



BEYOND THE LONDON 2012 GAMES

Seminar 145 held on 4th December 2008
at 4 Hamilton Place, London

SUMMARY

The project known as 'London 2012' is the first stage of a programme that extends several decades into the future. With just under four years to go before the London 2012 Games themselves take place and with construction activities well underway, the project has entered its busiest, most visual phase.

Chaired by Terry Hill, Chairman of Arup, the seminar reviewed progress to date, and looked over the horizon at the challenges that lie ahead in providing a lasting legacy of regeneration for some of the poorest and most deprived parts of London. Topics included the impact of London 2012 in areas such as transport, the post-2013 plans, and an overview of the lessons from Sydney 2000.

Contributions from those directly engaged and charged with legacy development were balanced with representation from leading commercial interests and investors. Whilst inevitably this seminar concentrated on London, the subject was of interest across all sectors and to locations outside the capital where regeneration and investment in the public realm is critical.

LONDON 2012: BUILDING FOR THE GAMES AND LEGACY

The Chief Executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) looked at the work carried out since London was awarded the Games in 2005, and the importance of London 2012 in providing a platform for the long-term physical regeneration of East London.

Most of the ODA's work on the legacy, such as master planning for Stratford City and its integration with the rest of the Olympic Park, has now been done.

Preparatory work on the Olympic Park, including site clearance, obtaining compulsory purchase orders and relocating businesses and services was carried out in the early years, prior to starting building work on the Stadium in May 2008. The Stadium building was the first major decision on how to design for legacy – for instance, it was clear that it should be more temporary than the one built for the Sydney 2000 Games.

Some of the other current infrastructure works were described, for example:

- A new waste pumping station is being installed; a 30 m deep underground sewer pipe will run the entire length of the Lea Valley.
- The Energy Centre will use innovative technologies to support the ODA's commitment to renewable energy technology and efficient energy systems.
- 52 electricity pylons have been dismantled; more than 200 km of electrical cables are now installed in an underground tunnel.
- BT is installing a high quality ISDN line, covering the whole site.
- The complex process of land decontamination is 70% complete.
- 96 % recycling of all demolition material has been achieved – the target was 90%.

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- The project to create new highway connections across the site involves more than 30 bridges and 20 km of roads in and around the Olympic Park – one of the largest parks to be created in London in the last 150 years.
- 8 km of canals have been cleared, dredged and improved to create access to water and encourage a diversity of wildlife.
- After the Games the International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre will provide around 1.3 million square feet of space for businesses.

The importance of London 2012 in terms of business opportunities was discussed: 800 companies have already secured £3.5 billion of work and the same amount again could be awarded on completion of the Games. 98% of the companies are UK-based, 70% of them small and medium enterprise businesses. More than 40,000 companies have registered with 'CompeteFor' an online service for recording business interests, and over 3,000 individuals are currently working on the site, 24% of whom are from the five host boroughs.

A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE COMMUNITY?

London 2012 is the first time in the history of the Olympics that the organisers have attempted to use the Games for regeneration of an area. The Mayor of Newham outlined the importance of the London 2012 Games for Newham and the other host boroughs, which together have one of the largest concentrations of deprivation in Europe. Local councils are successfully using the Games to raise aspirations and inspire local people to aim higher in a range of fields, such as employment, education, volunteering and sport.

The London 2012 Games will support Newham's community strategy objectives, which are to:

- Create a better environment for all
- Build an active and inclusive community
- Invest in young people
- Make Newham safer
- Narrow the health gap
- Encourage business growth and access to jobs

Once the Games are over, physical benefits to the area will include:

- Sports venues and facilities that meet community aspirations
- Transport infrastructure to support economic growth
- Green space that offers healthier options
- Housing that supports balanced, mixed sustainable communities
- Business and industry accommodation and facilities

In order to deliver lasting regeneration in the current challenging economic climate, the area must be transformed quickly after London 2012: from one designed for the Games to one that is managed and maintained for and by the community. Newham is working with the other host boroughs and regional and national government to create a new organisation (a special purpose vehicle) which will ensure that everyone is travelling in the same direction and pooling resources to:

- Support the social and economic programmes
- Manage the transition and deliver continuing development
- Market the area
- Manage the Park
- Balance accountability with entrepreneurial flair
- Balance the books and repay debts

THE TRANSPORT LEGACY

With transportation key in enabling a successful London 2012 Games, the ODA gave an overview of the scale, form and nature of London 2012 and the implications for London and the UK's transport system. The presentation looked at the challenges ahead, the strategies being deployed and what that means in terms of the hard and soft legacy left behind after the Games.

During the 60 days of London 2012, the Olympic and Paralympic Games will involve around 55,000 athletes, officials, media and sponsors and nearly 10 million spectators. As well as meeting the transportation needs of these client groups, there is also the challenge of managing existing London demand in order to keep the city moving.

While the main focus of the Games will be on the Olympic Park, there are numerous other venues across London, plus locations in outer London and various parts of the UK. For instance, sailing events will be held in Weymouth and Portland, and football competitions will be held in stadia across the UK prior to the final at Wembley.

The first priority involves ensuring that the athletes are transported to their training and competition venues with the least possible stress. Secondly, the aim is to get spectators to travel to the events either by public transport, cycling or walking. In order to achieve these objectives, the Games must be accessible and inclusive to all groups, as outlined in the [London 2012 Accessible Transport Strategy](#).

It is expected that approximately a third of the tickets will be bought by people coming from mainland Europe and the rest of the world, a third by Londoners, with the remaining third being bought by people across the whole of the UK.

Some of the solutions will be temporary, while others will provide a lasting legacy. For instance, on 25% of the Olympic Route Network – a network that will be created from the existing road system – there will be dedicated lanes for a few weeks in 2012 to ensure reliable and swift journey times for athletes, officials and the media. However, enhanced traffic control systems and investment in various new technologies to support the network will remain as legacy.

Other measures which will support London 2012 and provide long-term benefit were described. Investment in transportation will provide significant improvements to railway infrastructure, for example new services and trains, signalling, enhanced stations, better access and 400% capacity boosts. New walking and cycling routes that link into the national cycling network will also provide lasting legacies.

SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SYDNEY 2000 GAMES

This presentation, from the former Chief Operating Officer for Sydney 2000, looked at the background and vision of the successful Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the legacy objectives and achievements, and the lessons learned.

The aim was to put Sydney on the map as a world city, promoting it as a tourist destination and a financial centre while at the same time reaffirming Australia's own cultural identity. The Games provided the opportunity to renew a part of the city that had suffered significant environmental damage, stimulate the delivery of transport infrastructure, and provide a legacy for sport in the country and for the Olympic movement.

The sustainable development aspects of the Games were economic, social and environmental. For instance, transport facilities were brought together in a much more integrated way, and coordination between the police and the road agencies improved; environmental aspects included activities such as site remediation and water conservation.

As far as the hard legacy is concerned, the aim was to minimise new construction, design for the legacy usage and use temporary venues where appropriate. Urban renewal was designed to encourage innovation and achieve economically viable long-term use. Whilst the strategy was broadly successful, some venues have performed less well than expected and some would have been more cost-effective as temporary structures. The Sydney Olympic Park has required continued government support and has yet to develop the 'critical mass' needed to become a successful community/destination. It was noted that London is better placed for regeneration as there is already a dense population around the Olympic Park area.

On balance the objectives of Sydney 2000 were achieved, although in hindsight some elements would have been done differently, for instance by:

- Setting up a separate group to focus on the legacy issues, working alongside the groups charged with delivering the Games
- Improving consultation with local councils and community groups, to involve them in the strategy and future use of the Olympic Park

2013 AND BEYOND

The commitment to a long-term legacy for London is the fundamental rationale for staging the London 2012 Games, and the delivery of this legacy will be the real measure of London's success.

The Games provide an historic opportunity to rectify long-standing social, economic and physical problems in East London – problems which differentiate the area from the rest of the city. As the organisation responsible for ensuring that London benefits from this lasting legacy, the London Development Agency (LDA) explored the key requirements, success factors and challenges facing London in maximising this unprecedented urban regeneration opportunity.

London 2012 is providing an opportunity for the metropolis to expand and develop over the next few decades. The high-level objective is to move London eastwards, and for this shift to happen, transport connections are vital; by 2012 Stratford will be the best connected metropolitan centre anywhere in London, a significant advantage in achieving the long-term revitalisation of East London.

The legacy has three main components:

1. The Olympic Park legacy – enshrined in the Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF) for the post-London 2012 development of homes, parkland, schools, health facilities, infrastructure and workspace.

The LMF will knit together the master planning exercises that are currently underway to address the need to integrate the immediate legacy from London 2012 with the areas surrounding the Olympic Park. It is very important that everyone living in the dense urban areas around the Park feels that it is part of their neighbourhood.

2. Lower Lea Valley development – linking areas and communities around the Park and integrating social, economic and physical renewal.

This development is covered by the Strategic Regeneration Framework, which is a long-term strategy, developed in partnership with the five host boroughs and other key stakeholders and covering a wide range of themes that affect quality of life. The ambition is to build on good practice and use the expertise of partners in the area to transform lives and tackle deep-seated problems such as poverty, deprivation, worklessness, poor health and low educational attainment.

3. London-wide opportunities created before and after the Games for improving skills, training, employment, business support and development, sport participation and culture. For example there will be over 10,000 sustainable jobs in the Olympic Park as legacy, part of up to 50,000 new jobs that will arise from the redevelopment of Stratford City and the wider Lower Lea Valley.

In 2009 the LDA will bring the various planning processes together into a single integrated and coherent long-term strategy for the area. This entails providing the strategic case, on the strength of which the private sector will invest and develop within the area over the next 20–30 years. The next stage will be for the business plan to be embedded within the statutory planning process.

CONCLUSION

This seminar highlighted the fact that London 2012 holds the prospect of being the first ever Games to have a pre-existing plan for development in terms of both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ legacy.

The Chairman observed that the current clean-up and preparation of the Olympic Park area for London 2012 will be followed by further construction work for many years to come. However, successful regeneration requires more than infrastructure; it involves linking the physical development of the East End of London with opportunities for local people, and harnessing the enthusiasm and talents of the local community to deliver long-term social and economic change.



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