

19<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to your letter dated the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, I have outlined below the Principality Stadium's responses to the questions raised by the Committee in relation to the Anthony Joshua World Title Fight staged on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

**1. What steps have been taken since the Rugby World Cup 2015 to improve transport planning and delivery for major events in Cardiff?**

The Principality Stadium has an established pedigree in attracting and staging world-class major events. This was most recently demonstrated in the delivery of the UEFA Champions League Final in June 2017, which received critical acclaim from UEFA, the participating teams and the hundreds of thousands of fans that came to Cardiff over the event period. As I am sure you are aware, the planning of these events does not happen in isolation and is only possible with the adoption of the collaborative "Team Wales" strategic planning model which sees all partner agencies and stakeholders working together towards a common goal.

This ethos to major event delivery is long established and is fully supported by the Principality Stadium for all events staged at the venue. This collaborative planning framework can be evidenced in the major events planning meetings (Stadium Event Liaison Group "SELG"), which the stadium chairs on a monthly basis. This meeting consists of invited representation from from all core stakeholders (Welsh Government, Cardiff City Council, South Wales Police, British Transport Police, Network Rail and the respective Rail operators.) The purpose of this meeting is to provide the stakeholders with updated event information relating to (1) confirmed events (those that are launched in the public domain and are in the operational delivery phase), and (2) forecasted events (those events that the stadium is engaged in positive discussions with event owners with the aim of attracting to the stadium and Cardiff.) The overview of forecasted events is provided in as much detail as is possible at the time (prospective date, capacity, event timings etc), so that the respective stakeholders are able to review in the context of their respective areas of operations, providing as early a warning as possible in which to begin factoring these events into their planning.

**2. What arrangements were in place to meet the needs of those travelling to and from Cardiff on the 28<sup>th</sup> October?**

With regards to the boxing event on the 28<sup>th</sup> October, it had been in our projected long-term calendar since early June 2017, with the 28<sup>th</sup> October or the 9<sup>th</sup> December highlighted as

potential dates for it to take place. The stadium is always cognisant of the wider impact of the events that it hosts and will continue to collaborate with the stakeholders to ensure that events are planned and delivered effectively. The concerns raised around the potential impact of the planned main line possessions for electrification and upgrade works to eastbound travel post event, were not highlighted as a critical issue until the discussions with the promoter had progressed to a very advanced stage. We had been liaising with the promoter continuously since the event was confirmed, to work through the operational detail for the event and provided all stakeholders with regular updates so they were able adapt their operational planning accordingly.

In relation to the highlighted rail infrastructure challenges caused by the planned electrification works on the mainline between London and Cardiff and its impact on the event mobility plan, the following steps were taken to ensure all ticket purchasers had access to accurate event information in which to plan their journey to and from Cardiff on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> October:-

- In conjunction with the broadcasters and Matchroom Sports, we were successful in being able to move the event start time for the main bout forward so that the enhanced services being offered by Arriva Trains Wales could be utilised to best effect post event. This resulted in the “ring walk” for Anthony Joshua taking place at circa 2215hrs and a fight start time of 2230hrs.
- Since the event was first announced, the Principality Stadium Events Communication Group had been in frequent contact to discuss, shape and disseminate the known transport advice to fans when they were purchasing tickets for the event. This has included a fan information guide (attached for reference) which was disseminated through the communications channels managed by the local steering group and the promoter. A travel warning was also posted on the point of sale when fans were purchasing tickets advising them to plan their journey well in advance, to compensate for limited rail capacity after the event. The wording was signed off by the communications group and this was electronically sent to all fans who purchased tickets for the event via the primary ticket agents.
- The event-specific fan guide has been a successful communication medium that the stadium has used for the past 18 months, promoting travel and safety advice for events staged at the venue. In addition to the guide being emailed directly to all ticket purchasers, the guide is hosted on the main event page on the Principality Stadium website, as well as being distributed across all digital platforms managed by the stadium, its partners and the promoter as part of the coordinated event communication strategy.
- From the on sale of tickets, we had, in partnership with Cardiff Council promoted the park and ride operation via an on line pre booking portal. [www.parkjockey.com/principality-stadium](http://www.parkjockey.com/principality-stadium)

- The promoter via their official travel partner also made available bespoke event ticket and bus transport packages for fans looking to attend the event. These were operated from Chelmsford and Reading and provided ticket purchasers with return bus travel for the event.
- The promoter also communicated to all ticket purchasers promoting National Express services to try and mitigate the limited eastbound services on the rail network.
- Arriva Trains Wales also supported the event through the provision of extended services along their Cardiff/Valleys and West-Wales routes, and also crowd management infrastructure around Cardiff Central Station. The confirmation of the earlier start time of the main fight also supported the additional post-event services the rail operators were able to put on.
- The stadium and the promoter provided regular updates on the postcode data of ticket purchasers to all stakeholders so they were able to understand the geography of the sales and possible high demand areas when finalising their respective event resource plans. I have attached to this letter, an example of the information that had been circulated which highlights the areas with the largest volume of sales.
- In coordination with Highways Wales and Highways England, event specific information was placed on all digital signs located on the main arterial routes to Cardiff as well as along the M4.

**3. What particular challenges did this boxing event present and how were these considered in the planning phase?**

From the Stadium-specific perspective, there were no real challenges in running this type of event and our internal planning assumptions were proven to have been correct and appropriate for the type of crowd demographic that this event attracts. The Stadium conducted an extensive pre-event review of its operational plans along with its main stakeholders, and the operation on the night received very positive feedback from the promoter, broadcasters and fans. Overall, the event was deemed a great success and certainly put Cardiff and the Stadium on the map for future world class events of this nature.

It was identified early on that, from an external standpoint, the planned electrification works and the impact this had on the post-event mobility plan (specifically rail movement to the East), presented the key operational challenge for this event. All stakeholders recognized this

and the measures put in place were felt (and were subsequently proven) to be sufficient to mitigate the challenges that the rail disruptions presented.

#### **4. How did development work on Capital Square affect operations?**

The Stadium works very closely with Rightacres, Cardiff Council and Arriva Trains Wales regarding the Capital Square operations. Rightacres provide regular updates to us on the progress of the site. It is my opinion that the development work at Capital Square did not affect the event day transport operation in any way.

#### **5. What steps were taken to mitigate the impact of the works on the Severn Tunnel and Brynglas Tunnel?**

See point 2 regarding rail mitigation measures.

#### **6. What was your assessment of the effectiveness of travel planning arrangements for the event? How many people were negatively affected by delays?**

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that although the event on the 28<sup>th</sup> October was challenging, it was the coordinated planning across the primary stakeholders that ensured it was deemed a great success. The Stadium welcomed in excess of 70,000 people and our planning assumptions and operational strategies were appropriate and were subsequently proved to have been successful in delivering the event.

Regarding the effectiveness of the travel planning arrangements:

- **Arriva Trains:** In the post-event review, it was identified that of the circa 9,000 spaces made available on Arriva Trains Wales after the event, only 3,000 were taken up by passengers.
- **Park and Ride:** Although the Park and Ride operation was heavily promoted to the ticket purchasers there was still additional capacity remaining on the night of the event.
- **Highways Wales / England:** Having spoken with Welsh Government, there were no issues raised with regards to the volume of traffic on the M4 and associated trunk roads as a consequence of this event. The roads remained quiet.
- **Taxis:** The only negative point picked up by the press was regarding a couple of complaints about the queues for Taxi's in and around the city centre post-event. Having spoken with representatives from Cardiff City Council and South Wales Police (who have conducted their own reviews with regards to this specific area), the Taxi queue times reported in the press were grossly exaggerated. It appears that fans attending the event

took the decision to remain in the city centre and take advantage of the night time economy instead of making use of the available post-event transport operation. This personal choice by the fans, in addition to those members of the public who were already in the city on the night of the event, contributed to the overall taxi demand.

It is important to stress that the small amount of negative press before the event, forecasting “chaos” on rail and road infrastructure did not come to fruition at all. This was as a result of detailed and careful planning by all stakeholders in the build up to and during the event. From a stadium perspective the event was deemed a great success, supported by the fact that we only received a single complaint – which was not a transport related issue.

### **7. What lessons have been learnt from this event and how will any lessons be applied to future events?**

The event has certainly reinforced the importance of early engagement with all stakeholders to enable the identification of key issues relating to events. I believe that we have demonstrated that, as an experienced group of operational stakeholders, we are able to identify these key issues and put appropriate plans in place to mitigate them.

I feel that the only issue that could have been improved upon under the circumstances was the availability and marshalling of Taxis in the City Centre. I believe this is being looked at by other stakeholders moving forward. I would also say that the people queuing for those Taxis made a choice that night to remain later in Cardiff and to not take advantage of the undersubscribed methods of transport that were available to them for several hours after the event.

Even with the restrictions caused by the electrification work and other rail disruptions, we have shown that events of this nature are able to be delivered successfully. We will continue to work in partnership with our stakeholders and review and refine our planning models for major events to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the specific demands for each and every event that the stadium hosts. It is within everyone’s interest that the Stadium, Cardiff and Wales are held in high regard as event venues and a tiny amount of poorly reported, negative press should not cause us to panic and be overly critical of what we currently do and the high standards that we collectively achieve.

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