THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES:  
A STRATEGY FOR GRAVESHAM

THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

At 12.48pm on the 6th July 2005, Jacques Rogge, the President of the International Olympic committee, announced that London was the successful city winning the rights to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. At the opening ceremony on Friday 27th July 2012 London will welcome over 23,000 competitors and officials to compete for 16 days in the largest event in the world.

The goal of the Olympic Movement is to “contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised without discrimination of any kind, in a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will embrace the Olympic philosophy to celebrate sport, culture and education to inspire a lasting legacy for London and the whole of the UK.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The main aim or purpose of this strategy is to ensure that Gravesham achieves the maximum possible benefits from the opportunities linked to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. The proximity of the Olympic Park in Stratford gives North Kent a distinct advantage in benefiting from the regeneration of the area and a renewed interest in the locality and surrounding communities.

The London Olympics Organising Committee have suggested that there is a general principle to be followed, “it is not necessarily about doing lots of new things; it is about achieving existing targets and priorities and using the Games…as the magic dust to try and actually accelerate the deliver of some of those existing priorities”. This strategy seeks to adopt that principle.

The strategy has been developed in such a way as to allow for expansion of the actions dependent on the level of support and commitment. Using the Olympic analogy, it sets out bronze medal actions that we can achieve with our current level of resources, and silver and gold targets that are only achievable with new resources and new commitment from clubs, businesses and residents across the borough. A haul of gold medals and associated benefits is achievable only by everyone working together.

KEY IMPACTS OF PREVIOUS OLYMPIC GAMES

Volunteering – There were 47,000 Volunteers involved at Athens 2004

Participation – in Sydney 2000 there were 199 nations, 10,651 athletes, 300 events and 16,033 media

It was estimated that the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games would add $6.5 billion to the Australian GDP and 100,000 full time jobs over a 12 year period from 1994-2006.

Estimated Global TB audience of 4 billion people (www.dcms.org)
Prior to the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, Barcelona was ranked as the 16th most popular tourist destination in Europe. By 1999 it had risen to third.

From October 1986 (the month Barcelona won the bid) to July 1992, the general rate of unemployment in Barcelona fell from 18.4% to 9.6%, a drop of nearly 50%.

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

- 46 sports in 55 venues
- 207 countries represented
- 14,700 athletes
- 50,000 reporters from across the world
- 9 million tickets
- 4 billion viewers worldwide

Added to these facts London 2012 is unique because it’s the 64th anniversary of the Paralympics which began in Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire in 1948.

PRIORITIES FOR LONDON 2012

The London 2012 organising committee aims; “To stage inspirational Games that capture the imagination of young people around the world and leave a lasting legacy”. This will be achieved through four clear strategic objectives:

- To stage an inspiration Games for everyone, from athletes to the viewing public
- To deliver all venues on time and on budget, providing a sustainable legacy
- To maximise the economic, social, health and environmental benefits of the Games for London and the UK
- To achieve a sustained improvement in UK sport, in both elite performance and grassroots participation

Key to the success of the London 2012 bid was the emphasis the bid placed on the legacy for the whole country involving sport, culture and education, particularly the opportunity to enthuse young people and to engage them in active recreation.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF LONDON 2012

There have been a number of studies of the potential impact of London 2012. Locum was commissioned to examine the impact of the Games on the South East of England. They started with the DCMS Olympic Games impact study which identified potential positive impact, but also a displacement e.g. it forecasts growth in GDP overall, but the large growth in London implies a negative impact on GDP of circa £4 billion 2005-2016 to the rest of the country caused by the displacement of activities and resources towards London. Locum suggest that nations and regions must avoid the “hype” of London 2012 and concentrate on developing ideas to capitalise on winning opportunities in a competitive market place.

Locum suggests that London 2012 represents an opportunity to accelerate the achievement of South East Regional Strategy (RES). The current RES identifies six sector priorities: media, marine, health technologies, environment, built environment...
Locum identify other competencies which relate to the Olympics – events management, tourism, travel and culture and suggest that the South East has the following strengths in terms of maximising benefits and mitigating negative effect:

- Proximity to London/Olympic Park
- Greatest concentration of internal gateways
- Large skilled resident workforce
- Large concentration of high quality sports facilities
- Large concentration of high quality visitor attractions and natural assets

Compete, Create, Collaborate for a World Class Performance is the South East’s offer for London 2012 and it outlines how the region can maximise opportunities from the Games. Key deliverables are identified which include targets for participation and for tourism. There is a commitment to participate in the Cultural Olympiad by building on the strength of arts provision and festivals and to offer all young people the opportunity to compete, create or collaborate with a young person from a competitor country between 2008-2012. There is also a focus on business, launching a business support programme to enable South East business to secure Games related contracts and a commitment to ‘upskill’ the 14-19 age group to take advantage of the employment opportunities related to the Games. It is envisaged that a legacy is achieved by developing more volunteers for sports, culture and community projects and that inward investment is increased by capitalising on the locational advantage and competitive regional economy.

LOCAL AND COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

Officers from Kent County Council were at the Games staged in Beijing to appraise themselves first-hand of what happened there: early in 2009 Kent County Council secured Beacon Status for its work relating to coordinating activities for the London 2012 Games in Kent and this continues to contribute to the county’s standing in terms of engagement with the London 2012 Games.

Kent was quick off the mark in establishing a coordinating group and Gravesham is represented on that group by Dartford, all of the potential beneficiaries of the London 2012 Games meet on a quarterly basis and there is an action plan (appendix 1) which is regularly updated.

Sitting under this large cross-sectoral coordinating group there is a Kent Officer Group to which representatives from all the boroughs and districts are invited and there is still a Kent Thames-side group looking at specific aspects relating to that field of influence and Gravesham has its own internal officer’s group.

What is now clear is that many of the potential cross-sectoral synergies, while they are emerging, are quite complex in their structures and there is no “clear steer” from any one sector and certainly no “Olympic blue-print” for anyone to buy in to.

What is emerging is that each organisation needs to decide what it wants affiliation with the London 2012 Games to produce and then set upon that path.

GRAVESHAM AND THE GAMES
The Borough has excellent road, rail and river links to London and with the new high speed domestic trains bringing journey times down to 19 minutes in to the Olympic site and 24 minutes away from St Pancras. Gravesham is also well placed to access gateways such as Ebbsfleet, Gatwick, Stanstead and Dover. It is also within easy range of major tourist destinations such as Canterbury, Thorpe Park, Brands Hatch, Bluewater and the beautiful Kent coast for day visits.

EXISTING BOROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

SPORT AND CULTURAL PROVISION

Residents enjoy a wide range of public, education and voluntary sector leisure services and facilities in and around the borough.

Flagship sports facilities include the Cascades and Cygnet Leisure Centre, The MEAPER Gym and the Nurstead Court Equestrian Centre and the latter two have been identified and publicised by Kent on the international stage as part of its “offer” for Training Camps.

Kent is set to announce (September 2009) which countries have signed Memoranda of Understanding to use facilities in Kent for training purposes, although these will not be legally binding.

GRAVESHAM; THE WAY FORWARD

In one way or another The London 2012 Games is likely to impact on all aspects of the council's business. In terms of those who live, work and use the area for recreational purposes they will be looking to Gravesham Borough Council to provide the local lead on all aspects of The London 2012 Games as it impacts on and inspires their lives. It is the council’s task to ensure that their aspirations are satisfied by our actions.

However, given the uniqueness of the opportunities facing the council choosing a way forward is not straightforward.

We have been strongly advised to find our niche, to identify what we are currently doing which we would like to improve and use the Legacy created through our links to The London 2012 Games to generate the impetus to make these things happen.

From the myriad of unfolding opportunities four core themes suggest themselves for Gravesham to focus on:

1. ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The government has set a target of 70% of adults taking part in five times 30 minutes moderate activity on a weekly basis by 2020. The Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) described a legacy of participation as “a main plank in the success of the bid” to host the Games. The Select Committee reporting on progress towards London 2012 also suggest that possibly the greatest prize to emerge from the Games would be demonstrable increase in participation in sport throughout the community. However, a report by Demos in 2004 found that although hosting the Olympics could
deliver a sustained increase in participation, past Olympics had not automatically done so.

This theme would contribute to the current Corporate Plan – Goal two: Communities – to foster vibrant and cohesive communities with affirmative action to promote meaningful engagement, diversity and social inclusion, health and well-being, leisure and culture – particularly 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5 and would built on the current work of the Sport and Recreation Team. To be really effective this work needs to tie-in and complement national, regional and county initiatives. We already have some existing resource in this are both in terms of capacity and revenue/capital funding, but there is also potential for external resources.

2. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although there will be other towns and cities across the region competing for visitors, Tourism South East is targeting growth in visitors numbers to the region as a result of London 2012. There is again some debate nationally about the impact of the Games on tourism and when and where any benefits may accrue. The Tourism Alliance has stated that “most in-bound Olympics related tourism will be a substitution for leisure and business tourism that would otherwise occur”. There is more optimism for increasing tourism after the Games with the many tourism organisations seeing the potential to use the Games as a ‘shop window’ for the UK.

There is potential to develop and improve the visitor economy in the borough and the Tourism Strategy outlines the proposals. External resources are available for ‘upskilling’ in the leisure industry and for supporting local business in tendering for Olympic contracts. There may also be opportunities to build on Gravesham’s existing strengths in the arts and events and to develop a major event for the Cultural Olympiad. The Cultural Olympiad is a four year national festival of events and activities leading up to the Games in 2012. As well as the traditional art forms, the programme aims to encompass culture in its widest sense including food, design and fashion.

The three main strands that are expected to make up the four year festival are:

1. Mandatory ceremonies including the torch relay and the opening and closing ceremonies for both games;
2. Bid Projects and Major ‘Signature’ Events including a World Culture Festival, International Music Programme, Olympic Carnival and International Shakespeare Festival
3. UK Cultural Festival is intended to involve arts institutions and community organisations across the country.

Some of the budget for the Cultural Olympiad is expected to come from the £40 million Olympic Legacy Trust Fund set up to support sporting and other initiatives around the UK such as the UK School Games. However, LOCOG has already warned that the vast majority of available funding for the Cultural Olympiad will go towards to major ceremonies and that there is minimal funding available for the other elements. This could affect funding for cultural organisations and community groups following the recent news that an extra £675 million has been diverted from the Lottery to pay for the increasing cost of the games; specifically it will affect their ability to deliver a Cultural Olympiad. LOCOG has subsequently stated that one of their tasks will be to design a
programme that enables everyone that wants to be a part of the Cultural Olympiad to identify sources of funding.

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad aims to:

- Change the way culture is valued in this country
- Engender increased participation in cultural activity
- Propagate a new younger audience for the games; engaging and then developing their interest through cultural activity. London won the bid in Singapore on the promise that is could re-engage young people with the Olympics
- Celebrate the UK’s rich and diverse cultural life

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad will provide an opportunity to:

- Engender exemplary cultural activity
- Encourage community involvement
- Build new audiences
- Try something new
- Think BIG
- Capacity build and support the professional development of cultural providers
- Enhance and promote local political cultural policy (around cultural regeneration, sense of place, community cohesion, arts, sports and tourism).
- Think differently about the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games
- Showcase Britain’s creativity to the rest of the world
- Showcase the South East’s talent to the rest of the UK

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad has 3 core values

- Celebrate London and the whole of the UK welcoming the world – our unique internationalism, cultural diversity, sharing and understanding.
- Inspire and involve young people
- Generate a positive legacy – for example through cultural and sports participation, audience development, cultural skills, capacity building, urban regeneration, tourism and social cohesion and international links.

In terms of training camps, two have been identified in Gravesham and grants of £9 million have been made available to encourage overseas competing teams to use training camps in the UK in the lead up to the Games. Kent County Council is the lead officers for this work.

CELEBRATE CULTURE AND DEVELOP COMMUNITY PRIDE

This theme again is building on existing work and links to Goal 2 of the Community Plan. Gravesham had high levels of volunteering in sport, % against a national average of 4.7% according to Sport England’s nationwide survey; however these levels can still be substantially increased. There are a number of programmes currently on offer which will contribute to developing skills for community volunteers. There are also grant schemes starting to emerge which will offer training for volunteers and benefits which could encourage residents to volunteer for the first time to be a volunteer.
Twinning programmes could also be developed which build on existing projects and would support the regional objective that every young person should have an opportunity compete, create or collaborate with a young person from another Olympic country. “Greet the World” is a significant opportunity to tap into regional developments with a creative slant that has emerged through Create, Compete, and Collaborate. Officers have achieved officer links to this regional programme and will update as we receive more information. There are opportunities here to some some inter-generational activities linking those who remember the last time The Olympic and Paralympics Games were hosted in Britain with the current generation who are about to have the experience for the first time: initiatives of this type are likely to attract fund and commendations for Gravesham.

On of the unique selling point for Gravesham is our cultural diversity and projects that embrace this could be successful. We have been particularly successful with our culturally diverse parades and events and this is an area that could be built up on.

One emerging theme linked to young people could be to focus on disability. Many of the potential opportunities surfacing around The London 2012 Games are linked to linking the able and disabled young people to enhance the lives of both, to foster courage, determination and equality (all Paralympics Principles) in the young people of Gravesham and to build cohesion for the future. This admirable aim seems well with our gift to achieve

PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The London 2012 Olympic Games potentially offers Gravesham companies an excellent source of new business given the Borough’s close proximity to the main Olympic Park. Many of the contracts for the Olympics will be large and therefore may not be suitable for a number of small firms; however, there will be significant sub-contracting opportunities with main contracts.

The Governments have an easy to use website for lower-value contracts for all types of products and services called Supply 2. There is also a specific website for 2012 related contracts and opportunities called CompeteFor. Here Businesses are able to upload their business and service on the website allowing companies to find you as well as bidding for contracts and it is all free to use.

For even more opportunities Village Supply Chain is looking for companies who can supply goods or services to the Olympic Village in Stratford (less than 20 miles away). Funding is also available for small business to ‘upskill’ and receive training in Bid Writing and Tendering Workshops.

Another opportunity for the Council is the good river links to many of the Olympic sites (particularly the sites in Greenwich). Nationally and locally Olympic officials are interested in any scheme that will divert traffic away from roads in to the main sites and the proposed pontoon with its emerging possibilities is of particular interest.

STRATEGY DELIVERY

The strategy has aims which are to be delivered in the long-term, beyond 2012 and there are going to be a number of major national policy developments and initiatives
announced between now and London 2012. For these reasons it will be important to constantly review the strategy and update it taking in to account any new opportunities.