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Capital of Sport: Feasibility Study Technical Report

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Postlethwaite, Verity. 2024. "Capital of Sport: Feasibility Study Technical Report". Loughborough University.
<https://doi.org/10.17028/rd.lboro.26414008.v1>.

CAPITAL OF SPORT

A Feasibility Study

Building on Spirit of 2012's Inquiry into the Power of Events, Counsel Ltd. and Loughborough University have been testing ideas and concepts for a UK '**Capital of Sport**' event underpinned by health and wellbeing outcomes.



Foreword

In 2023 our Inquiry into the Power of Events proposed a new event that would combine best practice from both the catalytic power of events and the detailed place-based interventions like Get Out Get Active, by initiating a new 'UK City of Sport Competition' based on a model similar to UK Cities of Culture.

One of the greatest strengths of the UK City of Culture programme over the past decade has been to act as an accelerant to delivering the vision and ambitions of local places, bringing energy, significant funding and new partnerships to place-based arts and cultural activities encompassing both grassroots engagement and the best national and international art.

Each year, the UK also hosts a wide range of fantastic sports events both national and international and across a broad spectrum of team and individual pursuits.

Some of these events also seek to increase participation in physical activity, whether by inspiring people to take up a new sport, upgrading facilities or raising awareness of the local offer. Many people expect that events can and should have a 'physical activity' legacy. The evidence of sustained increases in physical activity occurring after an event is, however, mixed.

Over the past 10 years there has been an increased and positive focus on place-based models of investment to address stubborn levels of inactivity, and its impact on health inequalities. Place-based models of investment, like the Sport England Local Delivery Partnerships and Spirit's own funded Get Out Get Active (GOGA) are part of the solution but there are still far too many people that face intractable barriers to taking part. Our Inquiry concluded that a place-specific event designation may be able to act as a catalyst to delivering higher levels of physical activity and increased wellbeing.

We asked Counsel, with Loughborough, to have a look "under the bonnet" of the idea, test it with policymakers, funders, interested parties and the public to see whether it would add to the events ecosystem of the UK. I am delighted that this report sets out different models that could see physical activity integrated into a new or existing designation to bring the benefits seen by Cities of Culture to sport and physical activity. Throughout this study they were mindful of challenges faced by local authorities in terms of funding and have taken this into account when formulating their recommendations.

I want to thank Counsel and Loughborough University, especially James and Verity who have been at the helm, and all the Ideas Incubation Group and stakeholders that generously gave their time.

Ruth Hollis, CEO Spirit of 2012

Executive Summary

Underpinning considerations

The starting point of the feasibility study was the proposal from the Spirit of 2012 *Inquiry into the Power of Events*:

The creation of a UK City of Sport competition, modelled on the success of UK City of Culture with a focus on health and wellbeing

The key underpinning considerations for the study were:

1. **Readiness factors** for places in the UK to host and the prominence of the placemaking agenda to include all types of 'places' in funding and policy decisions.
2. Cost of living and **economic factors** creating challenges and opportunities around models for an effective Capital of Sport.
3. Ability to build **health and wellbeing drivers and innovation** into a viable bidding and delivery model for a Capital of Sport.
4. Opportunities and challenges to develop the event model based on **the learnings from the City of Culture model** and other iterations of this event, such as those across Europe.
5. **Stakeholder and public appetite** for a Capital of Sport.

In the initial stages of the study, the original title 'UK City of Sport' was amended by the project team to 'Capital of Sport' to reflect early feedback that the word 'city' was viewed as exclusive and may inadvertently deter non 'city' geographies to engage with this feasibility study.

Approach

Over the course of the feasibility study there the project team:

- Gathered evidence and insight from over **150 different of voices** in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales through online public polling, interviews, presentations and workshops.
- **Explored a range** of previously hosted local through to international events and festivals through documentary analysis and event attendance and observations.
- Used a **balance of evidence-based and visionary thinking** across three stages to develop event models and concepts, using an Ideas Incubation Group and working collaboratively with concurrent Spirit of 2012 strategic projects.

Findings from the initial review and consultation

The event industry in the UK is buoyant and estimated to be worth around £42billion. The feasibility study reviewed and discussed a selection of different events and festivals hosted in the UK and abroad to better understand where a 'Capital of Sport' could fit. A consultee remarked that in terms of the events market:

"There is a commissioner market, investor market, delivery market and then a whole host of beneficiaries to consider. Finding what has worked well and what these different needs are is paramount to taking things to the next level" Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023

The evidence produced from the review of previous were analysed through adopting and adapting key principles from strategic decision making (such as, PESTLE analysis) to highlight what has worked well in previous events and festivals and identifying some trends across different event concepts and models.

Snapshot of the review of events and festivals

Political considerations – an event will need 'buy-in' from different governmental organisations and agencies.

Successful place-based events have a strong political backing, an emerging trend is for regional and city-based political support to drive this beyond a 'city of', for example the Liverpool City Region, Borough of Culture.

Economic considerations – an event will need to be affordable across the whole event lifecycle i.e. feasibility, bid, preparation, hosting, legacy stages.

Funds are drawn from a range of different sources, with a growing trend to base an event on a mixed investment model, for example the Great Run events have a mixture of commercial and governmental in kind and direct economic support.

Sociological and sporting considerations – an event will need clearly defined and engaged beneficiaries in the host community, moreover for this study an event that can demonstrate a connection to health and wellbeing.

The clarity of 'who' directly benefits from an event is mixed, with events like the European City of Sport or Britain in Bloom having a clear remit to target community beneficiaries. Moreover, events such as City of Culture reference the presence of health and well-being, but few events embed it as a primary underpinning drive or outcome.

Technological considerations – an event will need a primary event operational model.

A range of legal models were used across different events, ranging from franchises to kitemarks. The longevity and legacy of events does not explicitly correlate with one dominant operational model, however a trend with ‘cities of’ or ‘places of’ is to create organizing/delivery committees within existing public infrastructure.

Legal considerations – an event will need an accountability body and clarity on who is responsible for delivering and reporting on different stages of the event.

A mixture of centralized and decentralized ways of working in relation to control and accountability, for example the European City of sport model is managed much more as decentralized model, and the pressure is on the host place to comply with regulations and secure long-lasting impacts.

Environmental considerations – an event will need to consider varying aspects of sustainability, notably environmental sustainability.

A growing trend in recent events is to promote sustainability initiatives within the event delivery, however, less evidence found on how sustainability principles were present at the feasibility, bid and planning stages.

Progressed commentary and incubating ideas

The varying evidence sources yielded a number of discussion points and ways to productively develop models and concepts for a ‘Capital of Sport’, these were collated into a series of opportunities and illustrative snapshots of evidence.

A ‘Capital of Sport’ concept has the opportunity...

- **To be a genuinely UK and geographically inclusive event.**

“the event should motivate a place to celebrate and use blue, green and grey spaces. Utilizing existing spaces lends itself to the inclusiveness that you would need to promote.” Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023

- **To find a strong, clear, positive and visionary purpose for the event.**

“the proposed ‘Capital of Sport’ should be like a living laboratory and drive future policymaking around what is achievable in and through sports, arts and cultural events.” Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023

- **To offer some different and productive to the UK event eco-system.**

Evidence and insight demonstrated that to date, events in the UK have underutilised ‘health and wellbeing outcomes’ as a key contribution of an event to hosting communities.

Evaluations of previous events and festivals reported active travel as an important tool to increase health-based event outcomes. For example, 2022 Commonwealth Games and 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships.

- **To bridge stakeholders, beneficiaries and places from across different sectors.**

“A successful ‘Capital of Sport’ will be a counterbalancing of interests, often achieved through shared responsibility around a focus outcome or beneficiary group.” Feasibility Consultee, 2023

- **To strengthen the use of health and wellbeing as an outcome of hosting an event.**

Health and wellbeing tested as the highest priority in public polling:

From 10 outcome options, 64% of respondents selected “increase levels of health and wellbeing” as the most important outcome of a major event to them.

- **To meaningfully embed and adapt to economic, environmental and social priorities for a host community.**

Green event idea tested as the most popular in public polling:

From 5 event ideas, 62% of respondents selected the “greenest” as the most appealing idea to them.



Snapshot of findings and commentary



Conclusions and where to next?

"Realising and creating a 'Capital of Sport' would require a bold pursuit for better evidence and thinking around shared cross-sector impacts of events in the UK. In this study, it is clear how a focus on health and wellbeing could coalesce event commissioners, designers, planners and host communities around a shared outcome."

Concept scenario session reflection comment, March 2024

Proposed bidding models

Three models for the creation of a 'Capital of Sport' to be realised:

- Competitive bid (one winner).
- Competitive bid (multiple winners from across the Home Nations).
- Competitive applications (multiple awardees through a clear criteria).

Proposed event concepts

Three concepts for the creation of a 'Capital of Sport' to be considered:



Enhancement of an existing event - partner with the next City of Culture to embed health and wellbeing outcomes and strengthen the contribution of sport within existing event infrastructure.



Wrap around a planned event – partner with another major event – e.g. the 2028 Men's European Football Championships – to better embed health and wellbeing outcomes for the host places.




Standalone event – design and deliver a standalone 'Capital of Sport' through a multiple winner model with a clear focus on promoting the use of events to bolster health and wellbeing outcomes in places of all shapes and sizes.

Headline recommendations

- Prospective event owner to secure early dialogue with key event partners to develop a 'Capital of Sport' to test further.
- Prioritise financial and environmental sustainability.
- Prioritise co-produced health and wellbeing approaches.
- Look to use the 'Capital of Sport' to align partners and agendas.

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To reference this document, use the following citation:

Counsel Ltd. and Loughborough University. *Capital of Sport: A Feasibility Study Technical Report*. (Loughborough University Research Repository, 2024). 10.17028/rd.lboro.26414008

Acknowledgements:

Counsel Ltd. and the Loughborough University project team would like to express thanks to Spirit of 2012 and everybody who agreed to contribute to the feasibility study.

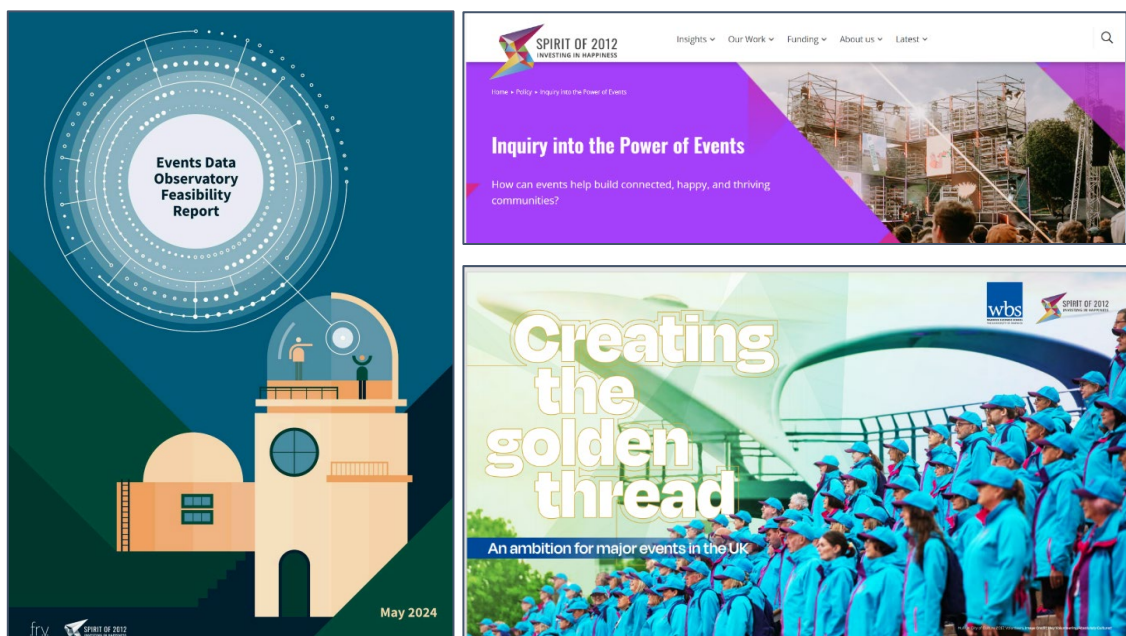
Background

Spirit of 2012 is the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy funder, established with a £47m endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund. They fund projects that help people to be creative, active and connected across the UK to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Spirit of 2012 is a spend-out trust. Their current strategy sets out an ambition to commit the remaining endowment by the end of 2023 and close in 2026.

Building on the successful completion of an eighteen-month independent inquiry - *The Inquiry into the Power of Events*¹ in 2023, Spirit of 2012 have commissioned a series of interlinked projects to consider varying aspects and ideas emanating from the inquiry. These include:

- 'Connective Tissue' piece aiming to arrive at an ecosystem for events in the UK²
- A scoping exercise on the feasibility of a 'Data Observatory' to collectivise data and evaluation from across events in the UK.³

Although these projects are being delivered by different partners, they have cross-over around the value of events in the UK and stimulating productive debate around Spirit of 2012's purpose and mission, which is unlocking and securing the role events and volunteering play in improving wellbeing for everyone through contributing to active, creative and connected communities.



¹ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/policy/inquiry/>

² <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/insights/creating-the-golden-thread-events-legacy/>

³ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/insights/events-data-observatory-feasibility-report-events-legacy/>

Underpinning considerations

Counsel Ltd and Loughborough University⁴ were commissioned by Spirit of 2012 in September 2023 to deliver a feasibility study for one of the central proposals from the inquiry:

The creation of a UK City of Sport competition, modelled on the success of UK City of Culture⁵ with a focus on health and wellbeing⁶

The following feasibility study technical report builds on the inquiry recommendations and evidence to explore how to implement a UK Capital of Sport competition in practice, with a focus on several key factors.

Key factors underpinning the feasibility study

1. **Readiness factors** for places in the UK to host and the prominence of the placemaking agenda to include all types of 'places' in funding and policy decisions.
2. Cost of living and **economic factors** creating challenges and opportunities around models for an effective Capital of Sport.
3. Ability to build **health and wellbeing drivers and innovation** into a viable bidding and delivery model for a Capital of Sport.
4. Opportunities and challenges to develop the event model based on **the learnings from the City of Culture model** and other iterations of this event, such as those across Europe.
5. **Stakeholder and public appetite** for a Capital of Sport.

⁴ details of the project team in Appendix 1

⁵ UK City of Culture is a UK-wide programme, developed in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The competition is run the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), inviting places across the UK to set out their vision for culture-led regeneration and takes place every four years.

⁶ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/policy/inquiry/proposals/>

The feasibility study yielded the following outputs:

- A pre-recorded slide-based webinar, July 2024.
- A web-based Executive Summary, July 2024.
- A document-based Technical Report, July 2024.
- A set of supporting data files, deposited August 2024.⁷

Development of name and scope of study

The initial title 'UK City of Sport' was amended by the project team to 'Capital of Sport' to reflect early feedback that the word 'city' was viewed as exclusive and may inadvertently deter non 'city' geographies to engage with this feasibility study.

The amendment for this study also reflects shifts in the City of Culture competition which has moved to embrace regions and joint bids, for example the 2025 competition in Bradford includes a large rural population, and there were also bids from places such as Great Yarmouth and Suffolk.

The feasibility study embraced aspirations for the event concept to go beyond large cities, i.e. opening to broader geographical areas which may not have as unifying agreed place identity.

⁷ For any additional accessibility requirements for outputs, and questions or requests about outputs and data, contact study research lead Verity Postlethwaite – v.a.postlethwaite@lboro.ac.uk

Approach

Between September 2023 and June 2024, the feasibility study was shaped by the following design principles:

1. The need to balance empirical evidence and visionary thinking.
2. The need to include a broad range of voices.
3. The need to develop detailed event concepts and models.
4. The need to co-produce the approach to complement other Spirit of 2012 strategic projects and studies.

To incorporate these design principles a national, multi-stage study was undertaken (Figure 1, page 6) using a series of desk and field-based evidence and insight gathering mechanisms.

Desk-based research

Documentary analysis, accessing secondary data from academic literature, industry reports and governmental inquiries, then primary documentary materials from event websites and media articles.

- Spirit of 2012 evidence;
- UK Government inquiries and reports;
- Event websites, reports and evaluations;
- Media articles;
- Academic literature.

Field research

Event and festival attendance and observations, across the four Home Nations and a cross-range of sporting, cultural, events themed events in the UK and abroad. Informal conversations and observations during events, attended events include:

European Association for Sport Management, September, **Belfast**.

2023 Gŵyl Wal Goch Festival for Football Lovers, October, **Cardiff**.

Power of Events evening hosted by Spirit of 201, October, **Liverpool**.

Get out Get Active Celebration, hosted by Activity Alliance, October, **Birmingham**.

Sport and Politics Research International Network (SPRING) Conference: The Politics of Sporting Mega-Events, October, **London**.

Sport for Development Coalition – Town Hall: Sport for development and major event legacy, November, **Birmingham**.

Connectivity of Events workshops hosted by Warwick Business School, November, **Edinburgh**.

Spirit of 2012's 10-year anniversary celebration, December, **London**.

Power of Sport and Physical Activity in Scotland Conference (co-hosted by Spirit of 2012), June, **Glasgow**.

Cheltenham Science Festival, June, **Cheltenham**.

Building Community Connection into Your Events hosted by the Belong Network, **online**.

Interviews, presentations and workshops⁸ with stakeholders from Spirit of 2012, Counsel Ltd. and Loughborough University groups and networks, including the:

- Ideas Incubation Group created by the project team (meetings in October 2023, February and March 2024, details of group members in Appendix 2).
- Interviews with Spirit of 2012 funded partners and network (October and November 2023).
- Spirit of 2012 staff and Policy, Impact and Influencing Committee (December 2023).
- Spirit of 2012 x Loughborough Summit hosted (March 2024).
- Spirit of 2012 hosted interactive workshop bringing the Spirit Board and senior staff together with project leads from across multiple areas (April 2024).

Online public polling survey launched March 2024 and closed June 2024, compared with the public poll conducted by Spirit of 2012 during the Inquiry into the Power of Events.⁹

Collaboration with concurrent Spirit of 2012 strategic projects.

⁸ Questions, summary of responses, extracts of discussion boards listed in Appendix 4

⁹ Questions listed in Appendix 4

Figure 1 –

Overview of Approach

KEY

Outer circle – steps in the study

Middle circle – groups and voices to consider

Inner circle – scope of geographical places



The evidence gathering yielded qualitative and quantitative textual, visual and oral data, this was analysed inductively (i.e. without a preconceived event concept or model) to produce and develop event concepts and models. The project brief was driving elements to how data was refined, for example the request to test and model based on the success of the UK City of Culture.¹⁰ All data has been anonymised and attributed to the different data collection mechanisms, further detail in the appendices outline (where permission allows) the key sources of data for this study.

The evidence was processed through the following strategic and innovation frameworks and planning tools:

- **PESTLE analysis**, a strategic framework to study external factors and environments (political, economic, sociological/sporting, technological, legal and environmental) that influence the viability of the event concept;
- **SWOT analysis and Porter's Five Forces**, a set of planning tools to identify and process the attractiveness and risks involved in the event concept;
- **Event lifecycle approach**, a chronological framework to breakdown key milestones (feasibility, bidding, preparation, hosting, legacy periods) across an event;
- **Three horizons framework**, a strategic planning tool to visualize disruptive long-term innovation projects across a mid to long-term cycle, typically around 10 years.

Beyond strategic frameworks, academic concepts, and planning tools, the feasibility study was shaped by adopting a co-produced, collaborative approach to creating, interpreting and imagining the findings from this study. More specifically, the findings and development of event concepts and models was tested and refined at multiple stages of this feasibility study. The testing and refinement included considerations for the following voices captured in Figure 1, a diagram co-produced with the ideas incubation group. Throughout the consultation over 150 voices were captured from across the UK.

Limitations and reflections on the approach

The consultation yielded a large amount of high-quality data and many original views and perspectives. However, this was also (and remains) a challenging consultation with very limited points of consensus across event attendees and wider consultees, and a range of strong, divergent views across all the topics explored. More specifically, consultees often had very different levels of knowledge – for example when testing alignment to another major event the levels of knowledge ranged from a high level of expertise and significant and direct experience, through to a very limited understanding of how an e.g. international sports event operates. This is not a problem per se but will mean that the development of a model in more detail will require a consultation process that works for multiple levels of stakeholders and one that does not exclude those with legitimate and important contributions on the basis that their prior knowledge may be limited.

¹⁰ UK City of Culture is a UK-wide programme, developed in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The competition is run the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), inviting places across the UK to set out their vision for culture-led regeneration and takes place every four years.

Findings from initial review and consultation

A review of previous event concepts and models

The event industry in the UK is estimated to be worth around £42billion and significant event-related activities can be found across the four nations of the UK. In March 2022, the Culture, Media and Sport Commons Select Committee launched the findings on an inquiry into major cultural and sporting events. A full list of the key sources of data is outlined in Appendix 3, including event and other notable strategies and policies from across the Home Nations.

In terms of a market analysis, a consultee remarked:

“There is a commissioner market, investor market, delivery market and then a whole host of beneficiaries to consider. Finding what has worked well and what these different needs are is paramount to taking things to the next level” Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023

Taking events from 2021 onwards and events that have received contributions from Spirit of 2012, these include: Coventry 2021 UK City of Culture, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Eurovision Song Contest 2023 and Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture. From the short list here, all the event concepts have different outcomes, aims, commissioners, funders, sponsors, host areas, and event beneficiaries. Moreover, the costs and models associated with bidding differ vastly. To better understand the landscape a potential ‘Capital of Sport’ could fit in, a series of previous events and campaigns were analysed, including ones that are year long programmes, franchise events, wrap around events and national campaigns. Strength, weaknesses, design detail and links to health and wellbeing were captured and summarised in the PESTLE framed table (Appendix 6).

Focusing on the following events:

UK City of Culture
European City of Sport
Borough of Culture
Birmingham 2022 Festival
Great Run events
Sport Relief

Other notable examples included in this review included:

Scottish Creative Place Awards¹¹ - Award model / accreditation model via Creative Scotland, offering awards to 3 levels of urban towns and rural villages. The model ran for 3 editions.¹²

Inspired by 2012 – Kitemark model - Accreditation / brand / kitemark model via organizing committee or event rights holder.¹³

Britain in Bloom¹⁴ - Award / accreditation model via the Royal Horticultural Society.¹⁵

Maths Year 2000¹⁶ - a government sponsored project to raise awareness of the importance of maths skills.

Year of Engineering¹⁷ – 2018 - In 2018 the Institution of Engineering and Technology joined forces with government and industry partners to give thousands of young people inspiring experiences of engineering to tackle the engineering skills gap and widen the pool of young people who join the profession.

The evidence produced from the review of previous were analysed through adopting and adapting key principles of the PESTLE process and highlighting what has worked well in previous events and identifying some trends across different event concepts and models.

Snapshot of the PESTLE review:

Political considerations – an event will need ‘buy-in’ from different governmental organisations and agencies.

Successful place-based events have a strong political backing, an emerging trend is for regional and city-based political support to drive this beyond a ‘city of’, for example the Liverpool City Region, Borough of Culture.

Economic considerations – an event will need to be affordable across the whole event lifecycle i.e. feasibility, bid, preparation, hosting, legacy stages.

Funds are drawn from a range of different sources, with a growing trend to base an event on a mixed investment model, for example the Great Run events have a mixture of commercial and governmental in kind and direct economic support.

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-16700284>

¹² <https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/archive/creative-place-awards>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspired-by-2012-brand>

¹⁴ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/britain-in-bloom>

¹⁵ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/britain-in-bloom/how-it-works>

¹⁶ <https://plus.maths.org/content/maths-year-2000-new-government-initiative>

¹⁷ <https://www.theiet.org/media/campaigns/year-of-engineering>

Sociological and sporting considerations – an event will need clearly defined and engaged beneficiaries in the host community, moreover for this study an event that can demonstrate a connection to health and wellbeing.

The clarity of 'who' directly benefits from an event is mixed, with events like the European City of Sport or Britain in Bloom having a clear remit to target community beneficiaries. Moreover, events such as City of Culture reference the presence of health and well-being, but few events embed it as a primary underpinning drive or outcome.

Technological considerations – an event will need a primary event operational model.

A range of legal models were used across different events, ranging from franchises to kitemarks. The longevity and legacy of events does not explicitly correlate with one dominant operational model, however a trend with 'cities of' or 'places of' is to create organizing/delivery committees within existing public infrastructure.

Legal considerations – an event will need an accountability body and clarity on who is responsible for delivering and reporting on different stages of the event.

A mixture of centralized and decentralized ways of working in relation to control and accountability, for example the European City of sport model is managed much more as decentralized model, and the pressure is on the host place to comply with regulations and secure long-lasting impacts.

Environmental considerations – an event will need to consider varying aspects of sustainability, notably environmental sustainability.

A growing trend in recent events is to promote sustainability initiatives within the event delivery, however, less evidence found on how sustainability principles were present at the feasibility, bid and planning stages.

Across the review, each of the events and festivals were reviewed to the extent they embedded health and wellbeing as a driver. As noted above, the findings demonstrate that previously health and wellbeing has not been the primary underpinning driver or outcome. However, there was a growing trend to including this phraseology in the event planning. Each of the events and festivals included in this review are listed below with explicit examples of using health and wellbeing:

UK City of Culture¹⁸

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing as part of a City of Culture – Bradford 2025 and relationship with Sovereign Health Care..¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-city-of-culture-2025> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

¹⁹ <https://bradford2025.co.uk/news/sovereign-health-cares-backing-boosts-bradford-2025-health-and-wellbeing-ambitions/>

European City of Sport²⁰

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing by Glasgow 2023, where ‘health and wellbeing’ was the theme for March 2023..²¹

UK Regions – Borough of Culture²²

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing during St Helens 2023 as part of the Open Grants Scheme a project was commissioned “Creative Walks for Wellbeing, a project aimed at using local green spaces and woodlands to support creativity and mental health..²³”

Birmingham 2022 Festival²⁴

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing, the evaluation surveyed people across the project around ‘wellbeing’ however, of the outcomes evaluated, health and wellbeing was not a headline outcome.

Great Run events²⁵

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing, the premise of the event is on encouraging positive physical activity and mental health gains. It is not clear to whether this is tracked to view longer-term behaviour change in participants. This is primarily delivered through partnerships e.g. partnering with the Newcastle United Foundation and healthy ageing..²⁶

Sport Relief

Explicit example of using health and wellbeing, the fundraising activities are frequently linked and themed around active activities. Plus, the campaign events showcase community and high profile projects tackling these issues.

²⁰ <https://aceseurope.eu/european-capitals-of-sport-2/> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations, press releases and interview with expert connected to ACES. Then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

²¹ <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/sport/european-capital-of-sport-2023/content-highlights> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

²² E.g. <https://sthelens.gov.uk/article/7982/Borough-of-Culture> (also present in other areas, such as London who introduced London Borough of Culture in 2016) - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases connected to St Helens 2023. Analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings. London link - <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/london-borough-culture/london-borough-culture>

²³ St Helen 2023 Borough of Culture, Interim Evaluation Report, https://boc.sthel1-prd.gosshosted.com/media/8681/St-Helens-Borough-of-Culture-2023-Evaluation-Report/pdf/St_Helens_Borough_of_Culture_2023_Evaluation_Report.pdf?m=1719485586127

²⁴ <https://www.birmingham2022.com/festival/evaluations> analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings and Spirit of 2012 funded partner interviews with direct knowledge of the festival.

²⁵ <https://www.greatrun.org/> analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

²⁶ <https://www.greatrun.org/events/great-north-10k/>

Additional trends identified in the review around health and wellbeing were:

- The use of the Office for National Statistics well-being framework to underpin, aggregate or create a baseline data set around health and well-being.²⁷ A snapshot of this embedded into an outcome of an event is in Appendix 5 which is an extract from the concurrent Spirit of 2012 strategic contract around ‘creating a golden thread.’
- The use of specialist agencies or organisations to deliver health and wellbeing programmes within or around an established event or festival, for example Great Run partnering with the Newcastle United Foundation. These types of partnerships were highlighted as being effective.

Views on the opportunities for a ‘Capital of Sport’ event

Concurrently to analysing different event lifecycles presented in the review above, the following opportunities were highlighted through initial consultation and review.

1. The opportunity to be a genuinely UK event and inclusive of all geographies

In relation to *political and legal* considerations, there was an appetite from consultees to develop a concept where the four nations of the UK were able and ready to bid to host the event. A number of conversations raised the important role Phil Redmond (Chair of Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture 2008) and Andy Burnham (in his role as Culture Secretary) had played in realising the UK City of Culture competition (late 2000s) in order for more places to experience the journey of looking to host such an experience and the potential transformational change it can bring to a place.

“...the biggest challenge is making sure that it has a genuine UK component rather than an England focus... and what defining criteria was included, such as population size, and to consider aspects like rural deprivation...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“...the kind of the diversity of geography and therefore the diversity of culture, voice and experience really kind of lends itself to actual learning... a UK approach...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“local authorities are key, if you can find a way to place an event in each of the Home Nations and ways to differentiate could increase traction...” (Feasibility Consultee, 2023)

“The structure of the bid must involve genuine place engagement throughout the decision making and implementation.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

²⁷<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/ukmeasuresofnationalwellbeing/dashboard>

Notably, a number of conversations did flag that “this type of event and concept [UK City of Sport] was considered around 2013 in the post-London conversations due to the convening power of events and enthusiasm after the Games. However, money and tangible outputs were big barriers to overcome.” The evidence from Spirit of 2012’s *Power of Events inquiry*, including public polling and focus group findings suggested that there was a public appetite for exploring a concept like this again, especially in the post-Covid-19 lockdown context which reminded a number of communities and places about the richness an event can bring.

2. The opportunity to find a strong, clear, positive and visionary purpose for the event

In relation to *sociological, environmental, and sporting* considerations, there was consensus around the need for a strong, clear, positive, and visionary purpose. The range of outputs or outcomes presented to discussants were welcomed, but many responses countered the breadth of ambition with a request to focus in on a more succinct purpose for the event.

“... because every single person, whether they are community, government organisation etc., will ask ‘what’s in it for them?’...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“It should not be an event for the sake of it... it will need genuine impact and outcome” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)


“An event should put up scaffolding around the city, then take down and the city is stronger” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“An event that can offer a coalition of action” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“...to build the structure of something like this and scale it up, it needs to sit with government... and it needs a cross department relevance...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

In the review of events, the purpose of the events all differed and were often influenced by the history and origins of the event. For example, the Great Run franchise has its origins in the late 1980s and enthusiasm for community running races. Subsequent development of the event into a place-based celebration of an urban community running race has taken place over a number of decades. Consequently, a successful ‘City of Sport’ concept must build on what purpose is important to the commissioning body and general public. To understand this further, several common outcomes and purposes of events were collated and included as a question in the public poll for this study (see Figure 2, page 15). Out of the ten options, 64% of respondents selected “increase levels of health and wellbeing” as the most important outcome of a major event to them.

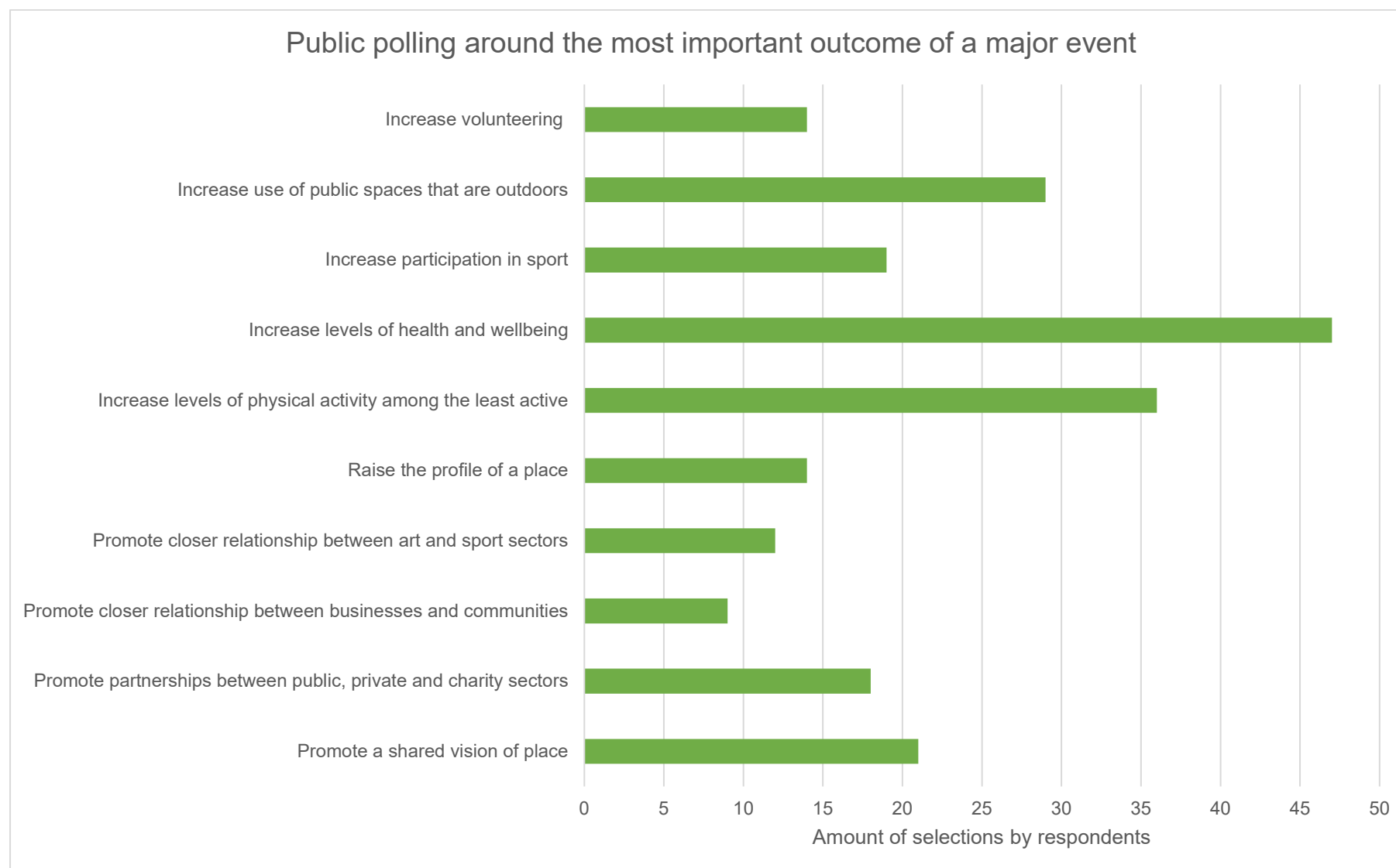
The events included in this review all implicitly or explicitly utilized health and wellbeing as a component of their event, however, the events were not underpinned with health and wellbeing as the main purpose of the event. Further to this, in recent event strategies and



evaluations of events the 'wider benefits' or purpose of events are tied to 'social impacts' rather than a core focus on health and wellbeing.

A notable shift is where an event is aligned to an international commissioner or impact framework as the United Nations Sustainable Development goals (goal 3) and the OCED impact measures for events utilize the phrase "Good Health and Wellbeing" this is a trend that will grow across the UK events sector as more places align with international governmental thinking around development and a whole-systems approach.

Figure 2



3. The opportunity to offer something different or productive to the UK event ecosystem

In relation to the **technological** considerations of the event, there was a mixture of support and concerns for the potential models for the bidding and delivery structures around the concept, most prominently this came out when discussing the name/identity of the event. Many of the discussants suggested that a strong identity and clear geographical focus would assist in creating a clear narrative for the event, therefore attracting prospective bidders, clarity of over the potential economic investment/funding, and inspiring the delivery of localised programmes.

“...I don’t like the wording capital of sport... it presumes a dominance in relation to the sport... there’s something about some way of doing this slightly differently. A [title] that doesn’t have those harsh words...”
(Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“..reading through background documents, I felt it was actually more than sports, you’ve touched on culture, the visitor economy.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“You couldn’t call us a city, a region... it would have to be a centre or something along those lines.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“If the question is, ‘should it be a city or should it be broad?’... it should be broad.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“...Stop people reinventing the wheel, needs to capture learning and sharing...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

Further to challenges and opportunities, evidence suggests that there are uncontrollable contextual and macro factors around the appetite and readiness for a commissioner to invest in creating a ‘Capital of Sport’ event, such as the turbulent political discourses around the change in UK government, the cost of living crisis, the financial sustainability of events and the environmental crisis, all of which are circulating widely throughout media and public discourses.

In relation to **political and economic** considerations, there are prominent challenges around the context of the event and timeliness of this study, including current pressures around funding (for facilities) and the cost-of-living crisis. There was consensus that the funding for such an event would be best placed from a prominent national funder, such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the four Sport Councils or The National Lottery Community Fund as it could offer an opportunity for an event to contribute to a larger policy and need in a local area i.e. health and wellbeing. Beyond these sources of funding, it has also been noted that if the selection or bidding criteria was built around aligning the event to a local and/or national priority connected to health and wellbeing then there would be a higher chance of sourcing funding from a range of different funders.

In June and July 2024, UK Sport described ‘improving health and wellbeing’ priority areas for social impact (connected to UK Sport’s *Powering Success Inspiring Impact* strategic plan 2021-2031) as:

- Mental wellbeing
 - o Mental health
 - o Resilience and self-efficacy
- Healthy lifestyles
 - o Physical health and wellbeing
 - o Healthy eating
 - o Balanced lifestyle
- Loneliness and isolation
- Volunteering
 - o Personal development
 - o Employability

These points were underpinned by the notion that an event offers a credible and authentic opportunity to “power positive change... improving health and wellbeing... from prioritizing the physical and mental wellbeing of every member of our major event community to helping other form positive relationships with physical and mental wellbeing.”²⁸

“...It [the proposed event] should be like a living laboratory of what’s possible and to drive future policymaking...and really understand what could be achieved in and through sport...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“...you might want it under the stewardship of a coalition type organisation, which would be better at mobilising the community actors who are going to get behind it rather than the civic governmental institutions... otherwise it could become more of a political manoeuvre than a citizen owned thing...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“...You need to have very clear policies and processes in terms of any corporate investment... [this proposed event] has the power to unlock sponsorship deals... but that has to be carefully negotiated with whatever local political structure there is and not an over complicated process...” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“City of Culture models and setting up temporary bodies have had varying degrees of success in retaining and securing long lasting legacy and remaining self-sufficient after the event, for example, Coventry legacy team were not financially viable.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“The future of these types of competitions will need the Local Authority to be part of every bid and a minimum viable population for a place to successfully host.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

²⁸ UK Sport, *Powering Success Inspiring Impact*

“There is a need for this to have a cross-government appeal.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“It will be a counterbalancing of interests, often achieved through shared responsibility around a focus outcome or beneficiary group.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

The project identified frequent points of tension between the sport and physical activity, arts and culture sectors when it came to discussing shared events and spaces. In one sense, this was not surprising given well known points of disagreement and differences in ways of working. However, this remains disappointing and is a challenge that will need to be addressed if a genuinely cross sector, collaborative ‘Capital of Sport’ is to become a reality. This further compounds the wider challenge across this project in finding points of commonality and consensus – within sectors there remain strong and divergent views about the way forward and this is even more the case when attempting to build a model that would work across different sectors.

4. The opportunity to bridge stakeholders, beneficiaries and places in a sustainable and embedded manner

Building on the recommendation from the UK Government’s Culture Media and Sport Select Committee recommendation that:

“The Government must be clear about what it is trying to achieve through major events and how they fit with wider policy priorities, and then to embed that vision through long-term planning and resourcing.” (Recommendation from the DCMS Inquiry into major cultural and sporting events, March 2022)

Plus, the strong findings from other Spirit of 2012 inquiry, projects and evidence, notably the ‘Connective Tissue’ (now released as a Creating the Golden Thread Report) recommendation to find shared outcomes from events and the data observatory feasibility study who both noted ways to aggregate events data in a more cross-sector manner.²⁹ In conversations across this study, many voices commented on the need to find an equitable model for bidding and concepts for the event that resonated with policy needs, community needs and shared priorities across sectors. A trend in comments was around the *environment* and the opportunity to make the ‘Capital of Sport’ event financially and environmentally sustainable.

“...is it legacy or is it change, transformation... there is a need to make things more sustainable and make the environment one of the big criteria.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“... it would have to be an approach to celebrating and activation of blue, green, and grey spaces...utilising those spaces and that lends itself to the geographical inclusiveness that you would need to promote.. cost is such a

²⁹ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/policy/inquiry/>

barrier... further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

*“...I would use the principle of sustainability very strongly... in the bid, because they change people’s attitudes through the process of applying...”
(Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)*

“Also, thinking about the risk of negative publicity for a city of sport during the cost of living crisis etc..” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“The general public’s view is inevitably influenced by the financial position and use of public funds, for example the media discourse around Birmingham City Council and financial hardship immediately after hosting the Commonwealth Games. The use of natural assets and transformation of existing infrastructure is key in the current climate.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

“A lot of existing elite events are built around the most powerful and privileged, this type of event needs to challenge and make a genuine shift towards being more equitable. Equity in the design, design making, delivery and securing long-lasting impact.” (Feasibility Study Consultee, 2023)

Progressed commentary and incubated ideas

In the next phase of the feasibility study, bidding models and event concepts were prepared and tested in a series of field-based exercises. For example, the virtual whiteboard (figure 3) of comments and ideas was gathered during a presentation of interim findings to Spirit of 2012 staff and board members.

Figure 3 – example of discussions around model and concept development



The following models and concepts were tested.

Three models for the creation of a 'Capital of Sport' to be tested and refined:

1. Competitive bid (one winner).
2. Competitive bid (multiple winners).
3. Competitive applications, against stringent criteria but not strictly limited to one or a smaller number.



Three concepts for a 'Capital of Sport' event to be progressed and refined:

1. **Enhancement of an existing event** - partner with the next City of Culture to embed health and wellbeing outcomes and strengthen the contribution of sport.
2. **Wrap around a planned event** – partner with another major event – e.g. the 2028 Men's European Football Championships – to better embed health and wellbeing outcomes for the host places.
3. **Standalone event** – design and deliver a standalone Capital of Sport through a multiple winner model with a clear focus on promoting the use of events to bolster health and wellbeing outcomes in places.

The initial building of these models and concepts emanated from the Ideas Incubation Group (Figure 4, overleaf) and questions or examples raised throughout the discussions.

Figure 4 – snapshot of ideas and questions raised during the Ideas Incubation group second workshop



Commentary around the progressing the model and concept

The concept of a 'Capital of Sport' can work well in various locations. This could be a single site or anchored project, operate across multiple sites (potentially aligned to another event) or operate in a larger number of locations with an 'accreditation' type model. There was a strong desire from consultees to ensure a level playing field, as far as possible and to avoid skewing the award of such a status/event to the 'usual suspects'.

Sustainability is a vital concern in designing the 'Capital of Sport'. This relates both to economic and financial responsibility and ensuring that 'big spending' bids are not unduly favoured but in particular to environmental sustainability where the use of existing assets, renewal and increased accessibility and creative approaches to ensuring a low environmental impact 'Capital of Sport' should be prominent criteria in the bid/award process.

There is considerable potential for health and wellbeing to form a key part of a 'Capital of Sport'. The evidence shows us that a 'one size fits all approach', or pre-determining the nature of health and wellbeing drivers and outcomes before location(s) and model(s) are decided upon is challenging. The specifics of a health and wellbeing focus and legacy will need to be designed and implemented in partnership with local community groups, in location. Further, public health strategies differ markedly by area (and differ further still within the context of the devolved nations). To be a success, we believe that alignment to or at least some acknowledgment of the relevant strategic health context and needs is vital – this must be built into the delivery specifics of the project and cannot be entirely decided at central level.

Figure 5 – photograph from the Loughborough University x Spirit of 2012 Summit³⁰



³⁰ <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise-health-sciences/news/2024/spirit-of-2012-summit/>

Across a number of discussions, a series of creative ideas were suggested with a view to developing the original UK 'Capital of Sport' proposal. These have been adapted and grouped below. For example:

- **Make this the youngest legacy of any major event:** Partnering with antenatal and neonatal services to deliver a very early intervention health and wellbeing focus to create the world's youngest health and wellbeing policy legacy;
- **Make this the friendliest major event this country has ever hosted:** Combatting loneliness, making this the 'friendliest' event of national significance ever hosted in the UK with a structured programme of befriending, bringing together local schools, health providers, existing community infrastructure and employers to bring the event into every home;
- **Make lasting memories and revisit old ones:** Partner with Sporting Memories and similar organisations in the chosen location(s) to promote working with people living with dementia and other long term conditions;
- **Greenest:** help to make this the greenest major event the UK has ever hosted. There are various partnerships available, but the recent release of the Outdoors For All: A manifesto for the outdoor sector provides an excellent starting point for further discussion;
- **Inspire across generations:** Promote the inter-generational elements of 'Capital of Sport' by co-locating events as part of the programme e.g. school/nursery sport days and similar in long term care settings.

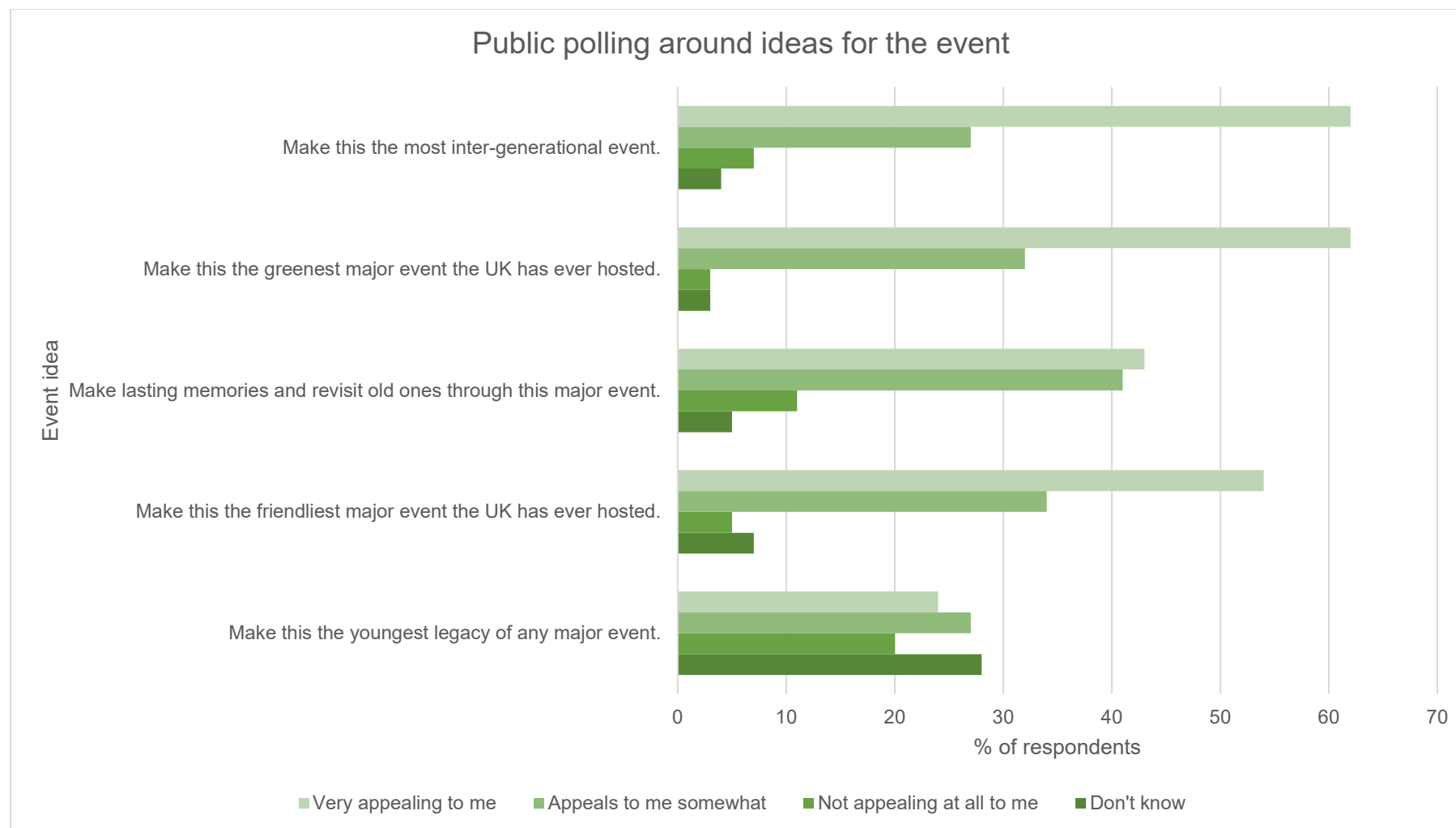
Figure 6 – photograph from the Loughborough University x Spirit of 2012 Summit³¹



³¹ <https://www.buzzsprout.com/411622/15044613>

All of these ideas have tested positively, with consultees identifying benefits of them all. The public polling further validated this, with the inter-generational, greenest and friendliest ideas testing as the most appealing.

Figure 7



Commentary around economic factors

Cost of living and economic factors creating challenges and opportunities around models for an effective Capital of Sport

The cost of living crisis, although inflation is easing and some early signs of consumer pressures reducing, featured very prominently as a concern from consultees and throughout the evidence gathered. This coupled with a UK in a period of poor public finances, relatively low growth and recession (the UK was formally in recession at points during the consultation process) and political turbulence (a UK General Election took place during this feasibility study) led to a degree of scepticism from some consultees – not about the viability of the project (the large majority felt it to be viable) but questioned how politically attractive this would be and how ‘sellable’ the event would be to commissioners and key stakeholders.

The context in which this event is being scoped is clearly important, however:

- With economic modelling and data, it is perfectly possible to demonstrate a ‘value add’ case to hosts, particularly where the focus can be on better using what already exists;
- The cost of living pressures are, it is hoped, easing;
- This report offers various delivery and bidding models which can reduce costs and mitigate risks significantly;
- After the formal consultation closed, but before the final sign off of this report, the UK Government changed following the July 2024 General Election. Whilst at the time of writing it was far too early to make any major judgement on this in relation to this project, it will undoubtedly alter the political context and potentially present opportunities;
- The evidence around costs of events to the taxpayer and return on investment continue to report positive impacts, such as recent evaluation on the Birmingham Festival 2022³² an UK Sport report on impact of events..³³

³² <https://www.birmingham2022.com/festival/evaluations>

³³ <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2023/01/12/new-report-reveals-economic-and-social-benefits-of-the-uk-hosting-sporting-events>

Commentary around health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing drivers and innovation around building this into a Capital of Sport model

There is clear enthusiasm for this concept, and certainly more enthusiasm than there would be for another event predicated heavily on a physical activity participation legacy. Spirit of 2012 has particular experience and strengths in commissioning successful programmes in this area (for example the Get Out Get Active programme³⁴) and, in particular, in successfully gathering and harnessing community preferences and needs. The development of a co-produced local health and wellbeing component should be a bid/award requirement. This advice and expertise is invaluable and should be utilised during the early stage scoping of a 'Capital of Sport', as far as this is possible.

Examples where partners are currently commissioning such local activities include the following range of activities or interventions building health and wellbeing as a driver into place-based transformation and development.

Commissioned projects and partnerships, such as:

- World Health Organization, Healthy Cities Network, the approach seeks to put health high on the political and social agenda of cities and to build a strong movement for public health at the local level. It strongly emphasizes equity, participatory governance and solidarity, intersectoral collaboration and action to address the determinants of health..³⁵
- European Commission, European Week of Sport, each year the European Week of Sport promotes more active, healthier lifestyles to millions of people in Europe and beyond..³⁶
- StreetGames Doorstep Sport initiative, At the core of Doorstep Sport is the provision of accessible and affordable opportunities for young people to take part in informal sport within their local community through vibrant, varied, fun and sociable sessions. Effective Doorstep Sport delivery has a strong emphasis on youth leadership, offers personal development opportunities and encourages lifelong participation..³⁷
- Laureus Sport Model Cities programme, 2024 marks the 10TH anniversary of the establishment of 'Sport for Good Cities'. The concept originated from Laureus Sport for Good's capacity as a convening partner; bringing together social programmes working in the same areas of a city with a view to making a positive impact on young people's lives..³⁸
- Loughborough Town Deal, working in partnership with local communities, the Active Healthy Living Project will empower residents to identify and address key barriers to engaging in physical activity, helping Loughborough to become a national leader in active healthy living..³⁹
- Sport England, Place Partnerships, in order to focus our investment and resources on the communities that need it most, we're significantly increasing the number of places across England that we partner with..⁴⁰

³⁴ <http://www.getoutgetactive.co.uk/>

³⁵ <https://www.who.int/europe/groups/who-european-healthy-cities-network>

³⁶ <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/european-week-of-sport>

³⁷ <https://www.streetgames.org/what-we-do/about-doorstep-sport/>

³⁸ <https://www.laureus.com/modelcity>

³⁹ <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/healthy-innovative/active-living/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/place-partnerships>

- Arts Council, Creative People, Getting involved in creative activities in communities reduces loneliness, supports physical and mental health and wellbeing, sustains older people and helps to build and strengthen social ties. People everywhere tell us how much they value opportunities to develop and express their creativity, both on their own and with others.⁴¹
- International Olympic Committee, Olympism 365, The IOC is collaborating with sport and health stakeholders to strengthen the contribution of sport and Olympism to creating healthy and active communities. This includes increasing people's access to safe, inclusive and health-promoting sports participation opportunities to improve their physical, mental and social health, while also supporting them to build positive social connections in and through sport.⁴²

Further to examples of what works listed above, this feasibility study supports the proposals made in the other Spirit of 2012 strategic commissions around measuring and joining up measures around health and wellbeing benefits. An extract of the Creating Golder Thread in Appendix 5 offers a snapshot of how this could be achieved, which this report fully supports.⁴³

⁴¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/outcomes>

⁴² <https://olympics.com/ioc/olympism365/sport-health-active-communities>

⁴³ <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/insights/creating-the-golden-thread-events-legacy/>

Proposed bidding models

Readiness factors for places in the UK to host such events, and the prominence of the placemaking agenda to include all types of 'places' in funding and policy decisions are both important in determining the suitability and feasibility of areas to act as 'hosts'. The bidding models can be used in different ways to mitigate some of the risk that a more diverse range of areas – particularly those with the most acute financial challenges and the most limited experience of bidding for projects of this nature do not feel that this is 'for them' or represents an acceptable investment – i.e. by designing these processes properly, they can be inclusive and enabling rather than exclusive..

The three delivery models being proposed all offer different levels of requirement in relation to the level of readiness required.

We have developed and tested various 'bidding models' through this study – the mechanisms by which the status of a 'Capital of Sport' could be awarded to a single or several locations. We have refined this list down to the three most viable models, each of which is outlined below with pros and cons as well as wider observations.

The three models outlined are:

- A competitive bidding process with a single winner;
- A competitive bidding process, but with multiple winners;
- A competitive application process, with outlined standards but awards judged on meeting criteria rather than locations competing against each other.

Model 1 – competitive bid (single winner), e.g. every 4 years, replicate the City of Culture infrastructure and examples.

This model was the most familiar to consultees and has been used in various projects over a long period of time, both within the sport and physical activity sector and across other high profile programmes including the City of Culture.

There are many advantages to this model. It is clear and well understood and produces a decisive outcome. There are successful precedents in using this model and we know that having a single winner can be seen to bring particular credibility and a ‘special’ status. Even where bids are unsuccessful, then there can be real benefits. The process can be instrumental in bringing people and organisations around the table, it can promote better cross sector working (which in the best examples, continues long beyond the process) and it can drive a comprehensive mapping of local assets and the development of an investment case which can be used for other projects.

Nevertheless, this model carries risks. For one winner, there can be many losers⁴⁴ – this can potentially breed resentment and can also be off putting for locations to bid in the first place. These processes can be expensive, with reports that the cost of bidding to host the UK City of Culture can range from £50,000 to over £1 million as bids pay for research, consultancy support, community engagement, marketing, and testing of ideas. We are concerned that in the current political and economic climate, that not only could this model act as barrier to locations wishing to bid (particularly those in areas with the most acute financial challenges) but also could further exacerbate divides within the country and across locations.

⁴⁴ Although examples were found, such as Paisley, where the ‘loss’ of a City of Culture bid resulted in significant impacts and momentum to the local area. More detail in the Future Paisley pages which state “Future Paisley aims to build on the work done during Paisley’s bid to be UK City of Culture 2021, which saw us become the first town to ever reach the competition’s shortlist, generated UK-wide and international profile, and helped transform the town’s reputation.”
<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/futurepaisley>

Model 2 – competitive bid (multiple winners) every 4 years, transform to include multiple winners based on differentiators such as per Home Nation or per size category (city, town, village)

To mitigate some of the risks identified above, a degree of compromise could be applied – retaining the competitive element of the process but making awards to more than one location. This can spread the benefits for ‘winners’ (as well as, it is hoped, delivering benefit even in unsuccessful locations). A decision would be required on ‘how many’ – and on the categorisation of ‘winners’ – this could be for example on a size of location (city/town/village, though this did not test well with consultees). A more viable option would be to award, for example one per home nation. To reflect population size, more than one award or one award per region could be made in England.

The principal disadvantage of this model are that:

- (i) the decision on where/how many builds in not only another decision to be made, but carries risk of alienation and disagreement about how to make this fair,
- (ii) multiple winners do not offer as decisive and clear a result,
- (iii) a risk that rather than benefits being shared, they would be (or be perceived to be) reduced or diluted. Funding could potentially be more stretched as resources are finite and remain under pressure – and a more decentralised model would likely require additional local or commercial investment alongside any funds that could be awarded from a national organisation.

Model 3 – competitive application (multiple winners, but judged against an objective standard not in competition with other places) every 4 years, if a place meets a threshold then they are awarded a status and potential extra recognition / status. This *could* be capped at an agreed number (e.g. top 5/10) but this may not be necessary.

This model would mean that several locations could benefit - the risk of 'losing' is significantly reduced and the bidding process, if applicants are initially unsuccessful could stimulate a process of challenge and improvement in local areas. The benefits of bidding – collaborative working, making an investment case and understanding local assets could be multiplied across areas. The focus could be on raising standards in many places, over an agreed period of time. This approach can broaden horizons and connections between places, as well as within places and encourage a sustainable approach to adding value towards what is already there in terms of sport, physical activity and wellbeing.

The principal downside to this model is that it potentially undermines the 'special' status of there being one (or a small number of) winners. The standards would have to be developed and agreed – which includes an element of subjectivity and therefore potential disagreement, though this would apply in reality to any new bidding process. Moves away from a cash injection and one off nature of events. There is a risk, albeit one that should be very manageable, that no/few areas reach the required standard. There would be more work to do to create meaningful, shared metrics due to decentralisation.

In designing the award criteria, we have identified the potential for a 'Gold, Silver and Bronze' style model, with a clear improvement pathway possible between these levels.

Alongside the benefit of building on 'what is there', there is evidence that this third model could best support the delivery of a sustainable health and wellbeing legacy – a key driver for the initial recommendation to investigate the feasibility of a 'City of Sport'. Not least would this allow such a legacy to potentially develop across more locations, it is also reflective of the very locally specific drivers at play in relation to health and wellbeing and would allow locations to shape their 'bids' accordingly, rather than enter into a more binary competitive process against other areas. In addition, 'competing' to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and communities may not be considered entirely appropriate – this could be a shared endeavour with a focus on making lives better in as many places as possible.

Which model works best?

The answer to this lies in which event concept (three principal concepts are presented in this report) is chosen.

Concept	Most appropriate bidding model and scale	Notes
Concept A: align to City of Culture (i.e. enhancement of an existing event)	Model 1 At a city or region scale	(note: the bidding process will likely already have happened – driven by the City of Culture award)
Concept B: work with international sporting event (i.e. wrap around a planned event)	Model 2 At a town, city or region scale	
Concept C: standalone event	Model 3, would work with model 2 and 3 At a local, town or region scale	(note: this would also apply and work well with a 'year of' or similar award)

The concepts and models are not mutually exclusive and varying combinations of bidding and concepts could be realised.

Proposed event concepts

Concept A – enhancement of an existing event - partner with the next City of Culture to embed health and wellbeing outcomes and strengthen the contribution of sport.

The concept tested was an addition to the existing City of Culture event life cycle and infrastructure to more substantively include health and wellbeing (i.e. sport and physical activity) elements. Operationally, utilize the bidding cycle for the 2029 (i.e. next) City of Culture to pilot and test this addition in collaboration with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and potential bidding areas.

Building on the current infrastructure (including the use of bidding model 1), event concept 1 offers an opportunity to forge innovation at a national scale underpinned by health and wellbeing learnings from both Spirit and others. For example, this could include working with City of Culture bidding teams and eventual winners for 2029 to pilot an active travel map connecting the proposed sites and facilities used the City of Culture programme, underpinned by inclusive event design principles and ways to measure City of Culture attendees travel across the year. If successful, this collaboration between the sporting and cultural event sectors could be permanently added to all future City of Culture bidding requirements.

Readiness factors required:

A range of readiness factors in relation to a capacity for cross sector working, an ability to access funds (or ready funds) and a receptiveness from local/regional stakeholders and communities will be required. However, by aligning this to the City of Culture, much of this work will either be happening anyway or, at least, economies of scale can be realised. We believe that the wider benefit of this approach also makes this concept more attractive to local stakeholders, including political leaders and budget holders. The potential for and need to work on a cross sector basis is both a pro and a con – there are many benefits of knowledge sharing, increasing capacity and bringing a diversity of perspectives and experiences. Conversely, working cross sector poses challenges as highlighted in several places throughout this report.

The leading pros to this approach:

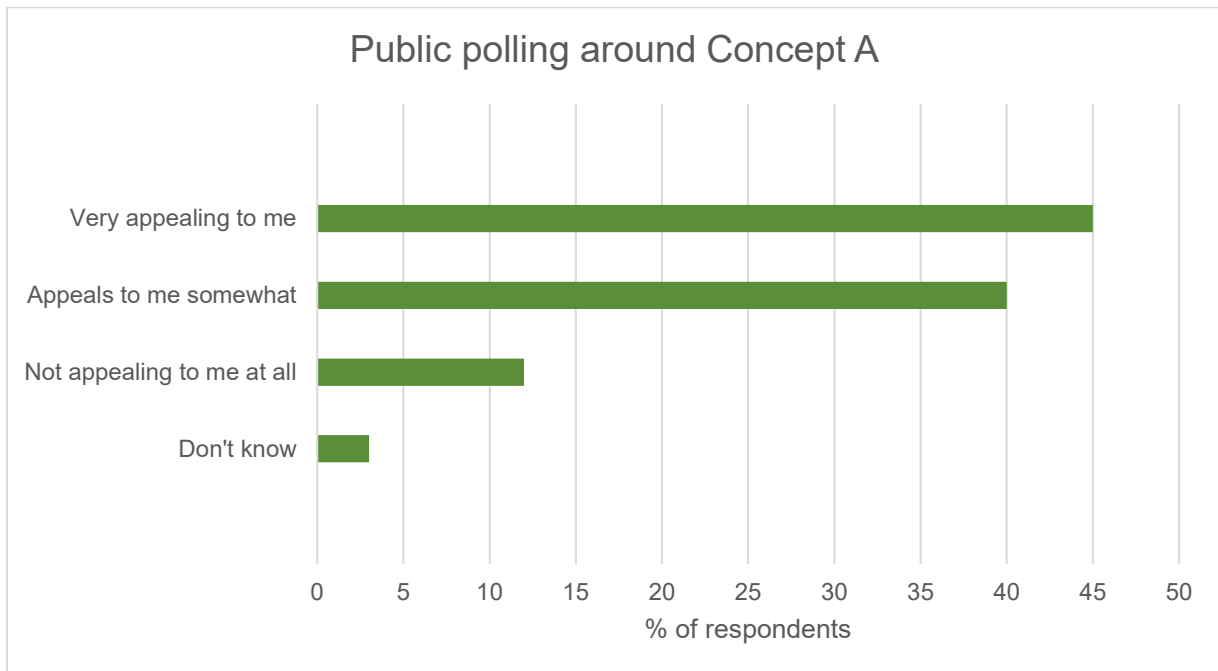
- Reduces cost and risk, allows the original 'City of Sport' objectives to thrive in a challenging external environment;
- The timescale is manageable and allows the best ideas and most effective groups enough opportunity to plan;

- This is working with an existing concept that we know works and has high levels of visibility and support.

The leading downsides to this approach:

- Reduced control over bidding process and location;
- The need to particularly ensure a strong presence for sport and physical activity to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes as part of something bigger.

Figure 8



Further to public polling, several comments were made about the potential and challenges faced in relation to concept 1, including:

Concept 1 - can see benefit and ease of doing this but don't know if it will constrain what can be possible.

I think typically the city of culture [another other events] work is important and has been introduced in varying ways but for health and wellbeing to be a substantive outcome of an event, such as a Capital of Sport, it cannot be an "addition" but rather integrated part from the offset. I feel a distinct addition would not get the attention needed or deserved and would instead be tokenistic

Concept 1 is very compelling. A diverse range of people converge over a long period of time and this would reach abroad audience as an adjunct to an event they have made a special effort to attend.

I think wrapping activity around an existing City of Culture would be the most impactful. The infrastructure investments related to a City of Culture would allow for greater value for money if they can also be used for

increasing sport and physical activity. There is also an increasing focus that sport and culture sits hand in hand.

Maybe it should be called 'City of Sport and Culture' - I don't think they are 'islands' and sport is arguably the UK's and all the home nation's most important form of culture - sport can be a portal into wider cultural pursuits and vice versa...I also think looking at the culture of sport and linking it in with wellbeing and health is an option - eg sports heritage running, biking and walking trails for example could be designed.

There are clear economies of scale if we link to the city of culture

Wellbeing is as relevant to culture as it is to sport. On the ground people see culture and sport together, the gap or separation is often in the infrastructure, funding and planning above i.e. management.

Having distinct sport model is more appealing (as extension of existing or discreet) rather than linking with art. City of culture messaging can already get confused when communicating with multiple audiences, my concern would be it weakens both messages.

Snapshot of how this could work in practice:

Feasibility findings:

- Use health and wellbeing as the underpinning driver...
- Enhancement of an existing event...
- Focus on the 'greenest' idea...
- Measures for health and wellbeing in other Spirit of 2012 projects/reports

Operationalising:

Pilot an active travel map connecting the proposed sites and facilities contributing to the City of Culture programme, underpinned by inclusive event design principles and ways to measure City of Culture attendees travel across the year.

UCI Cycling World Championships, hosted in Glasgow in 2023 Feb. 2024 reporting:

82% of spectators used a form of active travel during the event.

UNBOXED festival, hosted nationally in 2022, Dec. 2022 reporting:

StoryTrails attracted over 1.2million engagements, and contributed to 58% of overall digital

Spirit of 2012, Step Change: Working Towards an Active Society, May 2022 reporting:

"active travel is good for our health and wellbeing, as well as the environment..." - spectators, participants, workforce, volunteers

Canal and River Trust, Commonwealth Games Legacy, hosted in Birmingham in 2022, reporting:

"Birmingham 2022 had a sustainability pledge to be the greenest Games ever. Our iconic canals within Birmingham City centre helped transport people around the vibrant hub and launched journeys to other venues with 16.5 miles of canals becoming **Active Travel Routes**."

Concept B – Wrap around a planned event – partner with another major event – e.g. the 2028 Men’s European Football Championships – to better embed health and wellbeing outcomes for the host places.

The concept tested was a promotion of a shared devolved Home Nation event (i.e. x 4 hosts (plus Republic of Ireland for EURO 2028) across 10 venues). Operationally, utilize the host locations and momentum from the Men’s EUROS 2028 event lifecycle to pilot this shared event through the host governmental bodies i.e. the respective Football Associations and UEFA.

Building on the ambition by UK Sport to pursue innovation and stronger social impacts from hosting international sport events (including the development of bidding model 1 and 3), event concept 2 offers Spirit the opportunity to voice the value of a shared Home Nation event-based intervention underpinned by health and wellbeing outcomes. If successful, this model and concept could be applied to all future UK-hosted international sport events.

Readiness factors required:

Similarly to model 1, a range of readiness factors in relation to a capacity for cross sector working, an ability to access funds (or ready funds) and a receptiveness from local/regional stakeholders and communities will be required.

However, the locations are already known (and have been for some time). The uncertainty of where to locate would be removed. Strategic conversations and joint work will already be taking place or be scheduled to happen.

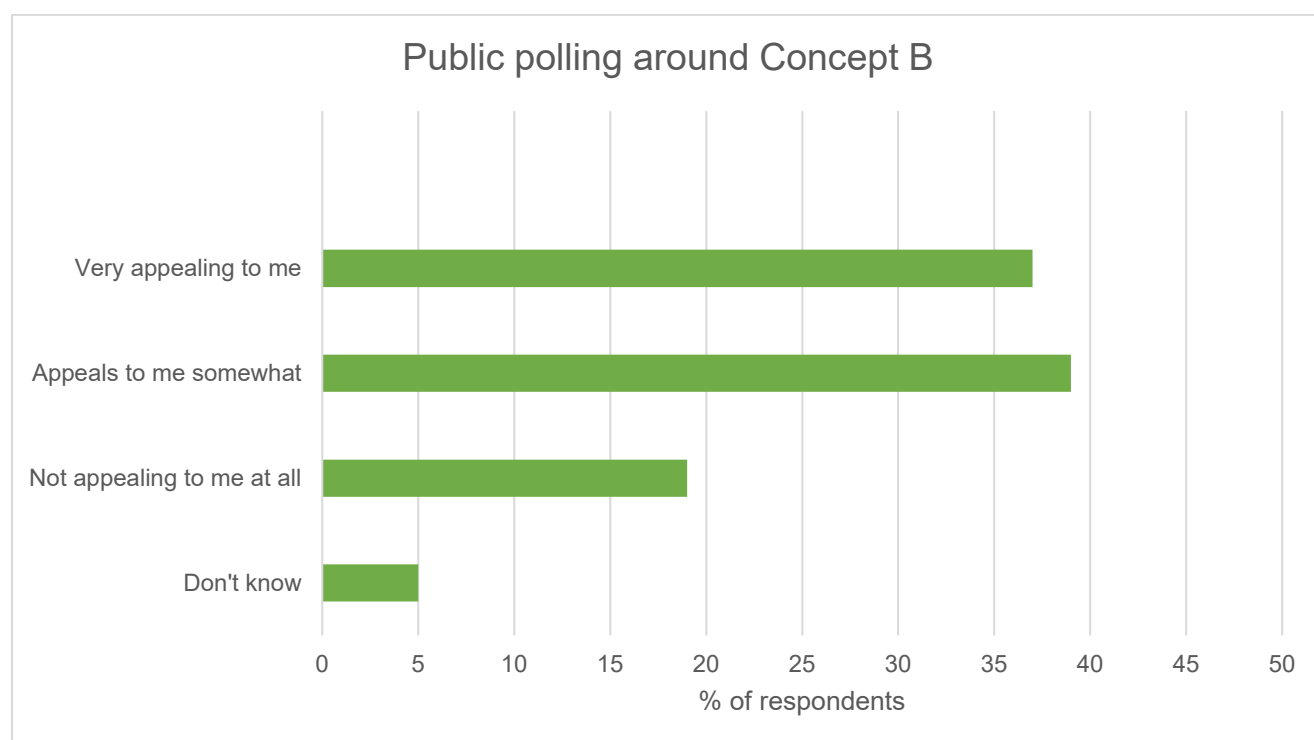
The leading pros to this approach:

- The event is across all nations as well as the Republic of Ireland and offers broad geographic coverage, making this a genuinely UK (and Irish) event;
- Whilst it is hoped that this model would not cater purely to a ‘football audience’, football at multiple levels has very extensive coverage – from grassroots clubs and community facilities, to semi professional and professional clubs
- The locations are fixed and known which allows for planning and certainty. With an added opportunity of the widespread reach and infrastructure football strategically and operationally has in the UK.
- The event will attract huge media buzz and be very high profile and could potentially achieve more total coverage and airtime if attached to a major event of this nature.

The leading downsides to this approach:

- Organising events of this scale places considerable pressure on local logistical capacity, and there is a danger that this could diminish the time and attention that could be dedicated to a Capital of Sport;
- Testing this through a major football event may distort the potential, as Men’s football is ‘saturated’. There are divergent views around this point – it could present opportunities and pressure for football to play more of a social role (though arguably the sport already has ample opportunities to do this);
- There is a perception, usually incorrect that football is awash with money and resources and this may negatively impact on perceptions of the event; ;
- Would there be international sport federation politics and regulations to negotiate, e.g. UEFA branding, sustainability and legacy policies and guidelines?

Figure 9



Further to public polling, several comments were made about the potential and challenges faced in relation to concept 2, including:

Concept 2 - again can see benefit from using PR aspects of main event but would need a separate team focussing on this - if you expected the Organizing Committees of the big event to do it, I think it risk being deprioritized or just being based on the specific sport.

I think tacking it on to other events feels a bit forced.

I worry that there is already actually the infrastructure in place and so what is needed is actually cultural and behavioural shifts. For that reason I feel that Concept 2 goes beyond this by brining meaning and purpose and connecting to people in lots of different ways.

It would be great to have a wrap around event to further engage people with larger sporting competitions and help those who may not usually attended these find further interest.

Great communications and media opportunity if an existing event's profile is leveraged to include this type of wrap around event. However, the event will not always appeal to everyone, for example, football can put people off.

Concept C - Standalone event – design and deliver a standalone Capital of Sport through a multiple winner model with a clear focus on promoting the use of events to bolster health and wellbeing outcomes in places.

The concept tested was a promotion of a standalone event for a place around the idea of a 'Year of health and wellbeing' with a very specific purpose or format, based on the learnings and success from commissioned Spirit of 2012 projects. Operationally, utilize the ongoing discussions around place-making and whole-systems thinking to pilot this idea across the four UK Sport Councils.

Building on emerging thematic collaborative working between the four UK Sport Councils (such as the recent launch of shared equality, diversity and inclusion hub online platform, Moving to Inclusion) and learnings from Spirit's cross Home Nation projects (including the use of bidding model 2), event concept 3 offers the opportunity to champion the value of a new standalone event of national significance for the UK. The concept would be underpinned by health and wellbeing outcomes and themed around something that has worked well during Spirit of 2012 commissions, such as targeting young people. If successful, this model and concept could productively disrupt the UK event ecosystem.

Readiness factors required:

This concept would require the greatest level of bespoke readiness factors. It would require each area to develop its own systems/ways of working and would likely require more investment. It would carry additional financial risk and uncertainty but would also potentially offer greater visibility and prestige for this specific event.

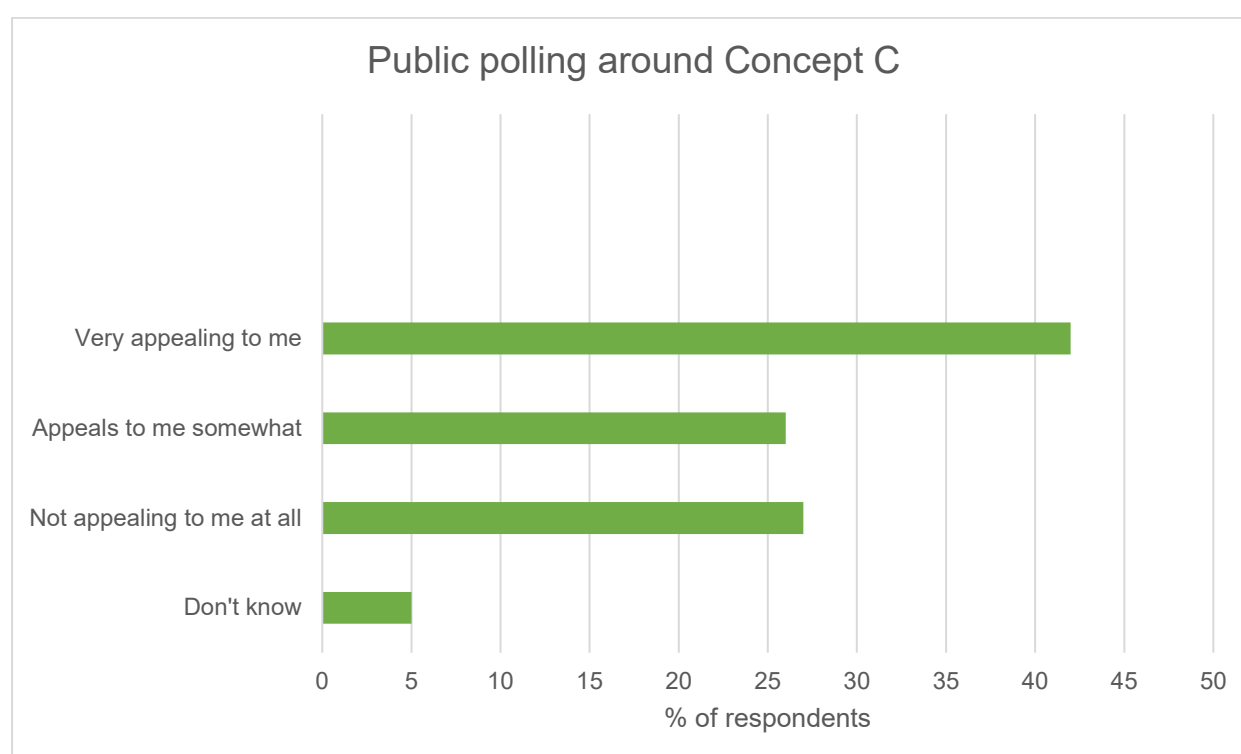
The leading pros to this approach:

- A genuinely new and fresh event and one of the first at this scale to have a genuine health and wellbeing focus;
- Maximum freedom and flexibility about bidding processes, timing and locations.

The leading downsides to this approach:

- This concept carries the highest risks and costs including the need for a specific bid process and infrastructure,
- This concept will need significant scoping for appropriate purpose, locations, and format in order to support this standalone event as opposed to enhancing an existing event.

Figure 10



Further to public polling, several comments were made about the potential and challenges faced in relation to concept 3, including:

Concept 3 - probably my favourite. I am attracted to the Britain in Bloom analogy - wouldn't it be great to see the signage of a town promoting they were part of the 2025 Year of Wellbeing!

Concept 3 probably the most appealing option, but ideally would also link to elite sport

Place based programmes have a 'feel' of being more grassroots which could really help with engagement from individuals in their communities.

All have great potential to increase awareness of positive wellbeing impacts of sport. Given the diversity of places, communities, assets, infrastructure and sports participation across the UK I suspect a 'one size fits all' approach will be less effective than something that is more 'place based'. All 3 concepts could be implemented in a way that enables local communities and assets to drive and benefit from activities.

Being part of a year of health and wellbeing is a particularly good shout, especially as London 2012 was intended to increase sport/PA participation levels in order to tackle health crises in UK

In my opinion, the place-based approach in Concept 3 is particularly appealing if local places are given the opportunity to plan and deliver events that reflect the needs of their area. This could lead to a more tailored approach which may encourage greater engagement and improvements in health outcomes.

I just think that infrastructure challenges would prove difficult in the first and third concepts and whilst highlighting problems would probably be effective if the funding isn't there to address then it would just lead to disenchantment.

A lot of potential, however concern around the amount of resource needed to create this. Could it possibly set the overall framework and let communities decide what they want to do i.e. be flexible and empowering.

Recommendations

A long lead in time to the 'Capital of Sport' offers an exciting opportunity to build on the recommendations of this report, but more significantly to build on Spirit of 2012's strong legacy, evidence base and insights – which we hope can be utilised in the period in which Spirit of 2012 is still operating. The bidding process and co-ordination, along with concept design in the short and longer term will need to be 'owned' – we believe that DCMS is the most natural home for this, working with the devolved nations, given its ownership both of the City of Culture and complementary policy areas. Whilst we note that Spirit of 2012 will no longer exist as an organisation in the latter stages of the event design and for its whole delivery (assuming a delivery timescale from approximately 2029/2030), we are firmly recommending that Spirit of 2012 are given a role and fully consulted in the early design phases.

1. For DCMS (or the overall owner, if elsewhere) to make a decision on preferred bidding model and a contingency option (supplemented by public polling data and strategy/handover sessions with Spirit);

- Our recommendation in the immediate term is to focus on alignment with another event/programme of events as the best way to secure the original ambitions of the original 'City of Sport' concept. This does not preclude exploring a standalone event now, or in future;
- At this stage, alignment with a future City of Culture appears to offer the closest alignment;
- Running a successful 'Capital of Sport', incubated within a wider event (such as City of Culture) offers an invaluable opportunity to test and refine the original concept and to develop a model that could operate on a standalone basis in future.

2. DCMS to secure early dialogue across key government departments as the event driver and (as appropriate and depending on preferred model(s) UK Sport, City of Culture stakeholders, UEFA, host city locations etc;

- To test and establish a proof of concept and/or value proposition;
- To support a fully inclusive event, ensure that all bidding processes, concepts and models are checked and challenged by high quality inclusion specialists;
- To develop a system and dialogue with Spirit of 2012 and other subject experts to support potential bidders with embedding health and wellbeing into their proposal to build capacity and streamline bidding process;
- Facilitate better learning across bidders, building on our finding that the large majority of intelligence, ideas and best practice are lost; for example, build a community of practice to bring together bidders and related organisations for events of major significance to share (as far as possible).

3. To initiate a national campaign, drawing upon the evidence of this study and related projects to socialise and publicise the concept of a 'Capital of Sport', building an inspiring vision to secure public interest and support.

- The project team strongly recommends the engagement of creative specialists at an early stage of event development. This should cover the event name, branding and identity and work closely with those responsible for a delivery strategy for the event.

4. Once an option is finalised, to conduct in location exercises co-production and consultation with community groups;

- To develop toolkits for use by community groups;
- To run/support in-location competitions to generate new ideas;
- To make available (or encourage other funders to do so) a light touch, development pot of funding which will be ringfenced for use by communities in higher levels of socio-economic deprivation **and** projects with a specific inclusion focus in relevant locations;
- To build in what works in other programmes and interventions connected to health and wellbeing, in particular around measures and benefits.

5. To address concerns around costs, cost of living, public finances and the economic outlook:

Commission in-place economic modelling to assist with building the investment case;

- This would cover: detailed asset mapping, a robust assessment of any capital and revenue costs associated with hosting, an ROI analysis based on increased visitor numbers, enhanced cross sector working, the ability to harness additional and/or pro bono support;
- Once clarity has been achieved on the way forward, to support local political leaders and stakeholders with conducting their own in location engagement programmes;
- To share Spirit learning on high quality, inclusive consultations through accessible resources;
- To provide training (or commission others to do so) for local authority officers and others on community consultation.
- Look to resource and test in an upcoming event.

6. Make intangible factors and indicators, including engendering civic pride and tackling priority health and wellbeing problems, such as loneliness, part of the bid/award process;

- Encourage bidders to include factors such as these, built on evidence drawn from qualitative engagement with communities;
- Utilize existing event strategies, strategic reports and proposed impact models to guide prospective bidders and places and what these could be and how to knowledge transfer 'what has worked well previously' in this space;
- Combining these two actions, strong recommendation to align to various community groups and providers e.g. foundations, trusts, professional teams, established facilities and institutions during the bid stage, i.e. enabling and linking local and existing infrastructure and partners already working in these spaces into the bid process.

7. Make financial and environmental sustainability key elements of the bid/award process (where this is within the control of the event owners – and to influence commissioners and to encourage the inclusion of the criteria in related bidding processes where applicable – e.g. for the City of Culture);

To give a strong focus and support to using what we already have - renewal, accessibility and improvement of existing facilities from 'hard' infrastructure (e.g. leisure facilities, stadia), to outdoor assets (new and existing walking, running and cycling trails, improving visibility of green and blue outdoor spaces in all areas). For this to be favoured in bids over building new infrastructure funded through capital budgets for the specific focus of being a 'Capital of Sport', with appropriate weighting within bids/approval processes;

- Consider outlining a spending cap to ensure parity of opportunity to bid;
- Offer different levels of expectation for different sized/resourced local authorities (and others) to ensure that larger ones cannot simply 'outbid' others;
- Develop 'twinning model' between larger/urban authorities and smaller/rural authorities;
- Provide additional support and acknowledgement through bidding for those adopting innovative environmental processes;
- Work with specialist agencies to develop a 'green kite mark' to support organisations to make this a genuinely environmentally sustainable event.

8. Make a co-produced local health and wellbeing approach, aligned to relevant strategies and based in a meaningful way on community needs and preferences part of the bid/award process;

- Spirit of 2012 to advise as part of the handover on this community consultation element and/or to commission/advise expert advisers on this;
- In depth analysis of national and/or local/regional public health strategies to be conducted by the event team to develop a detailed awareness of how a health and wellbeing legacy can meaningfully be incorporated into the event.



End of main report

Publication date: 31/07/2024



Appendices

Appendix 1 – project team

James Allen, lead for Counsel Ltd.

James is the founder and director of Counsel. He has wide ranging experience and has worked in a range of senior advisory roles in governance, communications and external affairs. He has worked in sport, in the voluntary sector, as an adviser to corporates in financial services and in a variety of non profit organisations. He has led a number of significant projects across the UK and internationally. His international experience includes working with pan European NGO groups in areas including sport and health, in co-leading a joint UK-Japanese knowledge exchange programme and in delivering political and policy elements of a civil society building programme in the former Eastern bloc, sponsored by the US Government. He worked as a Policy Adviser for a senior Cabinet Minister in the UK Government and has extensive Board experience, including as a Non Executive Director at Sport Resolutions UK, where he led the development of a new strategy and as a Trustee of the award winning Disability Sports Coach (where he was Board lead on governance). James has served as an Ambassador and Trustee for the Bristol Sport Foundation and pro bono adviser to the Community Foundation of Crystal Palace Football Club and a range of other community organisations. He is a trustee of a local Mind in Wales. He worked previously in senior roles at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) - leading work both in policy and on public services reform and as Director at the Sport and Recreation Alliance. He holds a Masters degree in Public Policy, is ICSA governance qualified and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Verity Postlethwaite, lead for Loughborough University

Verity joined Loughborough University in 2023 as part of the University's prestigious [Vice-Chancellor Independent Research Fellowship](#) scheme. Her fellowship is based within the School's Sport, Business and Society research and innovation theme. It focuses on the use of events as catalysts for social and community change in the UK, Japan, and Australia. Beyond research, Verity proactively contributes to the University's research and innovation culture, with expertise in inclusive partnership building and translating research into publicly accessible formats. She is an active contributor to vibrant Loughborough University activities and networks, including the [Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport](#), the [Loughborough University Policy Unit](#), and the [UNESCO Chair in Sport, Physical Activity and Education for Development](#). Prior to joining Loughborough University, Verity completed an undergraduate degree in Politics (University of Nottingham), a postgraduate degree in International Law, Ethics and Politics (University of Birmingham) and a doctoral study exploring the governance of the 'inspire a generation' legacy aim connected to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (University of Worcester). During her studies, Verity has cultivated opportunities to work abroad, be part of industry-based research projects and grow a network of collaborators. She has built these development and educational experiences through securing varying research, visiting fellowships and travel grants from a variety of funders including: the [Japan Society for the Promotion of Science](#), [Toshiba International Foundation](#), the [British Society for Sports History](#), and most recently through a collaborative partnership with the Spirit of 2012.

Appendix 2 – ideas incubation group

Alex Johnston, National Grant and Policy Manager, Spirit of 2012. Alex has worked at Spirit of 2012 since October 2013 to lead on the development of Spirit's first events-based programme as part of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. He joined Spirit on secondment for a year from the National Lottery Community Fund in Scotland. He's still here! Alex started his career as a History & Politics teacher before going into funding with the European Social Fund almost 20 years ago.

Borja Garcia Garcia, Reader in Sport Policy and Governance, Borja García was part of the European Commission's expert group that designed the launch of the European Week of Sport in 2015, and participated in Rijeka's 2020 European Capital of Culture programme of activities.

Caron Walpole, Senior Research Associate in Sport and Serious Youth Violence. Caron has a research interest in sport, young people and poverty. Her current role examines the use of sport as a means to prevent and reduce young people's involvement in Serious Youth Violence. This involves a focus on vulnerable young people living in areas of deprivation who are at risk of or involved in offending. She is also exploring place-based collaboration between community sport and the criminal justice sector.

Daniel Rhind, Professor of Safeguarding and Sub-Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences. Professor Daniel Rhind has expertise in safeguarding human rights in, around and through sport. He currently leads a global evaluation of FIFA Guardians and is a Director on the International Olympic Committee's Safeguarding Certificate.

Dominic Malcolm, Professor of Sociology of Sport, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University. Dominic is a sociologist broadly interested in the role and function of sport in society. He is an expert on the social significance of cricket in British society and has worked extensively on the intersection of sport, health and medicine. He is a Research Fellow of the North America Society for the Sociology of Sport and former editor of both *Soccer and Society* and the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*.

Doyoung Pyun, Senior Lecturer in Sport Management and Marketing. Dr Pyun is with School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University in the UK, where he teaches sport marketing and management to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. With over 20 years of work experience in diverse sport cultures across Europe, North America and Asia, Dr Pyun has attained recognition as a global sport marketing expert. His research contributes to advancing the understanding of consumers' cognitive and affective structures in various international sport contexts.

Emma Boggis, thought leader who has spent over twenty years working in the public and not for profit sector. Her early career started in the British Army where she had operational tours in Northern Ireland and Kosovo. After a brief spell in Management Consultancy she joined the Civil Service and worked at the Office for Standards in Education and had two spells in the Cabinet Office including as head of the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Unit, set up after London 2012 to support Lord Coe as the Prime Ministers Legacy Ambassador. Most recently Emma was Chief Executive of the Sport and Recreation Alliance. Emma was Senior Independent Director on the Board of the British Paralympic Association and a

Trustee of the National Paralympic Heritage Trust, as well as a member of the NCVOs Advisory Council and is now a member of the Board of the National Lottery Community Fund

Fehmidah Munir, Professor of Health Psychology, Fehmidah's current research focuses on the promotion of health and management of ill-health and wellbeing in occupational and community settings. In 2022, Fehmidah was integral to securing the Loughborough Town Deal grant to help build on the town's reputation for sporting excellence and hardness that knowledge for the good of the residents.

Hitesh Patel, Sport for Development Coalition, Executive Director. He joined the Coalition in 2022 after two decades working in UK Civil Service where a large part of his career focused on sport at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Notably, Hitesh led on the UK Government's support for the programme of major sports events following London 2012, including the 2013 Rugby League World Cup, 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart, 2015 Rugby World Cup, 2017 IAAF and IPC World Championships, 2019 UCI Road World Championships and UEFA Euro 2020. He also worked as Head of Music, Publishing and Copyright at DCMS and holds a number of voluntary roles including Chair of Sport 4 Life UK


James Andrew Kenyon, Senior Lecturer in Sport Management at Loughborough University. Dr James Andrew (Jamie) Kenyon is a Senior Lecturer in Sport Management. His research is broadly concerned with the strategic marketing and management of sport events and organisations, spanning community-based organisations and events (e.g., third sector sport organisations and small-scale events) through to their international counterparts (e.g., NGSOs like the IOC, and mega-events like the Olympic Games), and focusses most prominently on the various impacts and legacies of sport events.

Jennifer Wong, Project Manager Para Sport Against Stigma, Jennie is passionate about driving equity, diversity and inclusion through sport. She joined Loughborough University London in 2020 to manage the innovative Para Sport Against Stigma, a sub programme of AT2030 (a £20M initiative led by Global Disability Innovation Hub and funded by UK Aid). Her previous roles have been with the International Paralympic Committee, International Council for Sport Science and PE and Commonwealth Sport Canada

Lee Taylor PhD FACSM FECSS. Reader in Exercise and Environmental Physiology. Director of Partnerships and International Engagement. Dr Taylor is a researcher and practitioner in elite sport. His focus is predominately on protecting athlete health and performance within extreme environments (e.g., the heat). Having spent nearly three decades in this environment, he believes in the value of sport and the legacy that mega-events can leave behind for future generations. Whether that be to remain physically active or striving to be an Olympian.

Paul Downward, Professor of Economics, mainly researches on how engagement in sport through participating, volunteering and spectating improves personal, social and economic outcomes His research has been funded by a wide range of stakeholders including the DCMS, UK Sport, Sport England, The IOC, UEFA and The ECB. Paul sits on the Advisory Board for UEFA's Social Return on Investment strategic initiative and UNESCO's Expert Advisory Group on Impact Investment in Sport

Paul Lester, Research Associate Loughborough University. Paul is a Research Associate with a background in Public Health and Respiratory Physiology. Paul is currently working on a project funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) focused on identifying and addressing barriers to physical activity engagement in underserved areas and communities across Loughborough via co-production-based approaches.



Richard Giulianotti, UNESCO Chair in Sport, Physical Activity and Education for Development, and Professor of Sociology, Loughborough University. Professor II (Sociology of Sport), University of South-Eastern Norway. His main research interests are in sport, development, peace, globalization, mega-events, spectator culture, migration, policing and security, youth, crime and deviance. His research in these areas has been funded by external agencies, including the UK ESRC (8 awards) and the European Commission. Currently, as UNESCO Chair, he is working closely with UNESCO's Sport Section, and a UK representative (Vice-Chair) on UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS).

Sarah Mills, Professor of Human Geography, Loughborough University. Sarah's longstanding research interests and contributions focus on youth citizenship and volunteering. She has led several research projects related to children and young people. She sits on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's 'College of Experts' and serves on the Academic Advisory Group of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Political Literacy. Sarah leads a multi-disciplinary research cluster on "Digital Communities and Inclusion" at Loughborough University.

Appendix 3 – key sources of data

Inquiries, strategies, tools and reports

Spirit of 2012, 2023, Inquiry into the Power of Events,

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UK Sport and City of London, Impact of Major Sport Events, 2021,

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Scotland National Events Strategy, <https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/what-we-do/events>

National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030, <https://www.gov.wales/national-events-strategy-wales-2022-2030>

UK Sport Gold Framework for investing in events, <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/investing-in-events>

UK Sport Powering Success Inspiring Impact strategic plan 2021-2031

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McGillivray, David, and Daniel Turner. *Event bidding: Politics, persuasion and resistance*. Routledge, 2017.

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Roche, Maurice. "Mega-events and social change: Spectacle, legacy and public culture." In *Mega-events and social change*. Manchester University Press, 2017.

Veal, Anthony James. *Leisure, sport and tourism, politics, policy and planning*. Cabi, 2017.

Wise, Nicholas, and John Harris, eds. *Events, places and societies*. Routledge, 2019.

Academic sources – journal articles, book chapters

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Appendix 4 – overview of approach: consultees, questions, activities

Ideas Incubation Group 1 – October 2023

Agenda item 1 – Sampling and diversity of voices – 9.35 to 10.15 (40 minutes)

- Based on pages 6 and 7, virtual/in person group to have discussion on the sampling approach and visibility of the project
- Hybrid question/points of clarification
- Hybrid wrap up discussion points between virtual/in person group

Agenda item 2 – Questions and models to test – 10.20 to 11.00 (40 minutes)

- Based on page pages 8 to 12, virtual/in person group to have discussion on wording and coherency of the questions and models
- Hybrid question/points of clarification
- Hybrid wrap up discussion points between virtual/in person group

Ideas Incubation Group 2 – February 2024

Part 1, 11.00 to 12.30

Agenda item 1 – Update on the project and overview of progress since the last IIG meeting in October 2023

Agenda item 2 – Discussion around the bidding process and ownership

Part 2, 13.00 to 15.00

Agenda item 3 – Discussion of the proposed event ideas

Agenda item 4 – Discussion of health and wellbeing drivers and innovations

Agenda item 5 – Wrap up and next steps, including remaining engagement points with the IIG

Consultees and conversations – September to December 2023

1. Should this event be governed and supported by the DCMS (change from UK Gov)?
2. Should UK, sport, capital be key phrases in the title?
3. Should this be a city/town only? If not, what is the threshold for candidates?
4. Should the focus be health and wellbeing?
5. Should the competition encourage/restrict places on rejuvenating current capital/infrastructure/facilities?
6. Rank priority outcomes:
 - a. Shared vision of place
 - b. Partnership between public, private and charity sectors
 - c. Promote closer relationship between businesses and communities
 - d. Raise the profile of the a place
 - e. Increasing levels of physical activity among the least active
 - f. Increase participation in sport
 - g. Increase use of public spaces that are outdoors
 - h. Increase volunteering
7. Discuss and rank the feasibility of the following bid/awarding model:

Model 1 – competitive bid (single winner), every 4 years, replicate the City of Culture infrastructure and examples

Model 2 – competitive bid (multiple winners) every 4 years, transform to include multiple winners based on differentiators such as per Home Nation or per size category (city, town, village)

Model 3 – competitive application (multiple winners) every 4 years, if a place meets a threshold then they are awarded a status and potential extra recognition / status




Consultees, scenarios and testing – March to June 2024

Snapshot of guide from the scenario testing where groups (hypothetically representing views of the events sector, people who do not agree with publicly funding events, sport and physical activity sector, commissioners and funders) were asked to consider the following:

- Does this concept work for your assigned group?
- What are the pros/cons of the concept?
- What would persuade people to commission or engage with this concept?

Interactive session 3

Theme— discussion of the ideas from the live 'Feasibility Study for a UK Capital of Sport'
Please scribble, commentate and add post-its to this sheet.



Starters


Introduce yourself... and any connection to Spirit of 2012 and/or Loughborough University..

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

Where to next?



Overview of organizations who have been actively engaged with different activities across the feasibility study:

Active Partnerships

Activity Alliance

Belong Network, The Cohesion and Integration Network

Creative UK

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Disability Sport Wales

FRY Creative

National Paralympic Heritage Trust

Sport England

Sport for Development Coalition

Sport Wales

sportscotland

Sport Heritage

The Springboard Charity

Swim England

UK Sports Development Network

Ulster University

University of West Scotland, Centre for Culture, Sport and Events

Visit Hull

Warwick Business School

Youth Sport Trust

Public Polling – April to June 2024

Questions to ask in the feasibility study – online survey guide:

Section 1 - Please tell us about you and where you live.

Your age range:

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75+

Region you live in:

Scotland

North East

North West

Yorkshire & Humber

East Midlands

West Midlands

Wales

Eastern

London

South East

South West

Northern Ireland

Settlement type:

Large city

Small city/big town



Medium town

Small town

Rural

Do you identify as working or directly engaging in/with the sport and physical activity sector:

Yes

No

Not sure

Have you attended a sporting event hosted in the United Kingdom in the past 2 years, for example, the Commonwealth Games, the Rugby League World Cup.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Have you attended and engaged with a City of Culture activity in Derry-Londonderry, Hull or Coventry.

Yes

No

Not sure

Section 2 – Please tell us about your thoughts on the following concepts.

We have developed three concepts about what and how a Capital of Sport event could work. What do you think?

Response options:

Don't know

Strongly not appealing me

Tends to not appeal to me

Neither appealing or not to me

Tends to appeal to me

Strongly appeals to me

Concept 1 – provide a distinct addition to the existing City of Culture event, centred on a health and wellbeing activity.

For example, this could include working with City of Culture to pilot an active travel map connecting the proposed sites and facilities used the City of Culture programme.

Concept 2 – develop a shared Home Nation event to wrap around a planned international sport events.

For example, this could include working with UK Sport to pilot a health and wellbeing series of events connected to social impacts and the Women's T20 Cricket World Cup, World Team Table Tennis Championships, World Triathlon Para Cup.

Concept 3 – develop a place-based commission where a city, town, village could engage and apply to be part of a 'Year of Health and Wellbeing.'

For example, this could build on successful place-based commissions, such as Britain in Bloom, to develop infrastructure for places to celebrate, promote and capitalize on their existing infrastructure.

Open text box – any further thoughts on the concepts we've presented here.

Section 3 – Please tell us about your thoughts on the following ideas.

We have developed a series of ideas about what a Capital of Sport event could achieve, are any of these appealing to you.

Response options:

Not appealing at all to me

Somewhat appealing to me

Very appealing to me

Don't know

Q. Make this the youngest legacy of any major event.

- Q. Make this the friendliest major event the UK has ever hosted.
- Q. Make lasting memories and revisit old ones through this major event.
- Q. Make this the greenest major event the UK has ever hosted.
- Q. Make this the most inter-generational event.

Overall, what should the most important outcome of an major sport event be, rank the following statements:

- Promote a shared vision of place
- Promote partnerships between public, private and charity sectors
- Promote closer relationship between businesses and communities
- Promote closer relationship between the art and sport sectors
- Raise the profile of a place
- Increase levels of physical activity among the least active
- Increase levels of health and wellbeing
- Increase participation in sport
- Increase use of public spaces that are outdoors
- Increase volunteering


Open text box – any further thoughts on the ideas we've presented here.

Section 4 – Please tell us about your thoughts on hosting events in the United Kingdom.

In 2021, a number of people were asked the following statements. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Response options:

- Strongly disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to agree
- Strongly agree



Don't know

It would make me proud if the place where I live won the proposed Capital of Sport competition.

It would encourage more people to take up sport or get fit in my local community.

Winning the Capital of Sport competition would bring my local community together.

A Capital of Sport would be good for tourism.

A Capital of Sport would be a distraction.

I would be interested in going to events that were organized by the winning Capital of Sport.

We have developed three concepts about what and how a Capital of Sport event could work. What do you think?

Appendix 5 – snapshot health and wellbeing outcomes and measures

Contents	Foreword	Executive summary	1. Context & background	2. Creating the golden thread	3. Conclusion & recommendations	Appendices	Bibliography
Health and wellbeing							
COMMON OUTCOME AREA	OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES	ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES				
<p>Health and wellbeing: The influence a major event has on the physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing of citizens in the host city, region or nation</p> <p>Assumed levers of change: physical activity, cultural interventions for health and wellbeing, improvements to local facilities and services</p>	<p>Physical and mental health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunities for physical and mental activity Increased levels of physical activity and mental health in target groups Increased journeys taken on foot and bike Improved levels of physical health and wellbeing and a reduction in health inequalities in inactive and under-represented communities <p>Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in personal/community wellbeing Improvements in quality of life Improvements in levels of happiness Increased understanding of the role of culture/creativity in wellbeing Wellbeing strengthened across citizens, clinicians, and service providers <p>Improvements to local facilities and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved facilities and opportunities for physical activity Improved access and opportunities for active travel System-level improvements to create pathways between public health, physical activity, and activity sector organisations that influence the opportunity to be regularly active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase levels of happiness and engagement through arts and culture Increased happiness and wellbeing including for young people Attendees of open air performances gain feel-good factors from being part of a mass participation event in the heart of the community Increased confidence Increased optimism post COVID-19 Improved wellbeing Increased health and wellbeing with developed confidence and skills Cultural sector activity makes a significant contribution to the economic, environmental, social, health, and wellbeing targets for the region 	<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONS Wellbeing statistics: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing ONS Personal Measures of Wellbeing: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/personalwellbeingsurveyusersguide Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/uewmwbs Scottish National Performance Framework Health outcomes: https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/national-outcomes/health United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Indicators: https://documents.un.org/doc/asp/symbol/access?symbol=A/RES/70/1&f=pdf <p>Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONS Wellbeing survey questions Quality of life indicators WEMWERS 				

Source: <https://spiritof2012.org.uk/insights/creating-the-golden-thread-events-legacy/>

Appendix 6 – full version of the PESTLE analysis

	<u>Examples of previous hosts</u>	<u>Political</u>	<u>Economic</u>	<u>Sociological and sporting</u>	<u>Technological</u>	<u>Legal</u>	<u>Environmental</u>
<i>Detail of what was considered during the exercise</i>		<i>Buy-in from different governmental organizations and agencies</i>	<i>Affordability (to bid, to host, to maintain impacts)</i>	<i>Ability to have a clearly defined and engaged beneficiary</i> <i>Demonstrate connection to health and wellbeing</i>	<i>Primary event operational delivery model for programmes</i>	<i>Accountability body and contingency mechanism</i>	<i>Considerations around varying aspects of sustainability</i>
EVENT							
UK City of Culture⁴⁵ Year long programme	Liverpool, 2008; Derry – Londonderry, 2013; Hull, 2017; Coventry, 2021; Bradford, 2025	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political support from local and national governments can provide funding and resources for cultural events. Government policies promoting 	Indicative cost – Coventry 2021 reported as £44.5m; Bradford 2025 reported as £45m. Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting the City of Culture can stimulate 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The award can promote cultural diversity, social cohesion, and community engagement. It can showcase a city's heritage, traditions, and artistic talents, fostering pride among residents. 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology can enhance the reach and engagement of cultural events through virtual experiences, streaming, and social media. 	Competitive bid/award model via DCMS Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear legal frameworks can provide guidelines for hosting cultural events, ensuring 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability initiatives can promote eco-friendly cultural events and reduce environmental impact. Incorporating nature and outdoor venues can enhance

⁴⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-city-of-culture-2025> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

		<p>cultural exchange and tourism can boost the success of the award.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in government priorities or funding cuts may affect the financial support for the City of Culture program. Political conflicts or instability could impact the ability of cities to host cultural events. 	<p>the local economy by attracting tourists, generating jobs, and increasing revenue for businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsoring and investing in cultural events can be a way for businesses to gain exposure and support the local community. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic downturns or recessions may reduce public and private funding for cultural initiatives. 	<p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural clashes or misunderstandings may arise when hosting events that challenge traditional values or beliefs. Inclusivity and diversity may face resistance in some communities. <p>Explicit example of using health and wellbeing as part of a City of Culture – Bradford 2025 and relationship with Sovereign Health Care..⁴⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative technologies can be used to create interactive and immersive cultural experiences. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependence on technology may exclude certain segments of the population, such as those with limited digital access or skills. Privacy and security concerns related to technology can arise during the hosting of cultural events. 	<p>safety and compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual property laws can protect the rights of artists and creators. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal challenges, such as copyright disputes or event-related liabilities, can pose risks. Adherence to changing regulations, such as health and safety standards, may require ongoing adjustments. 	<p>cultural experiences.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change-related issues, such as extreme weather events, could disrupt cultural events. Environmental concerns, such as pollution or habitat destruction, may arise due to large-scale events.
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⁴⁶ <https://bradford2025.co.uk/news/sovereign-health-cares-backing-boosts-bradford-2025-health-and-wellbeing-ambitions/>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over-reliance on tourism revenue can lead to economic vulnerabilities during times of crisis. 				
European City of Sport ⁴⁷ Year long programme	Glasgow, 2003; Cardiff, 2014; Glasgow, 2023 ⁴⁸	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political support and endorsements from local and national governments can provide financial and infrastructural support for hosting sporting events. Government policies that prioritise sports and healthy living 	Indicative cost not publicly available. Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting the European City of Sport can stimulate the local economy by attracting tourists, promoting sports-related businesses, 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting sports and active lifestyles can contribute to public health and wellbeing, fostering a healthier population. Sporting events can build a sense of community, pride, and social cohesion among residents. 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology can enhance the organisation and promotion of sporting events through ticketing systems, live streaming, and virtual experiences. Innovations in sports equipment, wearables, 	Competitive bid/award model via ACES Europe Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear legal frameworks and regulations can provide guidelines for hosting sporting events, ensuring safety, and compliance. 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability initiatives can promote eco-friendly sports events and reduce the environmental impact of hosting. Incorporating green spaces and eco-conscious venues can enhance sporting experiences.

⁴⁷ <https://aceseurope.eu/european-capitals-of-sport-2/> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations, press releases and interview with expert connected to ACES. Then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

⁴⁸ <https://aceseurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CITIES-OF-SPORT-2020.pdf>

		<p>can boost the success of the European City of Sport initiative.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political changes, budget cuts, or shifting government priorities may impact funding for sports-related programs and events. Political tensions or conflicts may disrupt international sporting events and collaborations. 	<p>and generating jobs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsorships and partnerships with businesses can provide financial support and promote local enterprises. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic downturns or recessions can affect public and private funding for sports initiatives and events. Over-reliance on sports-related tourism may 	<p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance to adopting healthier lifestyles or participating in sports activities may exist in some communities. Balancing inclusivity and accessibility in sports events can be challenging, particularly for marginalised groups. <p>Explicit example of using health and wellbeing by Glasgow 2023, where 'health and wellbeing' was the theme for March 2023.⁴⁹</p>	<p>and data analytics can improve athletic performance and fan engagement.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependence on technology may exclude segments of the population without digital access or familiarity. Privacy and data security concerns related to technology can arise in the management of sports events and data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual property laws can protect the rights of sports organisations and sponsors. Decentralized delivery model and allows host places a significant amount of creative control. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal challenges, such as doping scandals or contractual disputes, can pose risks to the reputation and integrity 	<p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental concerns, such as climate change-related disruptions or ecological damage, may affect sports events. Infrastructure development for sports events may have environmental consequences if not managed sustainably.
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⁴⁹ <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/sport/european-capital-of-sport-2023/content-highlights> - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

			lead to economic vulnerabilities during crises.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to changing regulations, such as health and safety standards, may require ongoing adjustments 	
UK Regions – Borough of Culture ⁵⁰ Year long programme		Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The award of Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture was inspired by the UK City of Culture programme, which followed on from Liverpool's European 	Indicative cost-funding breakdown from initial launch of programme: Under the new 1% for Culture Programme, Liverpool City Region has become the first in the country to commit to spending the	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear vision and focus on the localised communities with a clearly defined regional reach. Embeds within existing networks and infrastructure. Weaknesses and threats:	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of existing technological and digital infrastructure e.g. borough council branding and web infrastructure. Weaknesses and threats:	Competitive bid/award model via regional governmental authority Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear to who regionally and locally is responsible for managing the bid and 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporating green spaces, such as the Creative Walks commission encourages the use of the outdoors and natural assets. Embedded and implicit notion of a circular economy approach as

⁵⁰ E.g. <https://sthelens.gov.uk/article/7982/Borough-of-Culture> (also present in other areas, such as London who introduced London Borough of Culture in 2016) - analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases connected to St Helens 2023. Analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings. London link - <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/london-borough-culture/london-borough-culture>

		<p>Capital of Culture in 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages a regional approach and engages a combined authority. The Borough of Culture was introduced by Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in 2018 to encourage and enable each Borough to deliver cultural programmes which create a lasting legacy across the whole region. 	<p>equivalent of 1% of its annual £30 million devolution funding from government to support cultural activities.⁵¹</p> <p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Helens 2023, first year to secure funding and planning around 'legacy' - It has also been the first year of the Creative St Helens Place Partnership programme (awarded from Arts Council England), aimed at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what the legacy or impact measures were, around health and wellbeing. Success factors tied to the broader agenda around the region, unclear (other than the grant programme) how local community voices shaped or influenced the design. <p>Explicit example of using health and wellbeing during St Helens 2023 as part of the Open Grants Scheme a project was commissioned "Creative Walks for Wellbeing, a project aimed at using local green spaces and woodlands to support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No explicit innovative use of technology or digital. Unclear how innovations in digital infrastructure were increasing the ability to track and evaluation impact of programmes. 	<p>programme delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established intellectual property laws can protect the rights of local delivery organisations. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear to who regionally or locally is responsible for legacy or tracking long-term impacts. 	<p>existing local infrastructure and venues utilized.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear to if there were any climate or sustainability targets.
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⁵¹ <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/st-helens-named-as-the-first-borough-of-culture-in-the-liverpool-city-region> These activities will include: £200k to support an annual Borough of Culture programme; £30k allocated for the Liverpool City Region Cultural Awards. Additional funding will be acquired for the awards through developing sponsorship opportunities; £70k allocated for the development and delivery of region wide events (themed to celebrate and highlight the city region)

		<p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively new concept as introduced in 2018. 	<p>ensuring a lasting legacy from the year and a step change in the Borough's cultural offer and capability.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding guaranteed by unique devolution commitments e.g. Liverpool commitment to spend 1% of its devolution government funding on cultural programmes. Not all regions, such as London or 	<p>creativity and mental health.⁵²</p>			
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⁵² St Helen 2023 Borough of Culture, Interim Evaluation Report, https://boc.sthel1-prd.gosshosted.com/media/8681/St-Helens-Borough-of-Culture-2023-Evaluation-Report/pdf/St_Helens_Borough_of_Culture_2023_Evaluation_Report.pdf?m=1719485586127

			Liverpool will have replicable geographic areas. A consideration would be the ability to run this in a more rural, less urban region.				
Birmingham 2022 Festival ⁵³ Wrap around programme, six months	Directly connected to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games	<p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by a consortium approach, similar to the City of Culture model. Strong buy-in from a range of local and national and international partners, such as British Council, Birmingham City Council, DCMS. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rooted in the Commonwealth 	<p>Indicative cost – “£12 million six month long celebration generously supported by a range of funders with the aim of animating the entire West Midlands with ambitious creative works.” ⁵⁵</p> <p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported economic impact in the 	<p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clearly defined and shared vision of what outcomes to monitor and evaluation: co-creation, workforce, skills development, new audiences, community, network, profile. Opportunity to replicate the design and evaluation model used in this festival. 	<p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear working relationship with the organizing committee. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear about who / how the impacts and outcomes of the programme will be secured into the long-term, e.g. has 	<p>Organizing committee / existing event model, this e.g., delivered by Birmingham CWG organizing committee</p> <p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation approach was ‘outcome based’ and based on a consortium of independent 	<p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of commissioned projects and programmes connected with the use of blue and green spaces, plus consultation acknowledged and engaged with key natural assets, such as the canal infrastructure. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p>

⁵³ <https://www.birmingham2022.com/festival/evaluations> analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings and Spirit of 2012 funded partner interviews with direct knowledge of the festival.

⁵⁵ <https://www.birmingham2022.com/festival/about>

		h Games and identified as “set out to positively disrupt the sector and region with a ‘Brummie’ narrative.” ⁵⁴	evaluation report, £100m direct economic impact (£47 from tourists) and £87m GVA impact. ⁵⁶	Weaknesses and threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was based on a city and region, not clear to if this would work with expanding to rural areas too. Explicit example of using health and wellbeing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation surveyed people across the project around ‘wellbeing’ however, of the outcomes evaluated, health and wellbeing was not a headline outcome. 	Birmingham City Council been able to build on the Festival and share / knowledge transfer.	evaluation partners. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation between the main sporting event and the festival created ‘gaps’ and missed opportunities to aggregate evaluation data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear substantive alignment or connection with the environment or sustainability principles.
Great Run events ⁵⁷ Annual events in a	Such as, Great North Run, Scottish, South, Manchester	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure support from regional and 	Indicative cost to host not publicly available. However, value of event	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A true mix of elite and grassroot participation. 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered via an economically 	Franchise event model via business, this e.g., Great Run	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The events are built on using (in an

⁵⁴ Festival Evaluation, page 6, foreword from Executive Producer, Raidene Carter.

⁵⁶ Festival Evaluation.

⁵⁷ <https://www.greatrun.org/> analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

variety of locations		<p>local governments to use infrastructure (e.g. road closure).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong brand identity with strategic officials, who see as a flagship event for areas. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear how (if at all) local or regional governments can influence or shape the Great Run planning. Currently engaged with mostly urban and city political areas. 	<p>reported in 2019⁵⁸ “Paul Foster, chief executive of The Great Run Company, said: “We’ve always known that the Great North Run is woven into the fabric of Tyneside, but this research really brings home the impact of the event on the economy, tourism and wellbeing of the region.”</p> <p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds for the events drawn from a diversity of sources, including: participant entry fees, private sponsorship (notably the 	<p>With a significant element of participation connected to individuals achieving physical activity gains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass participation data demonstrates some level of diversity, with a growth area into youth categories. Participants often running for a charitable cause and brand is associated with a ‘fundraising’ citizenry spirit. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear how diverse or local the participants in the events are. <p>Explicit example of using health and wellbeing:</p>	<p>sustainable franchise model. This is operationalized by a central team and local delivery teams.</p> <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very defined product and infrastructure, unclear to if/how this could reach other beneficiaries or be replicated into other sports, areas and events. 	<p>Strengths and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of learnings and refinement across all events. Primarily functioning as a business. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear how the Great events collaborate or contribute to the broader sporting, health or event ecosystem in the areas it is hosted. 	<p>extraordinary manner) existing infrastructure or temporary infrastructure (e.g. road systems and pop up event sign in areas).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural assets are highlighted through the physical course of the events. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commentary from voices about the t-shirts, medals and other single use plastic ‘giveaways’ during the event does not fully embed sustainability principles. Offsets have been introduced, such as an ‘opt in’ scheme around t-shirts and charitable
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⁵⁸ <https://netimesmagazine.co.uk/culture/great-north-run-brought-in-31-million-to-north-east-economy-in-2019/>

			<p>flagship sponsorship from AJ Bell) and investment, then in-kind or direct financial support from host areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to host event clearly refined into a successful franchise approach that can be transported between race areas. <p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear how (if any) additional economic impact is defined and measured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The premise of the event is on encouraging positive physical activity and mental health gains. It is not clear to whether this is tracked to view longer-term behaviour change in participants. This is primarily delivered through partnerships e.g. partnering with the Newcastle United Foundation and healthy ageing..⁵⁹ 		<p>donation to the National Trust Woodlands Appeal..⁶⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The events are 'one offs' in the calendar year and not clear how it encourages responsible citizenship around climate action etc.
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⁵⁹ <https://www.greatrun.org/events/great-north-10k/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.greatrun.org/events/great-north-10k/>

Sport Relief ⁶¹ National campaign model	National	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political support can lead to government endorsements, public funding, and favourable policies to support charitable activities like Sport Relief. Collaboration with government agencies can enhance the reach and impact of Sport Relief programs. 	Indicative cost of campaign not publicly available.	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growing awareness of social and humanitarian issues can foster empathy and support for charitable causes like Sport Relief. Sport Relief can promote social inclusion, community engagement, and healthier lifestyles through its initiatives. 	Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology can facilitate online fundraising, social media campaigns, and virtual events to reach a broader audience. Innovative digital platforms can enhance donor engagement and tracking of charitable contributions. 	Campaign model via Comic Relief	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasising sustainability and eco-friendly practices in Sport Relief events can align with broader environmental consciousness. Utilising outdoor venues or encouraging active travel to events can promote environmental responsibility.
		Weaknesses and threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in government priorities or budget allocations may affect 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic stability can lead to increased charitable donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Effective fundraising strategies can capitalise on economic prosperity to support Sport Relief's goals. 	Weaknesses and threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public scepticism about how charitable funds are used can affect trust and participation in Sport Relief activities. 	Weaknesses and threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependence on technology may exclude individuals with limited digital access or technical skills. 	Strengths and opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with relevant laws and regulations can ensure the transparency and integrity of Sport Relief's operations. Legal agreements with partners and sponsors can protect the organisation's interests. 	Weaknesses and threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental factors, such as extreme weather events or natural disasters (e.g., flooding), can

⁶¹ <https://www.comicrelief.com/sportrelief/> analysis based on the varying publicly available evaluations and press releases, then discussion in the ideas incubation group meetings.

		<p>funding for charitable organisations, including Sport Relief.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political instability or crises can divert attention and resources away from charitable causes. 	<p>Weaknesses and threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic downturns may result in reduced donations and sponsorship opportunities, making fundraising more challenging. Competition for charitable donations can intensify during economic crises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Societal divisions and controversies may influence public sentiment and support for certain charitable causes. <p>Explicit example of using health and wellbeing, the fundraising activities are frequently linked and themed around active activities. Plus, the campaign events showcase community and high profile projects tackling these issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data security and privacy concerns can impact the handling of donor information and financial transactions. 	<p>regulations, or reporting requirements can impact the administrative burden and cost of running charitable events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal challenges, such as disputes over funds or partnerships, can divert resources and attention from the charitable mission. 	<p>disrupt planned events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing environmental concerns with event logistics and resource use can be challenging.
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CAPITAL OF SPORT

A Feasibility Study

Building on Spirit of 2012's Inquiry into the Power of Events, Counsel Ltd. and Loughborough University have been testing ideas and concepts for a UK **'Capital of Sport'** event underpinned by health and wellbeing outcomes.



FOREWORD

Ruth Hollis, CEO Spirit of 2012

“We asked Counsel, with Loughborough, to have a look 'under the bonnet' of the idea, test it with policymakers, funders, interested parties and the public to see whether it would add to the events ecosystem of the UK. I am delighted that this report sets out different models that could see physical activity integrated into a new or existing designation to bring the benefits seen by Cities of Culture to sport and physical activity. Throughout this study they were mindful of challenges faced by local authorities in terms of funding and have taken this into account when formulating their recommendations.”



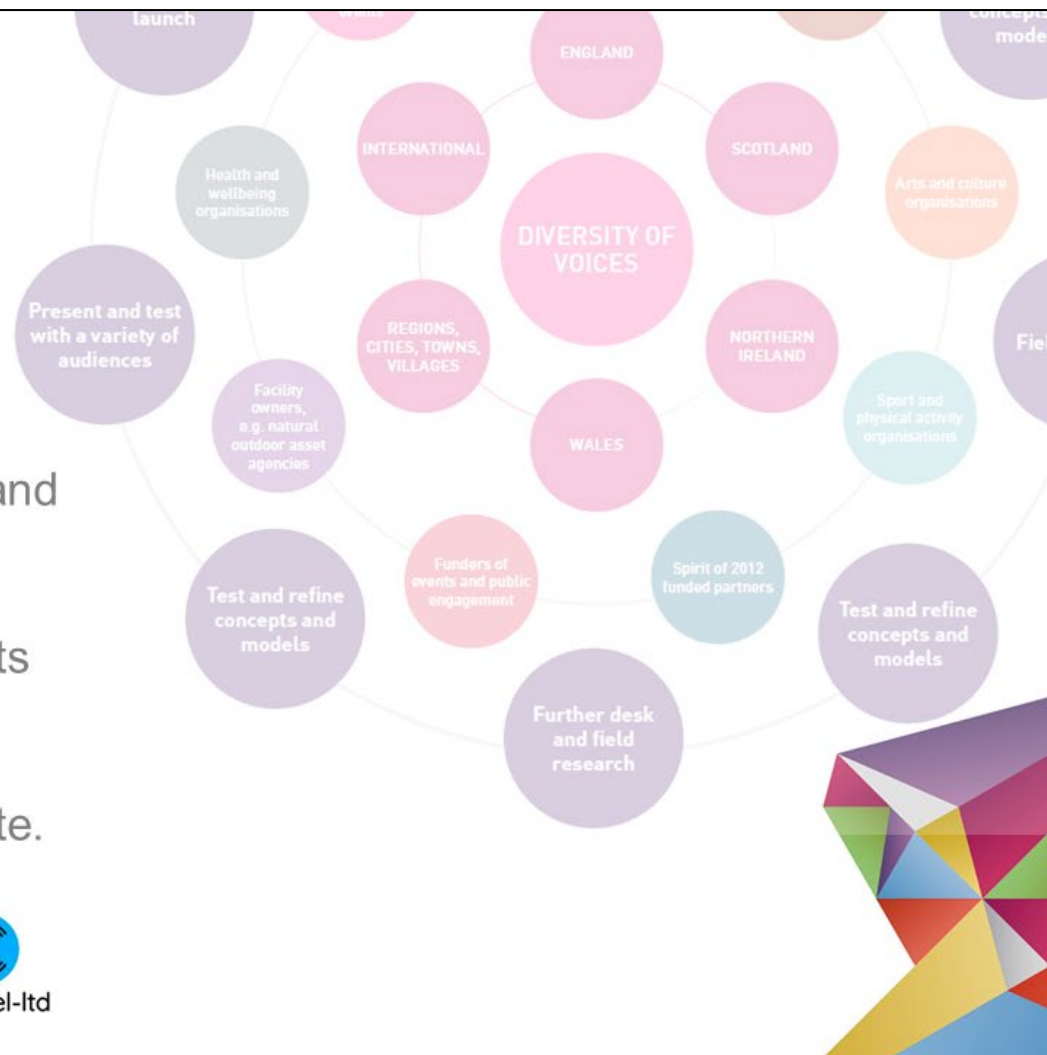
STARTING POINT

The creation of a UK City of Sport competition, modelled on the success of UK City of Culture with a focus on health and wellbeing.



KEY FACTORS

- Readiness factors.
- Economic factors.
- Health and wellbeing drivers and innovation.
- Learnings from previous events and Cities of Culture.
- Stakeholder and public appetite.



APPROACH

Over 150 voices

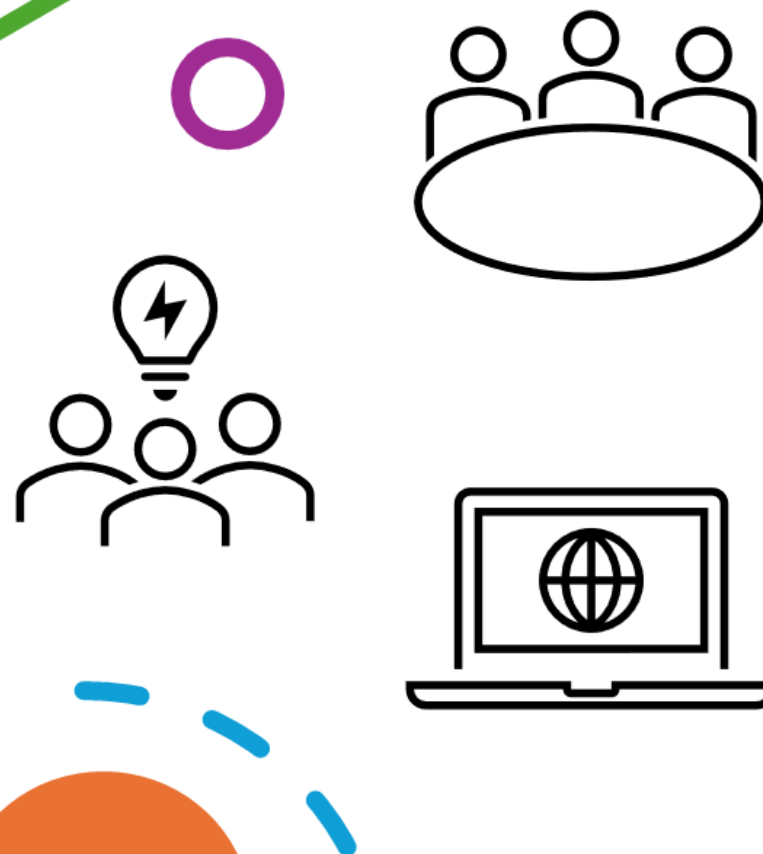
- Gathered evidence and insight from a range of voices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Broad range of examples

- Explored a range of previously hosted local through to international events and festivals.

Test and refine process

- Used a balance of evidence-based and visionary thinking across three stages to develop event models and concepts.





HEADLINE FINDINGS AND COMMENTARY

A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

**To be a genuinely UK
and geographically
inclusive event.**

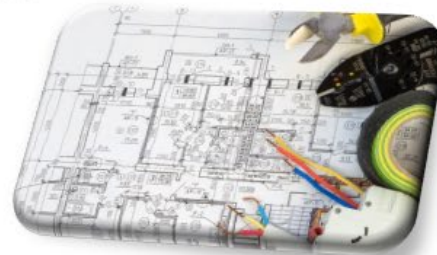


“the event should motivate a place to celebrate and use blue, green and grey spaces. Utilizing existing spaces lends itself to the inclusiveness that you would need to promote.”

Feasibility Study Consultee,
2023

A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

To find a strong, clear, positive and visionary purpose for the event.



"the proposed 'Capital of Sport' should be like a living laboratory and drive future policymaking around what is achievable in and through sports, arts and cultural events."

Feasibility Study Consultee,
2023

A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

**To offer some different
and productive to the UK
event eco-system.**



Evidence and insight demonstrated that to date, events in the UK have underutilised 'health and wellbeing outcomes' as a key contribution of an event to hosting communities.

Evaluations of previous events and festivals reported active travel as an important tool to increase health-based event outcomes. For example, 2022 Commonwealth Games and 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships.

A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

To bridge stakeholders, beneficiaries and places from across different sectors.



“A successful ‘Capital of Sport’ will be a counterbalancing of interests, often achieved through shared responsibility around a focus outcome or beneficiary group.”

Feasibility Consultee, 2023

A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

To strengthen the use of health and wellbeing as an outcome of hosting an event.



Health and wellbeing tested as the highest priority in public polling:



From 10 outcome options, 64% of respondents selected "increase levels of health and wellbeing" as the most important outcome of a major event to them.



A 'Capital of Sport' concept has the opportunity...

To meaningfully embed and adapt to economic, environmental and social priorities for a host community.



Green event idea tested as the most popular in public polling:



From 5 event ideas, 62% of respondents selected the "greenest" as the most appealing idea to them.



WHERE TO NEXT?

“Realising and creating a ‘Capital of Sport’ would require a bold pursuit for better evidence and thinking around shared cross-sector impacts of events in the UK.

In this study, it is clear how a focus on health and wellbeing could coalesce event commissioners, designers, planners and host communities around a shared outcome.”

Concept scenario session reflection comment, March 2024



HEADLINE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prospective event owner to secure early dialogue with key event partners to develop a 'Capital of Sport' to test further;
- Prioritise financial and environmental sustainability;
- Prioritise co-produced health and wellbeing approaches;
- Look to use the 'Capital of Sport' to align partners and agendas.



HEADLINE CONCLUSIONS

Three models for the creation of a 'Capital of Sport' to be realized:

- Competitive bid (one winner).
- Competitive bid (multiple winners from across the Home Nations).
- Competitive applications (multiple awardees through a clear criteria).

HEADLINE CONCLUSIONS

Three concepts for the creation of a 'Capital of Sport' to be considered:



Enhancement of an existing event - partner with the next City of Culture to embed health and wellbeing outcomes and strengthen the contribution of sport within existing event infrastructure.



Wrap around a planned event – partner with another major event – e.g. the 2028 Men's European Football Championships – to better embed health and wellbeing outcomes for the host places.



Standalone event – design and deliver a standalone 'Capital of Sport' through a multiple winner model with a clear focus on promoting the use of events to bolster health and wellbeing outcomes in places of all shapes and sizes.

CAPITAL OF SPORT

A Feasibility Study



Find out more

lboro.ac.uk/ssehs/capital-of-sport

