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Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

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This research was conducted from June-Sept 2012, with and on behalf of Embrace the Games partners in Cheshire. The findings are based on a review of the Embrace the Games Framework and Steering Group via interviews, documentary analysis and secondary sources.

A section of recommendations and supporting material provides an indication of the potential ways forward for ETG post 2012.

A cross-disciplinary investigation by the Departments of Management and Business, Exercise and Sport Sciences, MMU Cheshire.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Introduction

MMU Cheshire was commissioned to review the *Embrace the Games* strategy of Cheshire, on behalf of the Cheshire and Warrington Steering Group for the 2012 games.

In 2007, the steering group set out an ambitious strategy to achieve its mission for 2012, incorporating cross-sectoral interest groups, diverse organisation types across Cheshire and engaging with National and Regional legacy planning across sport, culture, business, and the visitor economy. This produced the 'Embrace the Games' Legacy Framework document and the Steering Group has continued to work across the sub-region to try to maximise the benefits from the 2012 Games to the local communities and organisations across Cheshire. This investigation has focused on the organisational learning and processes involved in the development and implementation of the legacy plan for Cheshire and Warrington from 2007-12, by engaging the members of the Steering Group in a series of interviews, and the review of documents and events from June-August.

The following is a report based on a qualitative study from June to September led by MMU Cheshire academics, from Business and Management and Sport Development. The study is mainly at the level of organisations and strategic decision-making, rather than the operational and delivery or implementation-evaluations of legacy plans and activities, which may be the subject of other on-going studies and investigations. Detailed analysis of specific outputs and activities or data relating to specific themes within the framework was beyond the scope of this study, though some aspects are referred to below, by interviewees in support of their responses. This review focuses on the experiences of those collaborating in the partnership – their views on how well the group and strategy had worked rather than specific cost / benefit assessments.

The intention is that this research will contribute to the future planning for major events and help inform strategy development across the sectors and partners involved in the 2012 Steering Group. While it is too early to suggest long-term outcomes, the study will focus on the processes and outputs of the group relevant to the Framework objectives, targeted for achievement by 2012.

At the time of planning for the post-Olympic Legacy, there had clearly been no specific 'blueprint' for legacy outside of the hosting communities. Indeed even within the London Boroughs, this potential for legacy was an unknown quantity (Kornblatt, 2006)¹, despite the Government's commitment to spreading the benefits of the Games to all parts of the UK (DCMS, 2008)². Regional plans for legacy have also

¹ Kornblatt, T. (2006) Setting the bar: preparing for London's Olympic legacy. *Centre for Cities* Discussion Paper 8, London: Centre for Cities/IIPR.

² DCMS (2008). *Before, During and After: Making the Most of the 2012 Games (Legacy Action Plan)*.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

been important in framing Cheshire's opportunities and plans³. Understanding what has been achieved in Cheshire will therefore be of interest not just within Cheshire but more widely and for other events to be hosted nationally and regionally in the forthcoming 'Decade of Sport' announced by DCMS very recently (Robertson, 2012).⁴

Though relevant literature and theory have underpinned this analysis, the intention is to provide findings to help inform future cross-sector working and planning, so they are in professional rather than an academic style. The research may contribute to academic outputs at some future point, so there may be some follow up or additional work post 2012 Olympics.

This report will summarise the lessons learned from the process, highlight issues for discussion and point to potential key actions needed for future collaborations seeking to build on the 2012 experience. It will also point to any potential implications for the steering group for the period after the Games. The general format of this report was agreed by the ETG chair to circulate to ETG partners, while wider dissemination of an academic paper will follow, subject to the consents received. This may include the quotations in anonymous form highlighted here and others from the approved transcripts.

Methods

The methodology adopted assumed a qualitative approach to understanding the perspectives of the Steering Group members would provide the most fruitful data, to enable thematic analysis and synthesis from a range of sources. This data has included documentary analysis followed by in-depth, and semi-structured interviews with 9 key respondents, identified by the Steering Group lead and telephone interviews, observations and visits to events, emails and organisational websites. Both researchers have also drawn on experience of professional networks and research into business, the public sector and legacy planning in the interpretation and validation of the responses.

After initial meetings with ETG Steering representatives and Group lead and a review of initial documents, memos and plans, the main themes related to Embrace the Games (ETG) were identified and used to refine the interview schedules. Five broad areas were initially explored with key stakeholders.

The broad areas investigated were:

- The aspirations and objectives of ETG and to what extent these have been realised
- The drivers, enablers, barriers and challenges faced by ETG

³ NW Regional Plans: Be Inspired, 2007, Everyone's 2012, 2009

⁴ Robertson Ministerial announcement of 10 point Legacy plan from DCMS Sept 18 2012

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

- The actions and decisions taken, the processes and structures used in the development of ETG
- The mechanisms for planning, guiding and evaluating ETG
- Specific changes in policy and practice, or 'lessons learned' by engaging in the process of ETG which can be taken forward

Nominated individuals and organisations represented a range of perspectives on ETG and its implementation, with only one group not providing any representative or declining to contribute to the research (Business/Chamber of Commerce). Interview transcripts were reviewed by both researchers, analysed independently then crosschecked for reliability and to arrive at final conclusions and discussion points summarised below.

Interviews lasted from 40minutes to 1 hour or more, and were recorded digitally, transcribed then analysed with computer-based data analysis software, using a constant comparison approach, text searches and the identification of nodes or themes on specific topics, drawn from the transcripts.⁵

Consistent with the ethical framework of research, all the full transcripts remain anonymous, in order to encourage openness, were available for checking by respondents on request. All the quotes are taken from the transcripts checked with respondents for accuracy. However, if there are any issues of interpretation or clarification after this report has been reviewed, these can be taken into account in any version for wider dissemination.

Initial Findings and Themes

Aspirations and Objectives

Several key themes emerged from the discussions about the aspirations of the ETG document or objectives set by the Steering Group:

- Consensus
- Collaboration
- Connectedness

There was a strong consensus among the partners about the objectives and purpose of the group. The underlying purpose of the group was clearly to work together to achieve these objectives. This relied very heavily on the connectedness of the group, their objectives and the objectives of the constituent bodies and organisations. The initial aspiration of working together to jointly achieve objectives

⁵Analysed using QSR NVIVO software. It should be noted that some interviews took place in advance of the Games and some when Olympics had been underway. The pre-Olympic interviews were less certain of the popularity and engagement of local communities into the Games activities and to a certain extent focused more than expected on the operational aspects of the delivery of Games-related activity.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

was perceived as successful, but without clear hard measures. Therefore though this method could be successful in the future, it may require more clear measures of success or achievement.

Where the group's objectives could be aligned with the partner organisation's objectives was the clear connection. This is picked up below, within other themes. The issue of fit also occurs with national, regional and sub-regional plans and structures.

The Legacy themes (related to Objectives) identified in the interviews identified those consistent with the objectives (listed in order of frequency of reference within the interviews):

- Sport/ Sport themed activities
- Events – Conferences, Torch relay
- Business
- Culture
- Volunteers
- Visitor Economy/Tourism
- Education
- Health and or Wellbeing

Planning over the long term had clearly been significant as the engagement of the partners had dated from 2005 onwards (though the Steering Group had not been formed until later). Different organisations clearly had different interests and priorities in the themes, but key to their involvement and was that the objectives were meaningful to partners, and the ETG framework provided a good strategic 'fit' to their own organisation and even personal role within this.

“the difficult bit of it is that you go in there as a co-ordinator representing the [home organisation], you've then got to come back here and get the buy-in from everybody back here”

“a critical tension between being part of a collective and going back and saying, my day job and my requirement for [host organisation]”

“that wouldn't have happened unless we at a local level had decided that was one of our key priorities, it hit one of our corporate objectives”

Perhaps not surprisingly there was clearly a strong alignment to public sector objectives – with many references to the need to provide community benefits and maximise opportunities for local residents, businesses and schools. There had also been clear alignment to Regional objectives and the NW Steering Group, part of the

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

London 2012 Nations and Regions group had been influential in this, as a one of the major contributors to the planning meetings – though listed as an ‘observer’ in the minutes. Their representative (RY) had clearly taken a very central role in many meetings.

Identification of Stakeholders

This was explored with interviewees who identified their role and those ‘key’ stakeholders in the process. Items in bold were the themes identified in the analysis.

Involvement with ETG and level or term of **engagement** clearly varied. Those identified by respondents were the Local Authorities, Sport Cheshire, Universities and Schools, Marketing Cheshire, Regional 2012 Group, Business, Sport England. However, health, the voluntary sector, specific reference to ‘public’ or community in relation to stakeholders was missing. This may be an issue of understanding terminology, as in other aspects of the interviews, the public perceptions and benefits were often cited as being important. However, they did not appear to be associated with the concept of ‘stakeholder’.

In other aspects of the theme of stakeholders, was the related issue of **representation** – in that the group was not representing all the stakeholder groups, with a representative from the Local Authority for example, representing the various directorates of the authority or acting as the strategic lead in that body.

There was strong identification of CB as a **strategic leadership** role and also some of the champions (e.g JB as sport champion) as key to driving forward across other partners. In this way, primary and secondary stakeholders were identified by one of the partners, as a way of showing that in some cases, the stakeholders were in a more influential position to effect actions or were showing more autonomy of decision-making.

Drivers and Enablers – Positive influences on achievement of objectives

The drivers or enablers which could be identified by the interviewees referring to those things which contributed to positive outcomes or successful achievement were:

Consistency of objectives – the framework had been very useful to maintain focus, despite many changes and over time. Consensus with other organisations on Objectives – as noted above this was important to maintain the momentum to achieve pre-Olympic activities in line with the objectives and achieve good collaboration

Communications – within the group, communication with public (mainly via the website and local networks, achieving national publicity), with external groups – eg Visit Britain was felt to be important in achieving objectives. However, there were

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

other qualifying remarks about communications was something they felt could have been done better and earlier, hence “something to do better next time”.

“it's maybe probably around communications that things started to creak a bit, not because nothing was happening, but actually we didn't probably have the mechanisms to connect the communications more effectively to bring it up as a holistic approach”

“Communications is always a challenge in this sort of scenario”

“We got the Embrace the Games website eventually. Probably we should have done an Embrace the Games website right at the start with a central port and what is it, and populated that much earlier”

“there was an awful lot of activity and an awful lot of good work, but probably the intelligence stayed within the people around that table”

“You know, it's all very well having a strategy and people working on a working group. It was very much about trying to raise the awareness of the public to this”

“I think there are a few lessons about that. I think if I had my time again, I would have a dedicated comms person from day one, working solely on...well, not day one but I would really have a drive on the comms side of things”

“I started to miss a few because I couldn't feel I was actually disseminating the right information to the people I was working with”

Influential Individuals

“those they'd previously had control of were gone, we're dealing with different directors, different managers”

“down to us as individuals as well”

“key individuals within the local authorities”

“his tenacity and his vision, and his determination to actually keep challenging”

“ultimately, it's about individuals”

“it's about individuals who chose to seize the moment, and individuals who have chosen not to”

“one of the main challenges for them was to get the right individuals together”

“once the right group of individuals came together, they did have, you know, a very similar view in terms of what they were wanting to achieve and how they could go about achieving some of the objectives”

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

“making sure you have got the right individuals that represent the theme, or that work stream”

“individual partners actually going away and delivering for themselves”

“It was driven by individuals”

“There's no rhyme or reason why one organisation has benefited more than another. It is purely about individuals; absolutely”

At an individual level, the enthusiasm and leadership shown by CB and JB noted, and by RY - as the broker between levels of LOCOG, sectors and themes. This enabled a consistent approach, and was instrumental in facilitating collaboration across areas and sectors of interest. Those with a Cheshire wide role, and being given a Champions role in ETG and or back in their own Organisation were identified as influential. Various **factors** contributing to the relative success of plans for ETG were identified:

- Strategic commitment of organisations
- Enhancement of organisational objectives (of partners)
- Goodness of fit (to own strategic priorities)
- Foresight (looking for opportunities in the future)
- Opportunity to rebrand and refresh existing services
- Recognition of 'once in a lifetime' opportunity
- Cross sector collaboration
- Potential for future collaborations on events
- Need for profile in the region
- Unique attraction of Olympics (magic dust?)
- Excitement /Passion/ enthusiasm
- Strong leadership

Having individuals with the commitment, drive, passion, vision, and leadership was seen as important to success but also that they should be able to influence their own organisation. This would appear to be a balance between level of seniority and influence, to energy, interest and time to devote to the group. That is too senior, possibly not enough interest, less seniority meant not enough influence.

Hindrances or barriers to achieving objectives

There were some areas noted as particular challenges and these were fairly consistent across the interviewees, even if expressed differently:

“new landscape that's come across since we started this exercise with the RDAs disappearing and the LEP”

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

“we've obviously undergone a massive change since then, and the world financially has changed out of all recognition”

“some of the aspirations that we had at the beginning when we started out were set out when the economic situation was different”

“the whole landscape has dramatically changed from when we started”

“a difficult time in terms of change and all the local government restructure”

“It was a challenge against the backdrop, certainly for us, of local government review”

Changing political structures (LA and County, NW and national – change of Government)

Wider economic climate – austerity budgets, having to find cuts in planned budgets.

Personnel : changes/ loss of continuity/no central facilitator/administrator to collate and chase actions

Role ambiguity – resulting in some lack of understanding/buy in by partners

Relationship with Event Organiser (LOCOG)

Issues with LOCOG included;

- Branding restrictions (Businesses unable to benefit from Sponsorship/clubs or others limited in how they used Olympic links)
- Autonomy/ Close control by LOCOG over major events/activities/programmes
- Lack of transparency by LOCOG (focus of control)
- Perceptions of control and compliance with LOCOG requirements (national – to regional – particularly over torch relay and Paralympic activities)

Resources

- Economic constraints – ie fewer resources than anticipated
- Lack of dedicated resource
- Changing priorities over time
- Uncertainty of resources (after 2008 and due to above, from 2010 onwards)
- Expectations of resources from event organisers (problematic for non-public bodies/education particularly)

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Lack of engagement - by some stakeholders with key roles in achieving objectives for themes identified:

- Health-related partners , Children and Family services not engaged
- Lack of engagement in meetings/ action planning by appointed representatives
- Businesses and their response

Decision making

- Variation across partners of decision-making processes related to agreed actions
- Time frames for decision-making (ie often took too long, or had to fit into too short a time frame, given bureaucratic structures involved)
- Autonomy of partners –(related to level of decision makers)
- Control of LOCOG over key issues (ie limits to ETG partners control)

Process of the ETG (how the group worked and was managed)

Role and Purpose of meetings

The group clearly relied on meetings and personal attendance, contributions by individuals or their representatives, led by the Chair. This was perceived by some as being resource heavy – but by others as a good way to achieve communications with people who could help them get more out of their role or for achieving their own objectives. The meetings were perceived more positively by some than others. The lack of engagement or consistency by some organisations may be seen as an indicator of the relative significance of the meeting. Briefing papers were noted as useful – but minutes very brief and it was difficult sometimes to see completed action points being followed up consistently.

There were comments on the completeness of group – some potential partners not engaged (Health, Children’s Services/Education, Volunteer organisations).

Also noted was a tendency for some to be ‘reactive’ at meetings – responding to papers tabled, but less pro-active in bringing material to them. From the NW perspective for example, communication was not always 2 way process, with monitoring and evaluation data on projects not being gathered or planning information being shared. This was apparently more of an issue with earlier plans, for evidence of engagement, became more difficult as the Olympics and Torch Relay drew near.

“the meetings worked well”

“when you're in a meeting once every couple of months, six months can go and you look at the actions, wasn't so and so supposed to have”

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

“[When you went to those meetings you felt you were simply updating?] “Yeah, things that were...information that had already been coming through other channels”

Timing- Related to the issue above, about hindrances, it was clear that with the reliance on meetings which were months apart, decisions from partners had to be agreed outside the meetings and actioned, so often actions delayed.

Monitoring was problematic – lack of central facilitator for all the information to be disseminated, despite the excellent support from Marketing Cheshire, there was no single accountable facilitator once JP had left the group. This is also a key issue for continuation for the group and achieving the framework objectives.

Important to the effectiveness of meetings was the strong leadership and drive from key stakeholders led by the Chair (CB).

As it was clearly important to get the communications right, the expertise of Marketing Cheshire noted as being important to bridge the economic and district boundaries, therefore it is perhaps not surprising that meetings appeared to be marketing and communications focused.

In terms of managing the process, the issue of role boundaries and expectations noted above, (eg LOCOG/region etc)- was at times problematic, but RY had a key role in trying to balance expectations and influence perceptions of the relationships from regional 2012 Steering Group/ Nations and Regions to national.

“I think undoubtedly the influence of the Nations and Regions Group through Andy Worthington, and the Northwest Group that was maintained despite the demise of the RDA through Rob Young” (about influence on successful achievement of key objectives)

“when we've met these barriers with LOCOG, it tended to be Rob who got the hammering”

“I feel very, very much for Rob, you know, Rob Young (Note: NW Steering Group/LOCOG Nations and Regions) in this, in the sense that I think he tried manfully to get the things going, but there just seemed a huge disconnect. They were doing whatever they wanted to do”

“I mean, I can measure that at the moment because every day Rob Young, who's the northwest co-ordinator for 2012, does his daily submission to LOCOG, you know”

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Therefore in general meetings worked well but the following are proposals to consider for future:

- consistent representation
- More frequent meetings near to events
- better communication channels within the group (to enable more frequent updating rather than relying on the meeting itself)
- Consider use of technology to assist shared resources- web portal
- better communication channels externally to inform stakeholders what the group were doing
- more adherence to the action-planning around framework objectives to retain focus and follow up on planned activities.

The appointment of Champions to particular themes had some mixed results. Sport results were reported as being successful but were only partly attributed to the influence of ETG, as many of these activities related to national programmes implemented in the sub-region and the overlapping objectives of the lead on sport.

Activities and achievements

Events organised by ETG group

All respondents thought the main **objectives of ETG group** had been met – at least as well as might have been expected (some more positive) it was about working together to **maximise Olympic benefits** for their communities and that had been achieved. The addendum to the report provides some added detail where available.

Relatively successful: sport related⁶, Torch relay, PGTC/ events (where they happened) conferences – ie these were consistently described as ‘successful’ across respondents.

Less successful: Cultural events, Inspired by research, registrations by/engagement of Businesses. These were less consistently positively viewed.

“it’s obvious when people see the Olympic flame”

“ticketed our celebration event on the racecourse, 25,000 tickets; enormous demand for them”

“two conferences and they were very well attended, a lot of interest”

“the focusing on the torch”

“the torch relay’s a very good example”

⁶ Sport Cheshire and JB have compiled extensive detail of the sport-related achievements, which many of the interviewees verified. This however was their main purpose and organisational objective over this period.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

“the torch relay is a great example of that”

“when I think about it, they did engage quite a lot in, you know, the conferences”

Most interviewees noted that the events (Conferences and Torch Relay specifically) were a positive feature; successful, well organised, collaborations.

Conferences for organisations involved across Cheshire, were noted as being good for dissemination and marketing of the ETG activities and promoting the full range of Olympic related activities to the community and decision-makers⁷

It was however noted that the 2010 and 2011 conference didn't engage the **education** sector too well across the county (eg School Heads), though schools and young people presenting did promote their good work to others, and will undoubtedly have had a positive impact on that school. Get Set registrations could be seen as a positive result of schools engagement with legacy planning, but this was not necessarily indicative that the network resources were being used. One possible criticism was that events were arguably attractive to the already converted, though the meeting minutes have noted that those who attended rated them very positively. They provided, as had been anticipated, a showcase of activity, but had arguably limited public profile outside stakeholders and partners.⁸

Resources to specific projects : **eg The Moment When** (disparate views on the success of this) gained profile, media coverage, performance well received by audiences, but expensive, or took a major resource input, with only limited public exposure (those attending to closed /non ticketed events). It would be interesting to see some more detailed analysis of the relative impact of this and the dance events organised by Cheshire Dance or other 'Inspired By' events in the sub-region⁹. While one respondent indicated some reservation about the wider impact of the Moment When:

“they're one-off events, and for me to engage cultural initiatives, it would have been far better to use that money now in hindsight, to use Cheshire Dance to go and work with, you know, schools, communities, and actually get the culture out into those key areas, rather than doing these wonderful displays”

The **Moment When** was noted as being a specific example of LA collaboration and a huge success by other respondents, in linking in to the Cultural Olympiad and its benefits to Cheshire. The group has to consider to what extent the specific methods

⁷ Attendance list /evaluation of the events may provide verification of this.

⁸ Marketing Cheshire conducted the event evaluations.

⁹ RY has noted the poor response to Inspired By research questionnaire, but this research could provide some indication of the response/effectiveness and reach.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

used in this activity were the most effective use of resources available. Some additional comments below illustrate this issue.

This raises the overall question of how 'success' of the ETG planning can be measured and there did appear to be some differences in perceptions or lack of clarity on the indicators of success. There was a lack of empirical data available underpinning the perceptions of 'success' and some concern that large crowds to celebrations such as the Torch Relay were not necessarily going to leave any lasting impact on the sub-region. Also, some activities under the ETG banner were part of national programmes which some schools/LAs were already taking part in such as Get Set. Though the ETG conferences and events may have helped to reinforce the benefits of the network, there were few tangible results to show any link to ETG group activities.¹⁰

Torch Relay – A clear focus for effective working across the sub-region

The torch relay and preparation for it, provided perhaps the best and most consistently referred to example of collaboration and the effectiveness of the ETG group, as illustrated in the quotes above.

With one main bid for the evening event, highlighting the county's most identifiable brands and iconic landscapes and buildings across the 2 days on which the torch visited the county (Chester, Jodrell Bank, Tatton Park being highlighted on TV), meant greater impact and more successful in marketing the county-wide attractions. What the outcomes of this exposure have been, or how it will be monitored, are not immediately clear. The evening event in Chester was a 'sell out' to the ground capacity (20,000), producing high media profile and international coverage as well as demonstrating high popular support and public engagement. Similarly large crowds demonstrated support across the county despite terrible weather for the daytime through Cheshire 2 days later. The only 'Iconic Facility' project in the sub-region Orford park was also included on and received TV coverage on regional news channels. But reservations about expecting this to have any lasting impact have been expressed (CE/Warr).

On the other hand, the Moment when... - was seen as expensive way to get some cultural activity with limited coverage across the county (by some) but by others as a great showcase to increase cultural aspects of the OTR and increase impact of the events, as illustrated below:

¹⁰ MMU instigated a Get Set Network workshop to help schools and promote the resources available, but this was facilitated by Podium funding and linked to ongoing research project on MMU Cheshire's PGTC/Legacy impacts.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

“we wouldn't, I don't think, have done the Cultural Olympiad project around The Moment When, as an example, unless we had 2012, and we'd never have done anything”

“the one tangible thing I suppose we did deliver out of that was the Moment When but, I mean, you know, but that has cost authorities to put quite a lot of significant additional resource into delivering. You know, there's a lot of money there that's gone into that, and did we get benefit from it?”

“through that group and the drive of that group, they've manage to get The Moment When. So I think that was a real success that they can look back on and say actually, that was something that wouldn't have happened without the drive of that group”

PGTC – were highlighted as successful, but benefits were seen mainly by CE and MMUC – Schools and clubs generally in Cheshire got little benefit outside or from other regional camps (confirmed by other research currently underway in CE¹¹). Expected camps either didn't materialise or were smaller than expected across the county, so the notion of increasing visitors, or economic or other benefits by this mechanism was shown to have limits. MMUC-CE consortium considered more social, relational benefits in their planning, so had a tighter focus on local links. Work is ongoing to capture this relational approach to longer term leverage of benefits from such short term 'camps', but full results of the PGTC in the region in the NW report have shown the results in Cheshire were similar to those in the region, outside Manchester, who hosted larger camps but arguably had similar problems in demonstrating wider benefits from them.

Challenges faced by ETG in achieving objectives or longer term benefits:

- Engaging broader groups – eg headteachers, businesses, public
- Coping with lack of resources – or identifying where existing resources can be used to achieve aligned objectives
- NWDA not acting as funding distributor for activities was problematic (expectations were raised that resources would be made available to capitalise on opportunities)
- Priorities – changing over time, differences between organisations
- Synchronising planning in different organisations
- Loose groupings in some themes
- Lack of leadership on some themes due to changes in personnel, or changing representation

Stakeholder issues, identified within this node or theme:

¹¹ Reports to LOCOG by L Burwitz on behalf of the MMUCCE consortium

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

- Key stakeholders and their role – some ambiguity or uncertainty
- Various levels – Individual-reps at ETG, Organisation, public/external
- Not recognising public or wider audience sufficiently in planning – some lack of PR in raising public awareness of plans
- Actions on plans being devolved operationally
- Continuity of personnel and identified representatives in the group (those with most consistency were more positive)

Perspectives of the different stakeholders on Embrace the Games

Analysis of responses across different groups of respondents provides another dimension to the results. The following section highlights the key common factors and issues identified in the 3 main clusters of respondents; Education, Local Authorities, Agencies.

Role of Education and their perspective of ETG:

FE and HE varied in their responses to ETG – from very proactive in MMU and selected colleges/schools – to very much less so in Chester University and other colleges/schools, as evidenced by Get Set and School Games registrations and PGTC or Podium activities.

In Schools, national programmes had difficulty in engaging from so far out (3+years before the event) – they had a less strategic approach to the Olympics in the long term so were slow to become engaged with ETG plans. Interest clearly heightened as the event drew near, so future strategic planning needs to take into account **school planning cycles** and structures and relative significance of the event. LOCOG had put considerable resource into the promotion and development of the educational offer and supporting material, but it was up to schools to engage with this to plan their own response and implement these.

In Cheshire, as across the country for example, the 2012 School Games had some difficulties in its first year with engagement, but this is a 4 year programme so it may develop and provide more opportunities in the future for sporting event links. Other nationally funded programmes were well used by Cheshire Schools – Sport Unlimited for example.

Based on the responses from Education representatives on the group, any engagement with Olympic or related activity is very dependent on Head teachers/Principals or CEOs and local priorities in their strategies and planning. This is likely to continue to be the case with any future events, so a directorate level response is likely to be more successful to co-ordinate planning across the sub-region. Plans were badly affected in sport and PE by changes to funding and loss of personnel (SSPs), which made more strategic/across boundary working difficult.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Concerns were expressed by some educationalists of lack of engagement by health – though this was part of the framework target, it was not really involving the health and well-being decision-makers. Also, respondents perceived the planning to be very LA focused which didn't involve others early enough and or at the right level and offered relatively limited support – at primary, secondary and FE levels. Schools and colleges might have wanted to get more involved but lacked the resources to do so.

The view from the education sector seemed to be that Legacy work starts now (i.e. after the event), hence the need to maintain momentum after September 2012. There was some concern about longer term follow up on plans to achieve the ETG framework outcomes. There were still great opportunities for building on the ETG plans – hence again a directorate level response was recommended moving into 2012-13. For example, good results in national programmes showed Cheshire responded well where they could draw down the resources. But many schools would have done so even without ETG, with School heads and teachers taking the lead, as they were making budget decisions, to benefit their pupils and schools, having seen opportunities in the proposals and programmes available. Based on this research therefore, there was a need for **high profile leadership** to drive legacy activities forward in districts and across Cheshire in the education sector particularly, beyond 2012.

From the education perspective, the ETG group can fulfil a purpose – for example, the identification and screening of long-term opportunities from future events and link to the relevant sport, health, skills and cultural strategies in schools. ETG could take a strategic lead on flagging these up to the appropriate level to have schools, colleges and Universities (who all plan independently) build into their plans in the longer term, or to set up the processes to link more effectively across partnerships. This is referred to below in the recommendations.

Local Authorities – Key/ primary stakeholders in the ETG framework

Local Authorities have clearly been impacted by changing political structures and economic constraints. However, ETG has fulfilled a useful role. The Olympic opportunities created a useful focus for new authorities. They provided high profile events in public eye, which in turn, gave good positive PR for the authorities. Local Authorities devoted significant resources despite constraints. The public reaction was positive and exceeded expectations. The councils appear to expect Active People and other national indicators will pick up the increased sport and activity though their own sport and recreation facilities will also provide evidence of increased activity in the public facilities. To this extent, the OG/London2012 provided a good vehicle for LA strategic objectives.

Most have legacy in sport/activity/well-being/participation and young people in their strategic plans for future. Therefore, there is a strong rationale for continuing work to

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

build on legacy objectives but there is clearly some concern over the future role of the group without the clear focus on Olympics. Some of the upcoming events have a more localised impact and expectation (RLWC 2013). Though much of the data on activity increases can be picked up by the Local Authorities in their leisure facilities. It is unclear to what extent this data is being shared and examined by the Authorities. This could be the subject of future research.

Challenges for the local authorities (those identified by ETG group):

- Identity of the group and what/who they represented
- Branding –LOCOG branding barrier to getting other commercial partners to support local activity
- Problems with lack of LOCOG concern with para events until late in process
- Missed opportunities around Paralympics
- Public dissemination of work before Games
- Communications/marketing co-ordination
- Taking long term view (those engaged since 2006)- many partner /other organisations were not looking that far ahead post Olympics
- LOGOG – communication/control relationship with the event organiser and concern for sub-regions regarding the role of the event organisers perceived lack of interest in the support of 'legacy' work after the delivery of the Games.

External Agencies – (LOCOG, N&R)

From the LOCOG/ NW Perspective, though there was a strong regional plan and driving force (led or represented by AW and RY) to building on existing NW-led and sport/culture related network, after the change of Government and the closure of the NWDA the NW2012 posts were hosted by Government Office for the region. This may have created some difficulties with consistency in planning and resource. There has been despite these difficulties, a consistency of leadership and personnel in most key roles (AW - RY- CB) from 2007 onwards . However, there was no Sub-regional co-ordinator, perceived as a gap 2009-12 and some of the posts hosted by the RDA did not continue after the closure of RDA office.

The region already has structures for economic alliances as base for any future work in sport, business, culture - regional groupings. However the agencies have also had to cope with political change and structural/resource changes. There have also been some issues of communication and possibly perceptions by the wider public and other organisations about the role of LOCOG in the regions and the role of the NW Steering Group.

Particular challenges:

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

- Pro-activity in regions – LOCOG were reliant on small number of active partners.
- Other organisations had to be pro-active and develop their own plans
- Resources (lack of) from LOCOG and the NW region
- Communication across sub-region
- Consistency of staff in areas
- Decision-making by Local Authorities
- Cross sector issues
- Responsiveness (lack of and timing)
- Pressure of immovable deadlines
- Need for local champions to action plans
- Unforeseen opportunities in the planning phase, and some uncontrollable
- Operationalising what success looked like for sub-region – identifying the measure so they could be monitored was problematic.
- Media and communications across all areas (with own systems etc)
- Future communications key to legacy partners, but plans uncertain and no personnel in post to drive forward

There seems some justification for an opportunity to showcase success in the regional report and possibly in a sub-regional event. However, there had been a lack of response to the NW survey designed to capture some impact data, which may prove problematic in making future case for investment in events and related legacy work. There was a clear need for partners to archive and maintain records of activity; monitoring data, output data, participants/project reports, to contribute to any evaluation later, however, limited evidence this was forthcoming. This makes the case of any legacy impacts much harder to make. There had been a lack of evaluation framework developed regionally or nationally and no resource or incentives for projects to devote their own.

Beyond 2012: lessons learned for future planning

Based on the earlier analysis this section highlights the key lessons drawn from the different perspectives and experiences of the ETG framework.

What might be done differently?

Engagement of all sectors in the plans, and some changes to structure and membership of the group.

Education might have been brought in sooner and at higher level to the ETG group – Events may need to demonstrate to the relevant strategic leads, how they will benefit, whilst recognising that organisations often work independently (eg HEI's, FE Colleges).

Health and related agencies (PCTs) re Activity to be consulted and engaged with on related strategies earlier, where an event may provide opportunity to promote a health message/service/priority.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Voluntary sector – more consultation and engagement with voluntary bodies and relevant charities to promote mutual benefits, eg in sport or culture, health would improve the impacts in the sector.

Involvement in ETG was dominated by Local Authority leisure/culture representation, but with cross-cutting relevance, future plans would need to ensure cross departmental , strategic relevance within the LA structures

The role of co-ordination by businesses/commercial partners via existing economic alliances and groups, must be reviewed as this group appeared more difficult to engage in planning and activities via ETG group.

Decision-makers at planning stage, related to ability to commit to plans.

Resource commitment to the Steering Group sufficiently early to enable some longer term personnel /HR (on secondment from existing staff establishment? possible KTP?)

Consistent personnel to drive and support (linked to above – this would provide more than an administrative function)

Greater sharing of benefits - eg on PGTC outreach work or similar, along with clear method of how GB athletes may be engaged across the county, based on the NGBs expected future commitment to ‘inspirational’ work to build on London 2012 success

Having a clear reporting and monitoring process on agreed actions – related to the personnel issue above, once the process agreed to have clearly defined roles. This ideally should be supported by clear requirement to collect appropriate data on impacts of agreed activities.

Need clearly focused structures for future – linking to the existing regional and sub-regional planning networks already in existence (LEPS or similar, Cultural Consortia).

In short, this could effectively mean a Legacy-focused group to continue working to deliver on ETG objectives – around sports events or similar, for each area – involve EACH directorate in LA and local business/schools/PCT or related organisation. At the County level, a smaller, focused group of strategic planning. See more detailed recommendations below.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Summary : Key Successes of ETG in Cheshire

Torch Relay

- response by public/ exposure /engagement by communities
- Successful local organisation and delivery
- Torchbearers being able to continue to use their experiences – to engage young/employers etc.
- High profile for the Local areas involved in planning – positive PR and reputation
- Engagement of stakeholders
- Individual commitment of key stakeholders (made it happen)
- ETG important enabling role
- Cultural links increased

PGTC – success due to MMUC driving (but localised impacts) and long term benefits expected, of non-economic impact. (reports by L Burwitz as evidence).

Olympic themed activity related to the ETG plan across the various themes (Sport, Culture) including young people

Cheshire's results in national programmes (eg Sport Unlimited, Sportivate, Sportmakers, Inspired By) but this needs to be qualified by recognition this is the work of Sport Cheshire or others even outwith the ETG, as is GSN or School Games and or the existing community networks.

Possible criticisms of ETG or and where future development may be focused:

Too reactive at times, meetings too much geared around information giving rather than actions being developed and agreed between partners.

Despite the strong leadership, some lack of engagement over longer term in ETG activities, being too reliant on face to face meetings, was particularly vulnerable to loss of individuals or change of representative and made decision making difficult. This points to a potential role for designated personnel, to co-ordinate work of the group. As ETG operated as a rather 'looser alliance' than partnership at times, the structure and operation of the group going forward needs to be considered.

The ETG Framework document clearly worked across the Sub-region and got all areas involved initially, as useful point of reference, but once written, action planning was not consistent and there was a narrow focus which seemed not to consider going beyond 2012 in order to consolidate the 'legacy' into future planning.

Senior level of organisations were engaged (but not across all sectors) and not consistently across the final couple of years.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Conclusions

While the impacts of the ETG group appears to have been positive and a useful vehicle to achieve the objectives set out in 2009, there have been some organisational and operational difficulties in maximising the benefits for all sectors and areas. The Framework provided an aspirational set of targets and a well - defined thematic approach that many organisations were able to relate to and integrate their own plans. A range of activities and outputs were achieved, though their longer term impacts and outputs will take some time to emerge. The lack of clear indicators or data collection and tracking beyond 2012 is problematic for providing evidence of outcomes.

By coming together at the sub-regional level to work collaboratively within this framework, the partners have clearly gained significantly in terms of knowledge and experience of the potential for major events to leverage additional benefits, even from events outside the county. However, the Olympics experience has clearly been a unique one, and unlikely to be repeated. Future events present opportunities for the same organisational groupings in the sub-region but any response is likely to be more fragmented in future, without the unifying role of the Olympic national legacy plans of Government, the LOCOG Nations and Regions group and their related organisational resources to promote and develop planning at regional level. Some of the partners considered their own activity would have happened even without the ETG group.

At the meeting on 8th October, the following issues were highlighted, for the group to discuss moving forward:

- Future plans for continuing to develop legacy from 2012 Games
- Possible structures and arrangements for any other events
- Developing a blue-print for future working at Sub-regional level
- Identifying existing sub-regional/regional structures which may need to be linked to maximise benefits and efficiencies

The above report has undergone some updating since the initial sharing with partners in October 2012. Specific recommendations are provided below for the ETG group to consider as they move forward into 2012/13 planning.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Recommendations for future strategic planning of ETG group

The Embrace the Games group has delivered notable benefits to the region from London 2012 and it is recommended that the steering group continues. Specific recommendations with regard to the constituency and operation of the group are outlined below, based on the 'lessons learned' outlined above.

- A standing panel is maintained that reflects the agendas & interests of different sectors including education, sport, health, business, local authority, tourism and the voluntary sector.
- Membership and terms of reference for the panel are agreed with representatives of the appropriate sectors.
- The standing panel continues to monitor the legacy from Embrace the Games and promotes the on-going benefits of the initiative.
- Promotion of these on-going benefits is used to generate interest and enthusiasm for future events. This information is used to demonstrate the relevance to strategic leads in organisations.
- Key people from different sectors & organisations are identified as members of the panel. Ideally these people should be decision makers who are able to commit resources and who have enthusiasm for the aims of the panel.
- Resource commitments are secured for the standing panel. This will require someone to lead the panel strategically and also monitor panel activities.
- A list is maintained of key contacts in relevant sectors and organisations both regionally and more widely. Regular communication is made with this network to maintain interest and relationships. Engagement across time is maintained to link together benefits and actions of different initiatives.
- Regular communication channels are maintained to increase exposure and awareness of the panel's activities. A website has been found to be one effective channel for this purpose but more targeted communication may be needed.
- An important element of communication should be reputation management.
- A strategic calendar of future events is established to facilitate strategic planning.
- The strategic calendar should provide the basis for four activities: raising awareness of future events to relevant parties; an initial appraisal of a future event to decide if further assessment is warranted; a fuller assessment of a future event to detail potential benefits, potential beneficiaries, and resource requirements; and evaluation of past events. Future events would embrace both sporting and cultural events.
- An important part of the assessment of future events should be stakeholder mapping.
- An important part of the assessment of future events should be the extent to which event objectives and benefits can be aligned with organisational objectives of panel members because achieving this alignment will generate greater commitment.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

- Strategic plans should be developed achieve the objectives and benefits related to specific events. Where possible these should link together different events to obtain synergies.
- The panel should have an action orientation rather than information sharing role. The focus should be on managing the strategic plan.
- Clear outcomes and measures should be established with respect to specific events, together with a clear reporting and monitoring process. The focus should be on relatively few measures for which sufficient, relevant data can be collected and evaluated. The development of a balanced scorecard* of measures should be considered.
- In relation to specific events the panel should appreciate the relevant links to appropriate structures – national, regional & sub-regional.
- The expertise of external agencies should be considered where appropriate, for example:
 - o Guiding the strategy and operation of the panel
 - o Producing a network and contact list
 - o Developing a balanced scorecard of measures
 - o Evaluating event outcomes
 - o Guidance of reputation management

Summary of specific recommendations for future planning around events:

- ETG to host an event to showcase the successful work related to London 2012 to partners and wider groups – Education, business, health and well-being, voluntary/ charity leaders – early 2013
- In implementing the suggested approaches above, the continued programme of work for ETG to highlight business, sport and cultural opportunities around future events (to link with RLWC2013)
- Maintain e-space and public facing communications with the ETG branding for partners to populate with their planned and ongoing projects and links.
- Develop Knowledge Exchange or KTP partnership with MMUC in order to develop and support post 2012 strategic planning for ETG group, events and activities noted above.¹²

*A 'balanced scorecard' for ETG work going forward may include specific objectives in:

- Sport, Activity and health engagement/outcomes in Cheshire
- Business and Commercial Activity related to major events
- Place marketing and communications
- Process and strategic planning for collaborations across sectors
- Community and public engagement in future events

The original framework for ETG and the 2012 Games can be developed to provide specific targets for ongoing work to be determined according to current and future

¹² Details will be circulated with the report of the possible models of KE or KTP which may be suitable to the needs of ETG partners.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

priorities of the partners. The list of events below provides some indicators for future plans.

Additional sections provide material based on secondary data, or additional analysis of previous material, based on feedback on preliminary findings, to help support the above recommendations.

B Bell, K Gallimore November 2012

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Addendum to the Report November 2012

Successes and highlights of the ETG Framework themes

Sport and Physical Activity

- Role of the Sport Cheshire leadership/ champion for achieving many of the actions set out in the original framework, shown in Sport Cheshire statistics.
- Number of projects in Cheshire achieving and taking advantage of the *Inspired By* mark:

Targeting disability groups, disadvantaged areas and under-represented groups in activity

NHS challenge schemes demonstrated links to health agenda and employee health projects

Links with Change4Life and 'free swimming' promoting health, activity

Volunteer-based projects have helped to achieve the volunteering objectives and develop skills in event stewarding and major events, as well as the delivery of activity in PGTC, Torch Relay and others

- Enhanced pathways and support for talented young people
- School Games successfully implemented in Yr 1 of 4
- High levels of Get Set Network registrations across Cheshire

(Details in the End of Games report, Nations and Regions team)

These are indicators of outputs achieved, though longer term outcomes not yet clear.

Other highlights

- Use of Olympic and Paralympic Ambassadors in schools and visiting athletes in PGTC to inspire young people using values-based education programme
- New facilities in Orford park have registered spikes of participation and activity levels since Olympics, which they attribute to increased awareness and interest. Other participation data should be available in the usage data on LA facilities and services.

We must note however, much of the data needed to demonstrate any increases or changes in activity levels is not being collected by specific projects. National Active People survey will capture indicative increases in activity only and may not be significant, given the already high rates achieved across Sub-region and small

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

samples for more localised impacts. Usage data of public facilities should provide long term trend data when collated. AP will also provide details on volunteering and club membership. Sport Cheshire have collated much of the relevant data into their annual summary, including the Cheshire results for national sport-based programmes, such as Sport Unlimited and Sportivate, SportMakers, Clubmark and Change4Life (Sport Cheshire review meeting 26 July 2012). Cheshire appears to perform well in respect of these national programmes.

Post Olympic activity: Homecoming events have created additional impact with Cheshire East based athletes receiving official welcomes in Knutsford, Wilmslow, Disley. These have provided a celebratory approach to Cheshire East's successes. Cheshire East's film of the Torch Relay has been shared at the event and distributed to groups – not clear to what extent this has been promoted to CE residents and wider, but it clearly showcases the extent of engagement by communities in CE in the planning for and the day of the Torch Relay.

PGTC – additional sporting impacts have been demonstrated by clubs hosting Olympic 'hopefuls' and athletes preparing for competition at the Games. Though these are localised, they do give an indicator of future potential for additional visits planned in the lead up to Commonwealth Games 2014. There are also ongoing Sport Science support activities in MMUC which provide some potential for future projects – eg linked to CP football, British Swimming, British Cycling and others.

Cultural

The respondents indicated that from a relatively low base, there had been some success in attracting planned cultural activities to Cheshire. The Moment when and other (Cheshire Dance, music and community arts projects) related to Torch Relay Celebrations provided participatory experiences for a variety of groups and involved hundreds of performers – dance, music, performance.

Public engagement in many of these were limited by ticketing or other restrictions – and for the level of investment and resource, there is some lack of detail on the impact or outcomes from these events.

As noted above, Cheshire East have produced a very effective video highlighting the level of community engagement by a variety of groups around the Torch Relay, many of which were community arts or cultural groups.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

The events (Torch Relay/Evening Celebrations) were clearly of a celebratory nature, which enabled many children, families and Cheshire residents to enjoy their personal connection to the national event.

Taking Part data for the region may be able to detect an increase in arts and cultural engagement in 2012 compared to previous years.

Visitor Economy

This project has had limited ability to comment on economic impact, but Marketing Cheshire and the CoC should be in a position to judge any successful outcomes in the following year, based on the exposure and impacts of the events during 2012.

Unfortunately the offer of PGTC, despite many suitable venues being included in the guide available to visiting teams, did not result in camps being held, other than those at MMUC/CE. This shows some limitations for the Sub-regional venues to be able to attract specialised teams and countries, despite the best efforts of Nations and Regions to help promote. This may have been a consequence of a lack of dedicated resource to promoting Cheshire venues to international NOC's – the MMUCE consortium have demonstrated this was time, expertise and resource intensive.

Visitors to Cheshire as a result of exposure, place marketing effects of Torch relay or PGTC work will be difficult to track, but Marketing Cheshire will be best placed to make this judgement, using their own marketing intelligence from 2012 onwards.

The research seems to indicate that those businesses with any interest in gaining advantage from the Olympic/Paralympic effect were given every encouragement to do so. The potential for future events has been highlighted by the work at Cheshire level – marketing active breaks the natural/outdoor environment, historical and sport related opportunities has clear merit, with the upcoming events (see list below) planned for the region and beyond – for event participants, organisers during or in preparation for the event and spectators to extend their stay. Gratton and colleagues work for UK Sport (2012) has provided clear indicators of potential for multiplier effects in spectator events, but also, that these impacts and benefits can extend into regions beyond the hosting area, on spending related to event services, accommodation and hospitality.

Other Business and Commercial

This research has had a clear gap in contribution from the Business community, but this is indicative of the variable response to event opportunities and the problems of timeframes and lead times for bidding for contracts and services. There is some detail in the NW End of Games report, but even so, this is not likely to be exhaustive and will lack long term perspective of net gains and multipliers achieved.

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

Volunteering, Skills and Capacity Building

One of the themes of the original Framework, Volunteering has been noted above related to Sport, but also can be shown to have impacts for future events and wider implications than sport. Staff in local authorities and other agencies have worked together to improve their volunteer co-ordination and deployment. This will have long term benefits for future events and potentially communities other than sporting impacts. Additional volunteers have been recruited and new relationships in this area have enhanced 2012 events, with the capacity to continue in the future.

Other positives highlighted by partners in relation to learning from the EtG experience:

Improved emergency planning and better communications with emergency service – examples of new partnerships and alliances for public safety and crowds.

Media and communications potential – use of social media and public engagement tools.

The list of events below is provided to stimulate action-planning for the ongoing legacy from 2012 in Cheshire. This is based on the Hugh Robertson announcement in September of existing agreements for international events and the recent UK sport announcement of a new round of bids being supported to build on 2012 experience and facilities. These events can then be seen as ‘opportunities’ in the SWOT analysis table which follows, being either based in /near to Cheshire or with sporting or other link to Cheshire. Further events may be added as part of the UK Sport programme and there may be events at National level, not included in this list, which partners may perceive to be of value in sub-regional planning.

Event	Venue	Year
Rugby League World Cup ¹³	National – Warrington/Wrexham	2013
BMX Supercross World Series	Manchester (BMX - CE)	2013
World Open Squash	Manchester	
Commonwealth Games	Glasgow (PGTC links to Cheshire)	2014
Rugby World Cup	Various – OT/Anfield (countries with links to region)	2015
European Eventing Championships	Potential for equestrian resources in Cheshire	2015

¹³ <http://www.rlwc2013.com/> - countries include PNG, Australia and others linked to London 2012/ Oceania and PGTC

Embrace the Games: a review of Legacy Planning and Strategy in Cheshire and Warrington

SWOT analysis of ETG

Strengths and Weaknesses based on analysis of relative successes noted in the report above, N&R End of Games data and internal data supplied.

SWOT analysis of ETG group for future Legacy events			
	Strengths	Weaknesses	
	<p>Sectors key to legacy engaged in planning from early in process</p> <p>Initial dedicated resource (financial and human) to establish clear plan and framework</p> <p>Effective group to co-ordinate across sectors and areas</p> <p>Strong leadership and clear objectives</p> <p>Events provided clear advice and signposting to other organisations of the potential for legacy opportunities</p> <p>Range of activities in the programme provided high levels of public engagement and approval</p> <p>Local planning (within Districts) was able to use the framework to highlight their own priorities and interests</p>	<p>Some lack of engagement by partners reduced impacts or known implementation of the framework (eg in health)</p> <p>Timeframes didn't always match planning cycles for partners or prospective [projects]</p> <p>Lack of data and monitoring of activity in projects and evidence to support impact</p> <p>Some lack of ongoing work to support the longer term objectives and outcomes</p> <p>No dedicated resource for ongoing planning or collaborative work (loss of JP as co-ordinator for ETG planning)</p> <p>No regional plans for post 2012 legacy work to continue</p>	
	Opportunities	Threats	
	<p>Variety of national and international sporting events (cultural opportunities and others to add) which can enable longer term legacy to be established/maintained</p> <p>Ongoing national government commitment to see post Olympic legacy impacts and their evaluation/ dissemination</p> <p>Cultural Activity in the region can be enhanced with more engagement in Cheshire</p>	<p>Lack of regional forum for economics which brings sport and wider cultural sector together</p> <p>Resource constraints on local and national government</p> <p>Lack of clear commitment for specific post-Olympic developments (national and regional)</p> <p>Ongoing financial constraints on health and other agencies who may collaborate on plans</p>	