

Communities and Culture Committee

The National Assembly for Wales' Communities and Culture Committee Inquiry into 'making the most of major events'

Evidence from the Sports Council for Wales

Sarah Powell, Head of Performance and Excellence, January 2010

Background

The Sports Council for Wales is the national agency with responsibility for the development of sport. Our job is to facilitate increased participation, improved sporting performance, and raised standards in sport and physical recreation.

In our Corporate Plan, 2009-2011, we outline a sporting vision for Wales (see "Box 1"). We won't achieve this vision by 2011, but we will make significant progress with the support and commitment of our stakeholders.

Box 1: Sports Council for Wales' "Sporting Vision"

We achieve systematic and continuing success across a range of Olympic, Paralympic, and home country sport bringing enormous pride and enjoyment to our public;

Children and young people have the best possible PE experiences and opportunities to practice their skills extra-curricular, and to further develop them in our communities;

Adults take responsibility for their own lives and engage in active participation in our communities;

Sport and physical recreation is mainstreamed within the policies of public authorities to ensure joined-up thinking and increased opportunities to participate;

National, regional, and local facilities are planned in such a way as to be sustainable and provide quality experiences for those who use them;

Wales' coaches and teachers are trained with technical and people skills in order to provide the best possible experiences for those in their care.

Context

It is important at the outset to consider the different types of events which may be covered by this review-

Mega sports events- Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth to World

Major Annual events - 6 Nations, FA Cup Test Matches etc Professionals sports

Local - National type events - e.g. Welsh Badminton Open Major international championships, or European events for smaller sports.

Similarly the purpose of hosting these types of events need to be considered, these can wide and varied from benefits to

performance sport,

sport development,

international influencing,

expertise and capacity-building,

economic benefits,

sociocultural and community development,

media exposure

profile and promotion of sport in Wales.

Major sporting events can bring inward investment, unite communities and encourage collaborative working. Events can ensure sustained investment into performance structures, create high level opportunities for people to engage with sport and maintain public interest. Other side benefits for sports events can be less tangible benefits such as home advantage for the athletes which can be an important factor in qualification for major events etc.

What contribution can major sporting events potentially have, in effecting lasting positive change in communities? What contribution can major sporting events potentially have in widening participation in sports and physical activity, especially in those sectors that usually face barriers to access sporting activity? How can this contribution be maximised?

The Contribution of Major Sporting Events to communities and participation in sport.

There is much rhetoric, but limited evidence to suggest that major sporting events impact on participation in sport at the individual, or community level (Murphy and Bauman, 2007, also see Cashman, 2003, Coalter, 2004, and Lyle, 2009). This is partly due to the complexity of motivations to participate in sport, and the interrelatedness of sports development render almost impossible the evaluation of single variable effects such as these. The difficulty in isolating the active effect of sporting success or major sporting event discourages rigorous impact studies.

Data is limited, therefore, to process evaluations of sporting club membership, environmental infrastructure development and some information on volunteers and community capacity building. Economic impacts are more commonly evaluated, such as tourism-related images of host city, urban regeneration and community pride.

Participation in sport

Veal (2003) analysed sports participation in Australia between 1985 and 2002. Although the analysis is concerned with methodological issues that limit longitudinal analysis, Veal does provide comparable data for 2000/01 and 2001/02, before and after the Sydney Olympics. In the year following the 2000 Games, although seven Olympic sports experienced a small increase in participation, nine declined. The pattern for non-Olympic sports was broadly similar, with the biggest increase in non-competitive walking. His overall conclusion is that it is 'a mixed picture... difficult to attribute it to the Olympic Games' (p.261).

UK Sport commissioned research on the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games and this indicates broadly similar results (MORI, 2004). Although survey results show that respondents "felt" that the Games had had a positive effect on their playing and watching habits, there appears to have been no recorded impact on sports participation levels across the North West.

sportscotland looked at the impact of the highly publicised curling Olympic gold medal on participation in curling in Scotland and concluded that:

the success has had the greatest impact on those who were already active in sport. Consequently, care should be taken when asserting that success on the world stage in sport has an impact on general levels of participation (sportscotland, 2004:24).

Hindson "et al". (1994) surveyed 35 New Zealand sports clubs and six National Sporting Organisations in the period following the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics and Barcelona Olympic Games to ascertain the impact of these events on club membership. The evidence of a 'trickle-down effect' was very limited; only three experienced an increase in competitive membership, and two saw an increase in 'social' (recreational) membership.

In addition to the Games having little effect on sporting demand, Hindson "et al". also point to a series of supply-side failures, for example: a lack of motivational marketing; a general failure to forward plan and promote the sport in the run up to the Games; both sports clubs and sporting organisations were complacent, relying on an anticipated 'trickle-down effect' from Olympic coverage to promote sport. They conclude that 'trickle down benefits from the Olympics are not automatic' (p.22). As Coalter (2004) argues, any benefits from major sporting events will only accrue from a more integrated and better planned sports development strategy.

In Wales, the Ryder Cup has provided a catalyst for delivering a lasting legacy for golf. An integrated sports development strategy was a core element of the successful Ryder Cup bid. This sports development strategy has been supported with a £2m Assembly Government-funded strategic development programme to increase young people's participation in golf and soon afterwards SCW allocated additional funding of £250,000 to the Golf Union of Wales for both development and performance programmes. SCW support to GUW has continued to grow and funding for 2010 is likely to be approximately £460,000. In addition golf's clubs have received support with £1m of SportLot funding for 4 Regional Centres of Excellence, as part of the Ryder Cup bid commitment.

Since its implementation, participation in golf has increased (see box 2).

Box 2: young people's participation in golf

"Participation in golf by 7-11 year olds"

Any participation increased from 14.4% in 2001 to 18.4% in 2006.

Extra-curricular participation increased from 4.7% in 2001 to 7.4% in 2006.

Club-based participation increased from 9.9% in 2001 to 11.8% in 2006.

"Participation in golf by 11-16 year olds."

Any participation increased from 10.1% in 2001 to 17.9% in 2006.

Extra-curricular participation increased from 2.2% in 2001 to 4.8% in 2006.

Club-based participation increased from 7.2% in 2001 to 11% in 2006.

Wider impacts of major events

Economic impacts of major events are more commonly evaluated. Jones "et al "(2006) have looked at the impact of the Welsh Millennium Stadium in Cardiff between its inception in 1999 and 2006, a period during which it hosted a number of world-scale events, and was amongst the top attractions in the UK, with over 1.2 million visits per annum. They argue that in attracting over half of its spending from outside the region and with many spectators having very high levels of regional spending per trip, the stadium might be considered a 'best possible case' of such developments in terms of economic or developmental impact. The analysis of stadium visitors' spending during this time revealed a contribution to regional value added (directly and indirectly) of around £50m per annum.

Similarly, a study undertaken by Youth Sport Trust has shown that hosting the UK School Games has had a positive economic impact for the host cities (see Table 1).

Table 1: UK School Games - economic impact, 2006-09

	2006 Glasgow	2007 Coventry	2008 Bristol/Bath	2009 Cardiff
£ generated into local economy	£1.9m	£1.75m	£2m	£2.16m
£ generated including multiplier effect	£2.3m	£2.1m	£2.4m	£2.59m

Linked to this is the fact that hosting major events can instigate broader investment into the local infrastructure; whether this is improving transportation links, the development of new facilities, increasing capacity within existing facilities, or, as has been seen in London Docklands, the complete regeneration of an area. As can be seen in box 3, the Olympic Games have provided the opportunity to regenerate each host city.

Box 3: Olympic Games: regeneration

Rome 1960 - new facilities, new water supply, airport

Munich 1972 - reclaim 280ha disused housing for sports facilities, shops, leisure facilities

Montreal 1976 - new Olympic park and village, 20kms metro, roads, airport

Barcelona 1992 - new sports venues, airport link, road and rail systems, beaches/marinas

Sydney 2000 - Homebush redevelopment

Athens 2004 - new housing, motorways, airport

Volunteering is also an aspect of major events that has the potential to contribute to social regeneration and the strengthening of social capital. A considerable emphasis was placed on volunteering at the Manchester Commonwealth Games. In terms of widening participation, evidence from Manchester indicates that such events may only attract those already committed to sport (MORI, 2004). Cashman (2003) argues, however, that if the catalytic impact of a major sporting event is to be sustained, there is a need to plan for what happens after the event.

What barriers are there to ensuring major sporting events are able to effect lasting positive change in communities? How can such barriers be overcome?

It is important to ascertain what the key objective of the major event is (whether it is to increase sports participation, volunteering, improve facilities, regenerate communities etc), and to ensure that this is built into the planning process. It is also important to ensure that the implementation of the plan is co-ordinated so as to enable the wider impacts of major sporting events to be maximised. This argument for the need for a strategic plan raises a more general point about viewing major events as being only one part of a much longer and systematic process of both sporting and community development.

To host a Mega type event such as a Commonwealth Games the capacity of facilities to not only deliver the event itself but to deliver the spectator capacity as well as provide a games village for athletes can not be underestimated. Glasgow spend will be in the region of £700 million with a potential Cardiff bid requiring an estimated £750 million to build the appropriate infrastructure. The National and Regional facilities in place throughout Wales were built for the purposes of training and preparation, and at best to host national type events. Linked to the hosting of Mega or Major events is the requirement at the bidding process for the event to be financially underwritten and can be a major stumbling block to securing or bidding for MSE's. The majority of events will require at the bidding stage a commitment from the sport to be able to under write the event. Organisations in Wales have limited funds to be able to do this.

Sports organisations within Wales have a limited capacity outside of the professional sports such as Rugby, Football and Golf (in the context of the Ryder Cup bid) to be able to bid, secure, and deliver Major Sports Events. Some of the issues faced within amateur sports are as follows;

Lack of skills / experience in event management, negotiating contracts, tendering, insurance, accommodation etc

Dealing with the legal aspects of events to minimise any risk to the sport

Appropriate event equipment to run events etc is required at minimal cost, this could be provided by a central organisation across events

There is a need to have strong skills set on the board of the organising committee, with a mix of executive and non executive roles e.g. RCW board is a good example with professional roles such as Director, Finance, Administration, Marketing etc working alongside the other directors from the key stakeholder organisations.

Capacity in terms of number of volunteers to run the event can be an issue; the World Youth Netball events required the Welsh Netball Association to request volunteering help from English Netball.

Running an event can take over the sport, and result in the Sports being not able to continue to run the core business when these events are on, most are not able to dedicate one point of contact with the expertise to over see the event

Areas to be addressed in supporting all major events in Wales can be summarized as follows:-

A one stop shop needs to be available for any organisations wishing to host major sports events, which can provide expertise in event management, resources, training and support. An example where this has worked well is the role undertaken by the Major Events Unit (MEU) in attracting Countries to hold their Pre Olympic holding camps in Wales. The MEU has been providing the one stop shop for interested countries and has been proactive in selling the benefits of a base in Wales as well as bringing together the expertise of other public sector organisations such as Visit Wales and International Business Wales.

A long term vision and strategy for the hosting of major events needs to be compiled to cover a 10 year period. This will enable Wales to build capacity in infrastructure and expertise in the delivery of events in Wales. To maximise benefit and minimise disruption individual events should be secured as far as head as possible.

With reference particularly to sporting events, the commitment of the UK Sporting Bodies may be required, as a number of high level events would require the GB organization to bid for the event, with Wales as the host nation. UK Sport current has a major events strategy to 2013 and is currently drafting a 13-16 strategy.

What support (including, but not limited to, financial support) does the Welsh Government currently provide to maximise the contributions of major sporting events, in effecting lasting positive change?

SCW provides limited financial support, the main role is to provide guidance and support to sports where necessary.

The Sports Council for Wales two national centres in Plas Menia National Water sports Centre and the Cardiff Welsh Institute of Sport play an important role in the hosting of major events from National, UK and European type events, and in hosting teams preparing for major games. Around about 150 events are held across the two centres, with support being provided to the NGB to utilise the facilities.

What support does the Welsh Government currently provide to encourage major sporting events to take place in Wales, and should it be seeking to increase the number of major sporting events taking place in Wales?

Welsh Assembly Government has circulated a Major Events Strategy for consultation, SCW have commented on this and would be supportive of this being finalised and published. Focus should be given to deciding the overall vision and objectives for the hosting of major events in Wales, alongside overcoming the issues highlighted in Question 2. The number of events should then be agreed as part of the vision and long term strategy for Wales.

What action could the Welsh Government take to improve planning and co-ordination of major sporting events?

The same actions or approach should be taken for all major events in Wales not just sporting as the issues faced by sporting events can be equally attributed to other major events, e.g. facility hire, legal aspects, technical expertise etc. Funding should again not be directed solely to the hosting of the event but funding should be available to deliver a direct legacy benefit. E.g. Ryder Cup Wales legacy programme

The strategy will need to be multi organisational in its approach, by bringing together organisations from the public and private sector such as - International business Wales, Visit Wales, and to encourage private investment, sponsorship, preferred suppliers etc from Welsh companies such as Brecon Carrog, Principality and Dwr Cymru etc. Finally, the strategy must have capacity building around the bidding, securing and delivery of major events in Wales if the strategy is to be successful in the longer.

What lessons can be learnt from planning for major sporting events, such as the Ryder Cup, and how can these be used to maximise the benefits of other major sporting events' legacy activities, such as the Olympic Games?

Very positive lessons can be learnt from the Ryder Cup based around a multi agency approach, including significant private investment and a confirmed legacy fund agreed prior to the event. The Ryder Cup has been led in Wales by dedicated professional staff with the appropriate skills to ensure all areas are proactively delivered. Alongside this a skilled board made up of the relevant agencies has overseen the delivery. A number of examples have been highlighted throughout this submission. The lead time between bidding and event has been important in allowing the 'Team Wales' approach to fully operate. This has given time for golf development programmes to mature; facility Legacy schemes to be completed and a wide range of preparation events to be staged.

What opportunities exist to share lessons learned from planning for major sporting events?

There have been a number of significant events hosted in Wales and the UK in recent times, with more around the corner e.g. numerous Millennium Stadium events, Ashes, Ryder Cup, London 2012 and Glasgow 2014. Wales should be proactive in learning from these events and other organisations such as Events Scotland, UK Sport in compiling a major events strategy for Wales.

What support does the Welsh Government currently provide to developing national sports?

Sports Council for Wales provides 5.5 million of exchequer funding to National Governing Bodies in sport in Wales.

Are there any specific recommendations you think should be considered as part of this inquiry?

There needs to be clarity on the relevant importance of hosting any major event and the purpose to which it is being funded.

Strategic and co-ordinated approach led by one agency.

Build Capacity for bidding, securing and hosting major events in Wales.

Need a long term vision and strategy for Major Events in Wales and the UK

Legacy funding needs to be built into any major event bid, for their to be any significant or sustainable legacy