

Strategic HR Forum – Discussion JSCC 21st March 2012

The impact of London 2012 Olympics, on the district, staff and local resources

Why will London 2012 impact on resourcing?

The Olympic Games run from 27th July until 12th August, and the Paralympic Games from 29th August until 9th September. With the potential for a large number of staff interested in either watching the Games, attending as a spectator or volunteering (either locally or at the Olympic stadium/training grounds), there will need to be careful planning and management of annual leave requests during our peak holiday season.

Understanding the volume of annual leave requests

Many of the requests for annual leave may be absorbed through employee holiday entitlement, although as an employer we have the right to refuse requests as long as it is done so in good faith and on reasonable grounds. Where multiple holiday requests are received it is important for us to treat them fairly and consistently. As of the end February 2012 we have received a total of 46 leave requests totalling 194 days during the two weeks of the main Olympics, we have received one application for the position of games maker.

How many staff usually take annual leave in this period?

Analysis on annual leave reports for the same period for 2009, 2010 and 2011. This indicates that approximately 50% of employees take some annual leave during the last week in July and first two weeks in August.

Anticipating leave requests in 2012

We have written to Heads of Service asking them to gather information on their service regarding how many additional leave requests they anticipate - for people wanting to take to attend the Olympics as spectators, or watch the games at home. We have also asked for names of any people who have applied to volunteer at the Olympics as a Games Makers – we are currently looking at the detail of how we can support potential volunteers with their leave requests.

This will also apply to any request we may need to consider for volunteers to resource the torch procession itself, and events in Howard Park alongside that celebration; these will both further impact Community Development and Parks Team capacity.

There is an additional issue with regard to leave requests. The summer of celebrations – Queens Jubilee, through the Olympics to the Paralympics – also includes a number of other associated events; these are not only local, such as Sonisphere, with an additional draw on staff resources from licensing, enforcement, environmental health, building control and strategic partners, but also what are being called ‘parallel events’ – such as sports events, Big Lunches

– and of course national/European events, such as Wimbledon, Ascot, European Championship.

What if too many people want to take annual leave?

If we find we are expecting an unprecedented call on leave we will need to consider having some more information. To see what leave is a priority we may need to do some of the following analysis:-

- Consider whether to question people on whether they are requesting holiday to see Olympics/Paralympics or if they are requesting holiday to take time off with dependants for school holidays, or both.
- If it is just for a holiday with dependants we may ask that they try to avoid the Olympics weeks.
- Consider whether we give priority to staff requesting leave to watch Olympics over staff requesting leave for school holidays or vice versa?
- Decide whether we will we need some kind of allocation rules ie introducing an application form

Watching/Listening to Olympics at work?

As we have in the past screened major England games during the Football World Cup, we could evaluate whether this may be a good idea for London 2012. We also need to consider our position on the use of radios etc.

This will also need to be considered alongside any subsequent request we may receive for other national events such as

- The Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- European Cup June/July
- Paralympics end August/September

ALL events we are currently aware of, many of which could impact our own resources are listed on the latest version of the SAG Diary attached herewith.

Update on the torch procession

The torch procession itself and arrangements surrounding timings, route etc are still subject to strict adherence with the LOCOG confidentiality agreement.

This will take place on 8th July, coming through Letchworth on that Sunday morning – the final route and timings are yet to be confirmed, as we asked that the original route be changed to take account of a local traffic issue.

NHDC officers and statutory partners have walked the route and are in the process of confirming our traffic management plan. This will include roads where traffic will move temporarily against the normal flow, which will need to be included in a countywide Traffic Regulation Order.

Walking the route on a Sunday has also allowed us to consider the impact of the parking alongside churches, car washes and within the town centre which are 'peculiar to' Sunday only. This will allow us to plan contingency measures with the relevant agencies to reduce parking on the route, events planned for outside churches etc causing issues with crowd control.

Roads will not be subject to complete closure, but will be subject to a momentary 'rolling road closure' – Herts Constabulary will deal with the forward convoy (the sponsor vehicles) and making sure junctions are closed for the back, torch convoy to pass through. From front to back of the convoy will take around 15 minutes to pass any given point.

We are not yet aware of any staff who are to be torchbearers, but do know that some applied, as did others for the Olympic opening event 'performance'. As and when we know more, we will be able to issue details and publicise any such participation. Outlook Magazine in the summer of 2012 will run a number of 'what's on where' features focussing on the Olympics.

The DCO will be open for staff on 8th July – this is to ensure access for officers dealing with Sonisphere, the Olympic torch and any other local events. This will also allow access (should it be needed) to the emergency control centre (Committee Room 3) in case of any emergency situation which may arise. This will also mean opening closing and attendance being resourced by caretaking staff, which has already been arranged.

The centre of Letchworth is to be decorated with Olympic style bunting – Eastcheap and Leys Avenue – from May to September. This has been purchased by the Council, and put up with agreement of the LGC Heritage Foundation. Our planning dept have agreed to waive general 'advertising' consents due to the exceptional nature of this event; some other Herts authorities are currently progressing full planning permission.

We have chosen not to barrier the whole route – that is not only difficult and resource intensive, but there are simply too few barriers for hire and the cost of those which do remain is prohibitive. The same is true of large screen TVs, which bring the additional burden of exceptionally strict new H&S guidelines following an accident in Europe during a football match two years ago.

The route itself will be resourced by volunteers – we have sought the assistance of partners at the LGC Heritage Foundation and CVS, College etc. We potentially have hundreds ranging from 12 to 22 years and are working with agencies to agree their roles, areas of responsibility etc.

The volunteers will be identified by a sash which we are intending to purchase and provide as a memento for helping.

There are strict style guidelines – these enforce what you are and are not allowed to say about the Olympics, how you dress the streets, plant flowerbeds and bear logos, particularly in areas where these could be picked up by national and local media/cameras. Should anyone be planning an event or need more information, this is available through Liz Green.

Media/press releases – these are to be agreed style and template, issued by LOCOG. Sarah Dobor can advise on specifics, timing for release of information etc.

Emergency Planning

As we have so many events going on at the same time, and especially across the peak holiday period, it will be vital to test our resilience and that we are prepared in case of any emergency. A tabletop exercise is planned shortly.

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