how it wishes to support councils once the Paralympic Games have concluded in September. Members may wish to share their thoughts at the final Task and Finish Group meeting when legacy will be discussed.
23. Actions could include:
 - 23.1 Continuing to identify culture, tourism and sport legacy case studies and sharing them on K-Hub.
 - 23.2 Embedding legacy in our leadership programmes for culture and sport portfolio holders.
 - 23.3 Supporting councils to better link sport to improved health outcomes for localities, with the Community Wellbeing Board.
 - 23.4 Continuing to update LGA community event resources with latest good practice.
 - 23.5 Reflecting legacy on the agendas of key events, such as the CTS Annual Conference.
 - 23.6 Representing councils' interests in discussions with government about their evaluation programme to ensure that the local impact is captured in a way that does not impose additional data burdens on councils.
 - 23.7 Supporting councils to use other major sporting and cultural events to sustain a legacy beyond the 2012 Games.

Financial Implications

24. There are no financial implications related to this report.