

BECOMING AN ACTIVE CITY

Appendix 28 – Liverpool Events Plan 2013 to 2019

Forward:

Liverpool has a rich sporting heritage with sport being firmly embedded within the culture of the people. The Liverpool public has always had a strong interest in sport, many developing as athletes and achieving success at the highest possible level.

This success has been underpinned through the city's historical and sustained investment into the local sporting facilities and infrastructures. This support ranging from grass roots participation to elite performance programs and complimented by special events has contributed significantly towards providing a sound platform for future success.

The Liverpool Sporting Offer:

Liverpool's sporting offer pre 2008 was underpinned by a programme of annual events across a range of nominated priority sports. These programmes have been primarily delivered by a team of city sports specific development and generic events officers. These programmes were complimented and given increased profile as the city capacity built towards European Capital of Culture 2008.

It was during 2008 that the city sports offer was taken to another level with the addition of a World Class Arena and 50 metre Swimming Pool to the venue portfolio. As a result the city was able to secure some quick wins in the events market during 2008.

The highlights of the 2008 sports event offer included :

- **The World Fire-fighter Games.**
- **The European Senior Boxing Championships.**
- **The British Open Squash Championships.**
- **The Tour Of Britain Cycle Race – Final stage and overall race finish.**

These events brought positive International profile helping to change old stereotypical perceptions of the city laying the foundations for future success in the sports market.

Maintaining the 2008 momentum, capitalising on the feel good factor and the repositioning of the city was key. In early 2009 the Arena Team added the resource of a dedicated sports and events manager with a focus on developing new and existing relationships with key National Governing Bodies (NGB's) representatives.

As a direct result ongoing relationships have been established with many NGBs with many of them now viewing Liverpool as an attractive proposition, a city with the credibility and the capacity to deliver to the very highest standard.

The Sports Events Sub Group established early 2009 has been instrumental in bringing together the local sports network. This group reports directly into the city regional major events group. Working in partnership stakeholders including ACCL (Events Arena), Liverpool City Council (LCC), Liverpool Sports Forum, the National Health Service and representation from within the voluntary sector work to ensure the local sports network is fully engaged in a coordinated manner. The aim is to support event organizers to deliver a quality event thus positioning Liverpool as an events friendly destination that is easy to work with. It is essential that all benefits and impact of hosting events are maximized at every level (ie development, legacy, volunteering and audience development and participation).

The feedback from UK Sport and many NGBs is that there is a renewed confidence in the strength of the Liverpool offer. The backdrop of a World Class Destination with a World Class Venue that is further supported by a strong, enthusiastic and experienced local sports network is an appealing proposition.

Liverpool post 2008 has an increased profile as an events destination and the city has seen significant Economic benefit as a direct result of delivering an impressive program of events. Sport played a significant part and has been integral to the economic success whilst contributing significantly to the overall diversity of the city event offer. Positive television exposure associated with hosting these events has reinforced the city's credentials not only as events friendly but as a must visit tourist destination.

The National perspective.

UK Sport the strategic co-ordinating body for the national sports governing bodies (NGB's) has announced that they will only be targeting and investing into events that are at a World or European level. In accordance with this shift change a target list (2013-19) has been produced and circulated to both NGB's and the Cities & Regions. (These opportunities have been integrated into appendix 1)

New opportunities will emerge, identified targets will drop away, priorities will change and on that basis this target list will be continually reviewed.

The impact of the revised UK Sport strategy and abolition of Regional Development Agencies has left many world circuit events without any support funding from the public sector. These events are still considered to be of high value in terms of economic benefit and media value and should therefore not be overlooked. The challenge for host cities and NGB's is that they must find more creative ways to deliver the required funding packages. These funding packages do not always have to be direct cash investment. In Liverpool we have a very strong offer as we are able to develop budget relieving packages that include venue/s, legacy & sports development activity and city dressing & promotions support.

It is beneficial for both host cities and NGB's to develop multi year hosting agreements that demonstrate a strong commitment from both sides. These arrangements pave the way to capacity build the event and relationships, demonstrate the cities ability and suitability to deliver to a high standard whilst simultaneously influencing the international sports federations in respect of future bids for their blue ribband events.

Why should the city continue to host sports events?

The value and benefits of hosting sports events at all levels should not be overlooked. Whether events are out on the city streets or within city venues there is huge benefit to the host city

- **Positive Television and media exposure.**
- **Supporting the priorities as set out in The Liverpool Plan.**
- **Increased International profile.**
- **Significant economic benefits.**
- **Sports related tourism and repeat visits**
- **Civic Pride and opportunity to celebrate local achievements.**
- **Association with London 2012/Glasgow 2014.**
- **Legacy, community engagement and cultural programmes including - Linkages to and support of The Decade of Health and Well being.**
- **Health improvement through participation in legacy activities.**

Developing required funding packages:

Events in this market will require support funding packages in order to deliver winning bids. These required funding packages do not always require a direct cash investment. Event organisers will at times work with budget relieving packages that include value in kind. I.e Free host/training venues, development programme support, city dressing or promotional support. There are no set rules in respect of this which affords host cities the flexibility to work up creative packages that enable the event to be delivered within budgets.

The challenge for Liverpool is that the city Sports and Recreation Department have had their event budgets cut back. It has become necessary for ACCL (Events Arena) to take the lead with a view to development of the required co ordination of most required elements of the added value.

The Stakeholders represented at the Sports Events Sub Group have a key role to play. By working as a strategic partnership this group must work pro-actively to ensure that each event receives full city support from their respective networks to ensure that all associated impacts are maximised. This should include but not be restricted to sports development , legacy programmes, Media value, positive promotional opportunities to drive audience development and inspire participation.

Action plan and next steps:

- Develop a sports strategy for Liverpool that supports UK Sport priorities and those within the Liverpool Plan.
- Identify realistic priority events that are affordable and deliver the best fit with measurable benefit for Liverpool.
- Consider targeting at least one Major International Sporting Event each year plus 2 National Championships.
- Consider a focussed and profiled year of sport ie 2015 (similar to Manchester model Year of World Sport 2008). UK Sport advise that 2015 will be crucial in the build up to the next Olympics post London 2012 and they will be targeting many major sporting events.
- Consider creating a dedicated sports events unit for Liverpool.
- This unit would include both ACCL (Events Arena) and LCC staff working in partnership. The unit would act as the first point of contact and main co-ordinating body from partnership/bid development to successful delivery and sustainable legacy.
- Seek financial approval for target events via LCC and other appropriate partners.
- Ensure legacy activities reach into local communities to enable increased participation.
- Confirm expressions of interest with NGB's.
- Develop event bids and international influencing strategies as required.