

# Communities and Culture Committee

## Inquiry into Major Sporting events in Wales

Response from Ryder Cup Wales

### Background

Ryder Cup Wales 2010 Ltd is the private company set up and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government when Wales won the bid to host the 2010 event. Its role is to oversee and facilitate the public sector elements of the bid commitments and to act as liaison between the Welsh public sector and the commercial owners of the event when it is played in Europe - Ryder Cup Europe Ltd., plus the venue, Celtic Manor Resort. The company is serviced by an independent Chairman, John Jermine, and a Board of Directors. On the Board, participating public sector bodies - Visit Wales, International Business Wales and City and County of Newport - work alongside Sports Council for Wales, Golf Union of Wales and Golf Development Wales to maximise the benefits to Wales of hosting the event. The project includes the annual RCW Summer of Golf, a yearly programme of six golf tournaments, run in conjunction with the European Tour, the Ladies, European Tour and the Professional Golfers Association that showcases Welsh courses on a global stage, provides a series of high quality golf events for Welsh audiences to enjoy secures economic benefits for areas of Wales outside Newport and the South East of Wales. It also utilises The RCW Legacy Fund (see below) as a means of permanently improving golf facilities in Wales.

### 1. What contribution can major sporting events potentially have, in effecting lasting positive change in communities?

**The role of major sporting events in effecting lasting positive change in the region as a whole can be summarised as follows:**

Enhances quality of life

Generates a national "feelgood " factor and increases national profile

Endorses inward investment and tourism offer

Showcases important venues

Provides a platform for national talent

Acts as a catalyst for regional regeneration

Clearly, these effects are also felt in the relevant individual communities, with companies choosing to expand in Newport citing "the Ryder Cup effect" as a positive influence\*(1), education providers in Newport pointing to the positive effect that preparations for The Ryder Cup are having on their efforts to recruit students \*(2) and the extensive regeneration programme undertaken for Newport being accelerated in advance of the event.

In addition, however, the effects of the RCW Legacy Fund (see below) has seen permanent and enhancements to the golf facilities enjoyed by selected communities and the cumulative effect of the RCW Summer of Golf (see below) has ensured that the economic benefits of staging this annual golf tournament season around Wales are enjoyed the length and breadth of the country.

In terms of infrastructure, the experience of The Ryder Cup project is that a major event, on the scale of this one, which will attract in the region of 45,000 visitors a day, is likely to necessitate a permanent improvement in the roads and transport infrastructure, which can be left for the community to enjoy once the event is over. This has been particularly evident in the immediate area surrounding Celtic Manor Resort but is also evident elsewhere in Newport\*(3)

### **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?**

**In the case of RCW the identification of the means via which an improvement in participation in the game could be delivered was a key factor in the bid specification and a major reason for the success of the resultant tender. RCW has acted as the enabler, rather than the deliverer of these outcomes. The work of Golf Development Wales, working in conjunction with Sports Council for Wales and the Golf Union of Wales, to develop the game from grassroots to elite, is reported into the RCW Board, upon which they are all represented. This coordinated approach has ensured that significant improvement the participation of young people, women and girls in the sport\*(4) and has relied upon clear and effective lines of communication with schools, with golf clubs and with local authorities and has involved "taking the sport" to the locations in which these groups are represented.**

2. How can this contribution be maximised, and what barriers are there to ensuring major sporting events are able to effect lasting positive change in communities? How can such barriers be overcome?

**The experience of the RCW project suggests that the involvement of both Sports Council for Wales and the newly-formed Golf Development Wales, plus golf clubs, local authorities and the Golf Union, secured both the elite and grassroots development programmes as part of the overall project. This proved invaluable, both as a means of securing "mentors" for**

**use in successful grassroots development and as a way of demonstrating successful "graduation" from mainstream, to elite, sport.**

**In terms of barriers, the often conflicting priorities of partner organisations (see above) can delay sports participation projects unnecessarily. The adoption of golf as a Dragon Sport in Wales and as a sport pursued through the 5x60 programme has helped to ensure collaboration between partners in this case.**

**3. 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?**

It is certainly the case that adequate funding has been a key factor for success during the lifetime of this project. In addition to project funding, The RCW Legacy Fund, the £2m fund available for Welsh clubs and local authorities to bid for, in order to improve their facilities, is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and administered by the Sports Council for Wales, with the support of Golf Development Wales. Applicants need to demonstrate that they will provide permanent improvements to access to under represented groups. The emphasis on the sustainability of programme - their ability to endure and continue to prosper - should be built in throughout all aspects of the project.

**4. 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?**

The work of the Welsh Assembly Government to identify, assess, pursue and secure major sporting events is coordinated through the Major Events Unit. They work closely with Visit Wales and International Business Wales and their effectiveness is maximised if they are able to cooperate fully with other partners seeking to attract major events to Wales - Cardiff and Co. for example. The work of the MEU is tabled at the Welsh Assembly Government's Events and Communications Steering Group and should be directed towards attracting additional events, providing a true year-round programme for Wales.

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

As above, the establishment of a Wales Major Events Unit has played a significant part in this event-aware approach. The Unit needs to be able, when necessary, to draw upon the experience of bodies that have successfully staged events in Wales and elsewhere. Including, as part of its assessment criteria, the proviso that:

(Sport) Widens access to, and encourages sustainable participation in, sport and physical activity

the Major Events Unit maintains resources of expertise and personnel that key project teams can draw on.

On a more general note, closer engagement with the private sector and a clear strategy to avoid cross partner clashes remain WAG priorities in relation to this area of work.

**6. 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?**

The experience of RCW suggests that a coordinated Infrastructure Taskforce should be established from the outset in order to provide the body responsible for actually staging the event (in this case, Ryder Cup Europe) with the best chance of securing the required contribution from bodies such as the Highways Agency and Local Authorities in a timely fashion. This enables the team to deliver, not only a successful event, but a sustainable and lasting infrastructure legacy. In the case of Ryder Cup, the position of a significant private sector partner with "Host Venue" status (Celtic Manor Resort), set alongside the priorities of Local Authority with Planning, Licensing and Highways responsibilities and "Host City" designation (Newport City Council) and a devolved regional government overseeing the interests of the "Host Nation" (Welsh Assembly Government), meant that off and on-site infrastructure programmes were best dealt with through a full Infrastructure Group upon which all were represented. Establishing inclusive work groups, tackling different aspects of preparations for the event, with clear reporting, is probably the key learning in terms of securing a lasting legacy.

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

As above, ensuring that relevant partner organisations from within Welsh Assembly Government (VW and IBW) are represented on the appropriate management body - the RCW board in this case - should assist dissemination of best practice. When not represented on the board, relevant parts of the Welsh Assembly Government ought to be engaged via another route. The involvement of DCELLS in the Education element of the project, for example, has ensured that the enhancements to the schools curriculum in Gwent will be shared with the rest of Wales through the National Grid for Learning.

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

This is delivered primarily through the Sports Council for Wales, which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. Operating under Active Adults, Active Young People, Coaching, Disability Sport and High Performance Sport, it works alongside Health Challenge Wales to develop national sport and promote active lifestyles.

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

As above, the importance of ensuring that creating a lasting legacy is built into both the specification and the bid should not be underestimated. Establishing desired legacy outcomes at the outset is also vital, as is the allocation of responsibility for each outcome to appropriate organisations.

**Footnotes:**

Representing Admiral Insurance in its search for suitable office accommodation in Newport during 2008, DTZ Senior Director in South Wales, said: "The city of Newport will undoubtedly be an exciting place in which to live and work during the next 20 years. "The enthusiasm of the local authority and Newport Unlimited are helping to encourage new residential and commercial property schemes, and the focus of the world will be on the city for the 2010 Ryder Cup.

Gary Handley, Campus Director, Newport City Campus, Coleg Gwent has reported that the increased international profile of Newport has assisted, he believes, in encouraging applications from students overseas in academic year 2009/10.

Carriageway and drainage improvements, new fencing and pavement enhancements have been undertaken on Catsash Rd., Bulmore Rd., Abernant Rd. and Belmont Hill in Caerleon/Newport. A new sliproad off the A449 will be activated for the event and will remain, for emergency use, after the event.

Sports Council for Wales figures for 2009 state that golf participation figures have increased significantly over the last two years:

For primary aged children it's increased by 27% (this equates to 6,000 more primary school children to make a total of 33,000).

For secondary aged children, by 74% (this equates to 17, 500 more secondary children participating to make a total of 42,000 secondary school)

For adults, by 22% (this equates to approx 17,000 more adults to make a total of 95,000)

In one year 800 beginner females participated in the GDW Women's scheme and just under 40% were converted to new members