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Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport Committee

**Major cultural and
sporting events**

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to the report*

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The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Summary

The UK has a strong reputation for hosting major events that promote our talent, culture and values around the world. In 2022, a landmark year for cultural, sporting and commemorative events in the UK, we consider the Government's role in bidding for, funding and evaluating major events.

It is indicative of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's lack of spending power that the Government could find £11 million for a potential five-nation bid to host the World Cup 2030 while DCMS's flagship cultural programme, UK City of Culture, is unable to guarantee any funding to successful applicants. During the drafting of this Report the UK-Ireland joint bid failed to proceed beyond the feasibility study, we conclude that any bid for major footballing events in the UK will be fatally undermined if the Government fails to implement the findings of the independent fan led review of football governance.

The Government and organisers have great ambitions for this year's "festival of creativity", Unboxed: Creativity in the UK, but have thus far failed to communicate a compelling vision for it to the British public, or to develop a meaningful plan for touring it internationally. With so little time to go before the festival's programme begins, we seriously question whether it will deliver return on the £120 million investment for the public purse or simply prove its sceptics right.

Digital content is vital to achieve the ambitious engagement targets set out for this year's events; however, traditional media platforms still play an important role in ensuring events reach the widest possible audience. We, therefore, call on the Government to strengthen the listed events regime and planning framework for major events to better reflect how people consume content.

Finally, we consider the legacies that major events leave behind for individuals, communities and cities and the challenges of funding, implementing and evaluating robust legacy plans. Although the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games present a great opportunity for the people of the West Midlands, particularly through its volunteer programme, there remains a sense that legacy funding and long-term evaluation have not been sufficiently prioritised.

This leads us to conclude that, ultimately, there is a lack of an overall vision or direction to the Government's events policy. This needs to be addressed if the UK is to capitalise on the opportunities that major events provide.

1 Introduction

1. Since the success of the London 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, the UK has built a global reputation for hosting major events. Those have included some 123 international major sporting fixtures, flagship programmes such as UK City of Culture, and major commemorations such as 14–18 NOW, which marked the First World War centenary.¹ As a result, UK Sport told us that:

The UK has established itself firmly within the top 5 of the world’s major sporting event host nations and has developed one of the most densely concentrated portfolios of international sporting venues in the world, coupled with a level of delivery expertise that regularly exports its services to other countries.²

2. Major events are a significant source of soft power, with the British Council pointing to a “strong evidence base for the value of cultural and civic events in enhancing the UK’s attractiveness and standing internationally—with UK arts and culture identified as key assets and drivers of appeal”.³ Moreover, it identifies that hosting major events allows “the UK to display and promote our values, as well as highlight our infrastructure, institutions and capacity to successfully deliver projects of national and international importance”.⁴

3. In 2022, the UK will build on this legacy by hosting the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Unboxed: Creativity in the UK (known as Festival UK* 2022 until October 2021 and occasionally referred to as such in this Report) and Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for strategic oversight of those events, which it hopes “will bring people together, inspire the next generation and be a moment of renewal for this country as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic”.⁵ The Government’s aim is for 2022’s events to foster the spirit of the summer of 2012, when “the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics and Paralympic Games, brought the country together like never before”.⁶ They will run alongside a number of other key milestones in 2022, including the conclusion of Coventry UK City of Culture, the UEFA Women’s European Football Championships, and the centenary of the BBC.⁷

4. In this year of what the Government calls an “unprecedented” programme of major cultural, sporting and commemorative events, we consider what can be learnt from them and how the Government might strengthen its approach to hosting future events. We thank all those who have contributed to our inquiry, including during our visits to Coventry and Birmingham where we gained insight into the delivery and planning phases of major events respectively.

1 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

2 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

3 British Council ([MCS0024](#)) para 5.2

4 Ibid, para 3.4

5 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

2 The Government's role in hosting major events

5. The UK Government's role varies considerably between major events and is conducted in partnership with other governmental, arms-length and sector bodies. Evidence highlighted the Government's role in deciding what events to bid for, providing public and financial backing for bids and events, convening all the stakeholders involved in delivering events, and ensuring lessons are learned and shared through effective evaluation.⁸ This chapter tackles the first three of these functions, using the case studies of the UK City of Culture and potential World Cup 2030 bid, and later in this Report we consider the importance of legacy and evaluation.

Deciding what to bid for and when

The value of a strategy

6. The UK Government states that it “recognises the importance and value of hosting major events” and is “determined to continue to build on” the UK's “hard-earned reputation” for hosting major events. Yet it also acknowledges that “there is increasing global competition to bid for and secure major international events, with countries around the world recognising the economic and social opportunities these events bring”.⁹ Indeed, nations, regions and cities within the UK can find themselves competing to attract high-profile events, with evidence highlighting that with “each national tourist board using major events to profile its own nation rather than the United Kingdom as a whole [...] Far from unifying the nation state, tourism can be a highly competitive industry both between and within the nations of the United Kingdom”.¹⁰ Given this increasingly competitive landscape, Dr Franco Bianchini from the University of Leeds' Centre for Cultural Value told us that “it would be a good idea” for the UK Government to develop a long-term strategy for hosting major events, especially as we emerge from the pandemic and the changes it has brought.¹¹

7. The importance of having a plan for how an event will be integrated into the wider ambitions for a host location was highlighted as integral to bidding for and securing an event in the first place. Reflecting on applications for the London Borough of Culture title, the programme's architect Chenine Bhathena observed:

What separated them was the real commitment to long-term change and the commitment across policy departments to understanding how this can help them take forward strategically the work they want to do and make that change happen.

[...]

When a country or a borough is not quite ready, it comes through quite clearly. I think you have to have strong cross-party political leadership

8 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#)), Q20 [Ruth Hollis], Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))

9 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

10 Professor Alan Bairner, Dr Jack Black, Dr Ali Bowes and Dr Stuart Whigham ([MCS0006](#))

11 Q7

because you can't do these things without political leadership. You need your business community, education community, cultural community and everyone with you on the same journey.¹²

8. Being part of a long-term strategy can also maximise an event's contribution to wider policy goals. Emphasising "the importance at a local level of having a long-term event strategy", as creative director of Coventry City of Culture, Chenine Bhatena, told us that the city's approach has been driven by "a major event strategy—thinking beyond City of Culture and thinking to other events and other policy-related opportunities that we might want to also be waving a flag for, for our city—which allows and enables the city council and the regional authority to deliver against their local and regional plan".¹³ Similarly, Dr Debbie Sadd from Bournemouth University suggested that in the context of the Government's levelling up agenda, the Government might choose "to support key events in areas around the country that would benefit most in the long-term".¹⁴

The UK Government's strategy

9. The Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Nigel Huddleston MP, acknowledged that, unlike for example the Scottish Government and industry's strategy for attracting major sporting, cultural and business events (Scotland the Perfect Stage), there is no "written stated document" setting out the UK Government's strategic approach to hosting events.¹⁵ However, he told us that within DCMS an events team is "constantly looking at what potentially is in the pipeline before we necessarily set up a bid team formally with money attached to it" and that the Government has "a pretty good idea of what events are available for bidding over the next 10 years".¹⁶

10. When it comes to major sporting events, the Gold Framework does set out how DCMS and UK Sport support the bidding for, and staging of, major sporting events at a UK-level, including the principles that guide investment in bids and the processes for prioritising events. UK Sport also told us that:

DCMS, UK Sport and the Devolved Administrations work collaboratively as part of a UK Event Coordination Group to consider the future programming of mega and major events across the UK. This helps to ensure that the events that are secured and delivered have the potential to spread the impacts and allow communities across the UK to experience the benefits of hosting—whether that's as a spectator, a volunteer or as part of an associated social impact project.¹⁷

11. In May 2021, UK Sport unveiled its strategic plan to host 97 high-profile sporting events in the next decade.¹⁸ Of these, 22 had already been secured, with feasibility studies under way for events including the Women's Rugby World Cup, European Athletics Championships, FIFA World Cup, Ryder Cup, and the Para Table Tennis World and

12 Q31

13 Q8

14 Bournemouth University ([MCS0002](#)) para 17

15 VisitScotland and EventScotland ([MCS0001](#)), Q272

16 Qq272–273

17 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

18 Full list: <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/-/media/files/uk-sport-major-event-programme-list-2021.ashx>

European Championships.¹⁹ The target events were “selected based on their potential to generate social, economic and sporting impacts for the UK, support government policy priorities, spread benefits across the UK, and provide value-for-money”.²⁰ Yet it also cautioned that:

In the current economic climate, it is extremely challenging to secure new funding into major events, particularly those that are due to be hosted in the medium to long term over the 2020’s and 2030’s. Due to the 5–10 year lead in time involved in bidding for major events, additional funding is needed now to ensure that the UK can secure a number of high profile event properties which will deliver tangible, lasting benefits for the nation over the next 10–15 years.²¹

The risks of investing money were highlighted when the bid to host the World Cup was withdrawn in February this year.

12. We welcome the Government’s commitment to building on the UK’s strong reputation for delivering major events but believe more could be done to develop a strategic approach to hosting them, particularly beyond the realm of major sporting events. In an increasingly competitive national and global landscape, such a strategy would assist with the effective allocation of resources and ensure decisions to host major events are joined up with wider Government priorities. *Within the next two years, DCMS should work with industry to develop and publish a strategy for hosting the full scope of major events.*

Providing financial backing

13. As a key funder of 2022’s major events, DCMS is investing:

- £778 million for Birmingham 2022;
- £120 million for Unboxed; and
- £28 million for HM Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.²²

Yet we have questioned the extent to which DCMS’s budget and influence in Whitehall constrains the Department’s ambition and ability to support events, especially in a busy year such as 2022.²³ For example, Chenine Bhatena suggested that DCMS is “under-resourced” with “mega events like the Commonwealth Games or Festival UK* 2022 or even the Queen’s Jubilee [...] more of a priority” than smaller events such as City of Culture.²⁴

14. The Minister told us that in cases when bidding for an event requires “significant resources [...] above and beyond the existing core team”, DCMS will “go to the Treasury and say, ‘Look, this is of a scale that is going to require a formal bid. We need to put the formal bid team together. That is going to require money. Treasury, please give us

19 UK Sport, [UK Sport outlines mission to create greatest decade of...](#), (7 May 2021)

20 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

21 Ibid

22 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

23 Qq303–305

24 Q21

some money”.²⁵ He acknowledged that Government Departments cannot “do everything [they] would like to do”, but stressed the importance of striking “the right balance [...] because we should not be spending government money if the private sector can do some of it”.²⁶ He observed that although the Government does “play a key role” in major events, plans for Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales to co-host the T20 World Cup in 2030, for example, demonstrate that “of their own volition, sports entities and other bodies can also independently apply “to host major events” without needing to rely on the public purse”.²⁷

The economic case for major events

15. When bidding to the Treasury for additional support to host a major event, DCMS will put forward an economic case for it.²⁸ Yet some argue that the “instrumentalist economic argument” for hosting major events is often over-stated. For example, a recent literature review on the economic impact of hosting the European Capital of Culture found that:

there is significant distance between policy rhetoric and academic research findings. This is especially clear on the subject of economic impact. Host cities often proclaim that major economic impacts and transformations are likely; academic research suggests otherwise.²⁹

Academics from the University of York Management School similarly caution that “it is critical not to exaggerate likely economic impacts” of this year’s events. They argue that although an event such as Unboxed might “work to catalyze a sense of ‘buzz’ and to boost local confidence, and create cultural legacies”, the “immediate economic benefits to business are likely to be limited”.³⁰

16. Others have questioned the value of Government investing in major events over other policy interventions. Academics from the University of Edinburgh suggest that “it could be decided that the UK will not invest in major sports events and, instead, will use monies that would have been spent on them to ‘level-up’ participation by investing in local sport and physical activity provision based on community development principles”.³¹ The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences likewise argues that “the ‘opportunity cost’ of investing taxpayers’ money into a [major sporting event] rather than community sport or physical activity” must be taken into account, and “if it is found that a [major sporting event] has increased the level of physical activity, the question must be asked if the money had been invested in other ways (e.g., improving the infrastructure for active commuting) if a bigger impact could have been achieved”.³²

Case study: UK City of Culture

17. DCMS does not currently guarantee the host of the UK City of Culture title any funding, with the successful location “expected to bid into existing funding pots” to secure Government support.³³ In practice, Coventry City of Culture 2021–22 has received more

25 Q273

26 Q303

27 Q272

28 Q273

29 Oriane Nermond, LSE, Dave O’Brien, University of Edinburgh and Neil Lee, LSE ([MCS0031](#))

30 University of York Management School ([MCS0007](#)) para 2.10

31 Dr Matthew McDowell, Dr Jung Woo Lee and Dr Gavin Reid ([MCS0021](#))

32 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences ([MCS0003](#)) para 8

33 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [UK City of Culture 2025: full application guidance](#), (7 September 2021)

than £18.5 million of Government funding (towards its total budget of c. £42 million), with DCMS directly contributing “about £7 million” of that.³⁴ However, DCMS’s contribution followed “a year of negotiating, bidding and proposals”, at a time when organisers were building teams, developing plans and securing other sources of funding.³⁵ Coventry’s Creative Director, Chenine Bhatena, therefore recommended that “in future the winning city is just guaranteed some funding, because it would save so much time and allow the winning city to move forward a bit more quickly”.³⁶

18. The lack of guaranteed funding for UK City of Culture hosts creates unnecessary uncertainty and risks undermining other fundraising efforts. The Government should guarantee successful hosts of UK City of Culture an appropriate amount of national funding from the outset, rather than require the host to wait for a decision, to enable organisers to focus their efforts on securing other sources of funding.

Convening stakeholders

19. The Government can also play an important role in bringing together the many stakeholders involved in delivering major events. For example, the appointment of a Prime Minister’s Special Representative to support the co-ordination and delivery of the 14–18 NOW commemorative events was found to have “played a key role in galvanising activity and securing political support”.³⁷ Yet despite our predecessor Committee recommending that the Government should consider “how this model can best be deployed for major programmes of commemoration in the future”,³⁸ no similar appointments were made for 2022’s events.³⁹ Instead, the Minister told us that although DCMS “is not one of the big-spending Departments”, it is “very experienced” and “very good” at working with other parties, including other Departments, on which it is “entirely reliant” for the “delivery of the Commonwealth Games, for example”.⁴⁰

20. British Council research highlights the potential benefits of meaningful co-ordination between central, devolved and local governments. It suggests that the UK Government looks “to the local insights of both devolved Governments and local authorities to both reflect the interest and experience of local communities and build national support for major events”.⁴¹ In turn, devolved and local administrations can benefit from drawing “more strategically on resources and expertise from Westminster and the UK’s extensive global network of diplomatic and international development professionals”.⁴² However, the Local Government Association told us that:

Local government has often been underrepresented in national strategic conversations about culture and leisure, despite their important role as a funder. Plans for forthcoming major events must be shared with enough lead-in time for local government to plan and deliver on especially in the current climate when councils are still responding to the [Covid-19] crisis.⁴³

34 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#)), Q21

35 Q21

36 Ibid

37 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Thirteenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Lessons from the First World War Centenary](#), HC 2001, p 2

38 Ibid

39 Q306

40 Q302

41 British Council ([MCS0024](#)) para 4.4

42 Ibid

43 Local Government Association ([MCS0019](#)) para 5.24

Case study: World Cup 2030

21. The potential joint five-nation UK and Ireland bid to host the 2030 FIFA Men's World Cup presented an interesting case study in this regard. UK Sport told us that it is "unprecedented in the UK's event bidding landscape, with joint working across the five Football Associations and the five Government Authorities of UK and Ireland".⁴⁴ UK Sport's Chief Operating Officer Simon Morton told us that the process has been "game-changing to the point where [it] has led us to begin exploring other mega events that can be co-hosted across the devolved governments".⁴⁵

22. The UK Government had already committed £11 million for the bid, which would have been accompanied by £205 million investment to build, or improve, up to 8,000 community multi-use sports and football pitches across the UK.⁴⁶ Yet with the previous bid to host the 2018 World Cup costing £21 million and attracting only two votes, we questioned whether the Government's support for a feasibility study represented good value for money.⁴⁷ Simon Morton replied that "one of the lessons of the previous bid was that the distance between the bid and the Government was too great". He argued that the Government "should take a view on the costs, risks and benefits" and "the only way they can do that is by putting their hands in their pockets and commissioning good work and closing the gap between the football associations and their bid and what we know about the event itself".⁴⁸

23. The feasibility study was due to conclude after FIFA publishes the bidding criteria later in 2022, ahead of bids being submitted in 2024.⁴⁹ We were told the study was looking at budgeting and cost apportionment; how stadium infrastructure measures up to FIFA's standards; safety and security; corporate governance; the social and economic benefits that might accrue from hosting the event; and "the winnability of the tournament".⁵⁰ When we questioned whether the bid could succeed without fundamental reform of the Football Association, Simon Morton replied:

If the Government want to set prerequisites for the Football Association before it provides financial support—as it would have to consider—for a football World Cup bid, then they have the opportunity to do that next year. [...] This is effectively what we already do in respect of governance when we fund national governing bodies.⁵¹

24. Since then, the independent fan led review of football governance, commissioned by DCMS, has identified that public confidence in football authorities is low.⁵² It also found that "the domestic authorities have had multiple opportunities for reform with little or no progress made", adding "the problems football is facing are complex and pressing and cannot wait for further reform – which there is no guarantee the authorities will be

44 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

45 Q209

46 HM Treasury, "[Budget and Spending Review – October 2021: What you need to know](#)" and [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), (27 October 2021) p 89

47 The Guardian, [FA reveals true cost of England's failed 2018 World Cup bid](#), (10 October 2011)

48 Q206

49 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

50 Q202

51 Qq221–2

52 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance: securing the game's future](#), (24 November), table 1

able to deliver”.⁵³ As such, the review recommends that the Government create a new independent regulator for English football, and Tracey Crouch MP, the review’s Chair, told us of her “hope that there will be legislation in the forthcoming Queen’s speech to set up the independent regulator”.⁵⁴

25. On 7 February 2022, the five associations announced that they would not proceed with the bid for the World Cup in 2030 and would focus instead on bidding for the UEFA EURO 2028 competition. They stated that the 2028 competition would “offer a similar return on investment, with the European tournament carrying a far lower delivery cost and the potential of the benefits being realised sooner”.⁵⁵

26. The recommendations and reforms proposed in the fan led review of football governance should not be hanging over the Football Association as it goes into a bidding process for the 2028 UEFA EURO. *The Government must ensure implementation of the review’s principal recommendation, the establishment of the independent regulator for English football in legislation, is completed by the time the campaign to host the 2028 competition begins in earnest.*

53 Ibid, para 1.35–1.38

54 Oral evidence taken on 7 December 2021, Sport governance, HC (2021–22) 855, [Q301](#)

55 Football Association Statement, “[Five associations announce joint bid to host UEFA EURO 2028 across five countries](#)”, 7 February 2022

3 Communicating a vision

27. To achieve maximum impact when delivering major events, and bring all the relevant parties together, organisers must clearly communicate who the events are for and what they can offer. Multiple submissions to our inquiry emphasised the importance of setting a clear vision for any major event. For example, Glasgow Life told us that measures of success:

need to be established via the development of a clear vision of the purpose of any future events and associated funding. Event objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound.⁵⁶

28. The Government has great hopes for 2022's programme of major events, stating that each event has "a clear set of ambitions [...] that will provide tangible benefits to the lives of people and communities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland".⁵⁷ In this chapter, we consider how those ambitions are formed and communicated, making direct reference to the upcoming cultural festival, Unboxed: Creativity in the UK, and other events.

Whose vision?

29. Major events rely on a range of stakeholders, including the public, businesses, funders and local leaders, each with different priorities and visions for what the event will deliver. Ruth Hollis, chief executive of Spirit of 2012, told us that the bidding process to host an event such as UK City of Culture "is dependent on what multiple different funders want to see", and therefore "is not just about the ambition of the city" but "also about the priorities of the funder".⁵⁸ Observing that "everybody wants something slightly different", Chenine Bhathena described the different ambitions behind Coventry City of Culture:

There are the local authority and the policymakers, who clearly have ahead of them the long-term vision of the city, and investment in skills and talent retention, the visitor economy and regeneration—all those kinds of things. For the cultural sector, it is about investment and support for them to grow, to become more stable and to create the infrastructure, which might be workspace or buildings or it could just be supporting their infrastructure as companies to be able to continue long term.⁵⁹

30. The different visions for an event are often accompanied by some scepticism about what it is likely to achieve. Bournemouth University's Dr Debbie Sadd cautioned that "unless clear viable evidence of positive impacts is tangible through the planning, then the longer-term perspective is skewed from even before the event happens".⁶⁰ Likewise, Dr Franco Bianchini from the Centre for Cultural Value told us:

One of the problems with these schemes is that there is often a lot of boosterism and a bit of hype, a bit of overpromising and perhaps also

56 Glasgow Life ([MCS0013](#))

57 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

58 Q41

59 Q44

60 Bournemouth University ([MCS0002](#)) para 13

overloading responsibilities on culture and sport to try to solve all the problems of the city. A bit of healthy scepticism is not a bad thing at all, but I have seen the scepticism being turned around in so many cases.⁶¹

Case study: Unboxed: Creativity in the UK

31. Unboxed: Creativity in the UK (previously known as Festival UK* 2022) will run from March to October 2022. It was initially commissioned in 2018 by the Rt Hon Theresa May MP's Government to be a nationwide festival of creativity following the UK's departure from the EU. This led to it being dubbed by some politicians and journalists as the "Festival of Brexit": a characterisation organisers and officials took great pains to reject in their evidence to us.⁶² The current Government's "overarching objectives" for the event are "to bring people together, celebrate creativity and boost pride in communities, and showcase the very best of the country's creativity to the world".⁶³ It was summed up by chief creative officer Martin Green as "a festival of creativity that has brought together creatives from science, technology, engineering, arts and maths to produce 10 commissions across the UK", each with a budget of between £6 million and £8 million.⁶⁴

32. Yet given that the event's name and full creative programme were not announced until October 2021, some three years after the idea was formed but just six months before it begins, we questioned whether people understand the vision for Unboxed, or even know that it is happening. Carrie Cooke, DCMS's deputy director for Unboxed and City of Culture, told us that the festival could not be named before then because the Government "did not know what it was"; however, she assured us from early 2022 "we will really see a push on places and dates and getting people hopefully booking them in their diaries and coming along".⁶⁵ She also told us that "there should be something for everyone and something accessible to everybody if they want to" participate.⁶⁶ However, this statement contrasts with the UK Centre for Events Management's view that although it can "be tempting to try to get events to be all things to all people and solve all problems", that is not practical and "organisers should prioritise the needs of specific communities and groups" when designing major events.⁶⁷

33. Unboxed's organisers aspire to reach 66 million people worldwide during the eight-month festival: by way of comparison, 35 million people engaged with the four-year programme of world war one centenary commemorations, 14–18 NOW. Carrie Cooke admitted that this is a "stretch target", but DCMS stated that key to meeting the target is that Unboxed had been "designed from the outset to be as accessible as possible, both live and digitally, so that everyone across the UK and the wider world can experience it".⁶⁸ Although this approach predates the Covid-19 pandemic, it is a learning shared by the team behind Coventry City of Culture, who told us that the cultural sector has "been so focused on live [...] but there is a real opportunity with broadcast, social media, web and all of those digital sources".⁶⁹ Dr Franco Bianchini was also optimistic that:

61 Q45 [Dr Franco Bianchini]

62 Qq80, 299

63 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

64 Qq62, 72

65 Qq296, 298

66 Q301

67 UK Centre for Events Management, Leeds Beckett University ([MCS0017](#))

68 Q333, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

69 Q52 [Chenine Bhatena]

there are massive opportunities around broadcast and digital, which I think could lead to the UK taking a leading role in advancing that. In that sense, Festival UK* 2022 could be interesting because it seems to be very interdisciplinary—very much across arts, science and technology. That could help to make the argument for arts in schools, and it could help to further this potential leading role for the UK in broadcasting and streaming culture.⁷⁰

34. The geographic scope of Unboxed will also be key. It is being delivered at arm's length across the UK, with each nation having selected a delivery body to commission work: a subsidiary of the Organising Committee of the Commonwealth Games will deliver programming in England; EventScotland will do so in Scotland, Creative Wales in Wales and Belfast City Council in Northern Ireland.⁷¹ Carrie Cooke told us that only one of the ten commissions will stay in one location:

Everything else goes to multiple places, but it is also very deliberately designed to be both live site but also online and broadcast engagement. We do not just mean if you cannot make it you can see it online, we mean genuine engagement. If for any reason you do not want to go to a live site, you can still take part where you are.⁷²

35. The British Council told us that “a key metric for the success of major cultural and sporting events should [...] be the extent to which global partnerships are created, and UK cultural and sporting assets can be exported to the world, such as through touring opportunities”.⁷³ Yet, despite the Government's aim for the festival to promote the UK's STEAM sectors to “key markets around the world”, and its intention to “produce content from the 10 projects that can last beyond 2022, and travel nationally and internationally”, significant question marks remain over how that will be delivered. The British Council has brokered international partnerships and is amplifying the event across its networks; however, it “is not providing funding to resource international tours” of the commissioned projects.⁷⁴ We asked what DCMS is doing to enable the multi-million pound commissioned projects to tour internationally and Carrie Cooke replied that there are “not yet” any firm plans but:

We are talking and in active conversations right now about how we do that, where it might go and when. There is potential for DCMS, but also we are talking to GREAT, VisitBritain, FCDO and DIT about what might go where and how it might support wider government aspirations.⁷⁵

36. Since the event's inception in 2018, the aims for Festival UK* 2022/Unboxed: Creativity in the UK have been vague and ripe for misinterpretation by the press and public at large. We see no evidence to refute such scepticism now. The desire for it to seemingly cater to everyone, everywhere, is a recipe for failure and investing £120 million in something when the Government, by their own admission, “did not know what it was” is an irresponsible use of public money. Despite ambitious “stretch

70 Q54

71 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

72 Q301

73 British Council ([MCS0024](#)) para 5.4

74 Supplementary written evidence submitted by the British Council ([MCS0032](#))

75 Qq334–335 [Carrie Cooke]

targets” for engagement, just a few months out there remains a worrying lack of detail about how that will be achieved, particularly when it comes to touring projects internationally. We therefore intend to scrutinise how 2022’s events are leveraged overseas in our subsequent inquiry on promoting Britain abroad.

Tackling divisive subjects

37. The Government intends for 2022’s events to “unite communities across the United Kingdom and celebrate our shared history and future”.⁷⁶ Given this aim and continued debates around contested heritage, we have considered what role major cultural, sporting and commemorative events can play in exploring difficult, and potentially divisive, social issues. Globally, this is particularly pertinent in the year of the FIFA Men’s World Cup in Qatar and Winter Olympics in Beijing, when human rights concerns dominate headlines and when Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has led to its exclusion from international sporting events. We have heard differing views on whether sporting events and associated media coverage should shine a light on such issues, or whether tackling divisive subjects should be left to parallel cultural or factual programmes.

38. Dr Franco Bianchini identified that, rather than shy away from controversial topics, previous major events “have achieved important results by tackling divisive subjects”. For example, as the 2009 European Capital of Culture, Linz in Austria hosted “a major conference and exhibition about Hitler’s project to make Linz the cultural capital of the Third Reich”. Dr Bianchini explained:

The artistic director and his team were accused of neo-Nazi nostalgia and the risk of encouraging that, but as a result of the project there was a very significant debate in the city, in the media, in schools, in universities. It was a sort of skeleton in the cupboard that was talked about, and most people think now that it was an important thing to do for Linz for civic growth.³¹

39. Ruth Hollis from Spirit of 2012 agreed that “we can make potentially divisive events work as long as we understand where the division may come from”. She cited the First World War commemorative programme 14–18 NOW, “which worked in Northern Ireland by employing local co-ordinators and working with local organisations. [...] What it did in Northern Ireland was very locally rooted and responsive to the needs of the community and the division that already exists”.⁷⁷

40. The UK Centre for Events Management suggested that “cultural risks” associated with an event should be identified and considered as part of its overall risk assessment, conducted by someone with knowledge of “cultural, historical and religious capital”. It told us that “in addition to the usual risk considerations around people, property, finances, systems, environment and image”, organisers should also assess any “cultural, historical and religious values which may impact on the planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of an event”. Such assessments “will never completely remove risks from impacting an event, festival or celebration, but will enable the event manager to address cultural, historic and religious issues as and when they arise, with a well-considered plan in place”.⁷⁸

76 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

77 Q37 [Ruth Hollis]

78 UK Centre for Events Management, Leeds Beckett University ([MCS0017](#))

41. A contrary view was presented to us by the organisers of some of 2022's major events who seemed reluctant to reflect on contentious subjects. Ian Reid, chief executive of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, told us that while he "understands" the colonial legacies linked to the Commonwealth, the "focus is very much on that modern family of Commonwealth nations", which "is a voluntary association with an incredible charter focused on human rights and other things that we would expect to see".⁷⁹ Similarly, Rosanna Machado, chief executive of the Platinum Jubilee Pageant, told us that the event will be "focusing on the seven decades of Her Majesty's reign and the society that we have become. We are very much reflecting on some of the past, but we are also quite future-looking and forward-looking".⁸⁰

42. Martin Green, who is responsible for the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay, opening and closing ceremonies and accompanying culture programme, suggested that "because sport is so codified and set, it is the cultural spaces around the games that allow the space for people to have those conversations".⁸¹ He told us:

It was really important to us from the outset that we said that those were particularly spaces where artists, creatives and communities could have any conversation they wanted to have around the Commonwealth and its history.⁸²

43. The view that divisive subjects are best explored in parallel with sporting events, but not necessarily directly during them, was shared by the BBC's director of sport. On the human rights concerns surrounding the Qatar World Cup, Barbara Slater told us:

As a sports department we are primarily there to cover the sporting action, but as a wider BBC, with a sports news department as well as a news department, I am confident that the full story of the Qatar World Cup will be told across the BBC.⁸³

44. Yet academics specialising in the sociological and political study of sport and sporting events strongly refute "the 'sport and politics do not mix' fallacy".⁸⁴ They told us that major sporting events "offer individual nations the chance to showcase themselves on an international stage, in both a sporting and a wider political sense".⁸⁵ They also argue that "despite the UK's promotion as a confident, multi-ethnic state, wider concerns regarding 1) negative media coverage of Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish/Irish athletes; and, 2) the inclusion of 'foreign-born' athletes, present ongoing points of contention in the print and digital coverage of UK sporting occasions".⁸⁶ These dynamics can often be shaped by whether teams compete as home nations or as part of Team GB. Ruth Hollis, from Spirit of 2012, told us that:

the Commonwealth Games is always an interesting example [...] We are competing as home nations; we are not competing as Team GB. Team GB has a unifying factor for an Olympic Games and Paralympic Games that is not the same in other events.⁸⁷

79 Q99

80 Q103

81 Q100

82 Ibid

83 Q165

84 Professor Alan Bairner, Dr Jack Black, Dr Ali Bowes and Dr Stuart Whigham ([MCS0006](#))

85 Ibid

86 Ibid

87 Q37

45. **Handled sensitively, major events can be an opportunity for communities to reflect on difficult subjects and grow from them. Organisers and stakeholders, including the media, should not shy away from interrogating potential fault lines, but carefully assess and manage cultural risks accordingly.**

The role of the media

46. Although digital platforms will be pivotal to the success of major events in 2022 and beyond, the traditional media still play a key role in raising “visibility, public debate and business interest” in major events.⁸⁸ During our visit to Coventry, this was illustrated to us by the Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry, who credited the BBC Four documentary, *Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain*, with significantly boosting visitors from across the UK to the cathedral in summer 2021.

47. Broadcast and news media can also help to unite the country around an event. Academics from the University of Edinburgh suggested that:

A possible way to bring people from all four nations together on the back of Birmingham 2022 might be to tell the human interest stories behind particular athletes from all four nations—in the language of event leveraging—to reach beyond the limited number of people interested in sport. If this was effectively narrated in the discourse of ‘we’re all in this together’ then this may appeal to some people’s sense of British national identity.⁸⁹

This also helps to deliver value for money. The BBC told us that “only if sport and the top events are available to the widest possible audience can the UK make the most of its unrivalled talent and potential”,⁹⁰ while its director of sport drew an explicit link between investment in athletes and the importance of easily accessible coverage:

Just think of those wonderful role models, how uplifting that is for people to follow those stories of extraordinary achievements. Having made that investment, surely what we want to do is preserve access to those events for the widest possible reach.⁹¹

48. However, the way in which the media cover major events, and the pressures on them doing so, are changing. The BBC told us about “big changes” in demand for digital content, which saw 75 million people viewing the Euros digitally, and “an all-time record of over 100 million” accessing the Olympics in that way.⁹² Yet as Andrew Moger, from the News Media Coalition, told us:

There is a huge disconnect between news consumption expectations at the moment, the way that the news media is able to deliver to those expectations, and the background market for rights, which has not moved on [...] It does not take account of patterns of consumption and the growth of the digital platforms.⁹³

88 News Media Coalition ([MCS0028](#))

89 Dr Matthew McDowell, Dr Jung Woo Lee and Dr Gavin Reid ([MCS0021](#))

90 BBC ([MCS0030](#))

91 Q125 [Barbara Slater]

92 Q118 [Barbara Slater]

93 Q135 [Andrew Moger]

49. The BBC has concerns that the existing listed events regime (intended to ensure that certain events of national interest are available to view live, and for free, by the widest possible audience) does not reflect evolving patterns of consumption, particularly among young people.⁹⁴ This meant, for example, that the BBC's digital coverage of the Tokyo Olympics was the result of commercial negotiations with rights-holder Discovery, rather than a guaranteed offer.⁹⁵ The BBC told us that the regime "needs to be kept up to date as technology and viewing habits change", with Barbara Slater adding:

listed events was created in an analogue age. [...] There is a provision for live linear coverage. That just does not feel adequate for this modern age. I would implore that there is consideration given to modernisation.⁹⁶

She also called for simplification of the criteria for qualifying broadcasters under the regime, and for consideration to be given to listing women's sporting events.⁹⁷

50. The Minister recognised that the Government must regularly "review the listed events, the nature of listed events, what is listed, what platforms things are listed in because the way that people consume content is fundamentally changing".⁹⁸ However, he also cautioned that there is a difficult balance to be struck "between commercial exploitation, so that sports can get value out of the intellectual property and the investment they put into it, while simultaneously trying to get as many eyeballs as possible". He acknowledged that "maybe we get it right and we get it wrong, particularly in the more fragmented media marketplace, but those are all elements of the consideration".⁹⁹

51. The listed events regime is vital to the UK's sporting and media landscape, amplifying major events and enabling the country to capitalise on its investment in them and their stars. As people's consumption of media content changes, this crucial tool needs to be gold-plated for the future. *The Government should review extending the protections currently offered under the listed events regime to digital and on-demand content. The Committee reiterates its view that sporting events which are a long-established centrepiece of our national sporting heritage, such as the Six Nations Rugby Tournament, should be added to the live listed events regime.*

52. We also heard calls for greater consideration of the news media's role and requirements when planning major events. The News Media Coalition has concerns "that the reduction in news opportunities at major organised events during [Covid-19], is part of a much longer attempt by professional sports clubs and governing bodies, to reduce media freedom in relation to the generation of news media coverage".¹⁰⁰ In practical terms, this means that

it is often only on the eve of an event, that news companies discover how a successful bid translates into practical controls on journalism. When journalists seek to report from sports venues, they or the news company they work for, are often required to sign contractual rules determining how the content they produce can be created, sometimes also dictating on which medium it can be shown, the status of their copyright, and where and if

94 Q121 [Barbara Slater]

95 Q123

96 BBC ([MCS0030](#)) para 26, Q121

97 Q160

98 Q343 [Nigel Huddleston MP]

99 Q349

100 News Media Coalition ([MCS0028](#))

revenue can be generated from their own material.¹⁰¹

53. Again, the digital transformation of media consumption and changing consumer expectations are key. The News Media Coalition told us that although “visual journalism has become a much bigger factor in sustaining the economic viability of news businesses [...] Conversely, it is in that area where content is most restricted”.¹⁰² Andrew Moger told us:

That applies to football, cricket, tennis—all sports. It is particularly acute around the high-profile, most commercialised sporting assets—the FIFA World Cup, the European football championships, the International Cricket Council, tour events and others—whereby the matrix of background rights and the monopoly around certain content opportunities presents an insurmountable barrier to news gathering. We do what we can at those events, both in the venue and outside the venue, in newsrooms as well, to find the background stories and to share those with news consumers, but it is becoming highly problematic to be able to retain relevance to the way that news consumers want to access news of all forms.¹⁰³

54. However, we heard that the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games shows promising signs of “embracing the needs of the news media” to deliver “a media-friendly games”.¹⁰⁴ For example, it plans to replace large-scale press conferences with iZones, which were described to us as:

Instead of a politburo-style desk with cameras and someone under the biggest spotlight you can imagine being asked a difficult question, on invitation or by application, rather, a group of journalists will be able to say, “We want to speak to X athlete or star” [...] They will then go into a breakout room, comfy chairs, soft lighting, more of a convivial atmosphere, rather than the brutal spotlight of a press conference. That has been shown to work in other events and I think it is potentially the way forward because it fits with [...] the requirement [...] that we are able to get closer to the story and to be able to share that story.¹⁰⁵

55. One way to make events more media friendly in the longer term is to involve the news media “as soon as possible” in preparations. The News Media Coalition told us:

Whilst not partners in the formal or contractual sense, news publishers and news agencies should have a voice and direct involvement in practical planning. Indeed, for mega events requiring bidding processes (and therefore involving government backing, media rights sales and enabling legislation), the needs of the news media in reporting of the event on the day must be a foundation pre-requisite. In our experience, ‘invitation to bid’, bids themselves or delivery planning rarely, if ever, encompass media freedom or news media change.¹⁰⁶

101 Ibid

102 Ibid

103 Q162 [Andrew Moger]

104 Q156 [Andrew Moger]

105 Q157 [Andrew Moger]

106 News Media Coalition ([MCS0028](#))

56. Andrew Moger told us that the UK's Gold Framework does not include "anything that comes close to provisions or safeguards for news media" and suggested that updating it "would be a good start", if it were followed by "an ongoing conversation about how that plays out on a practical level".¹⁰⁷ He went on:

It is all very well talking at a lofty level about media freedom and safeguarding journalism, but what does that translate into within the venues? What news can be created? What content can be created? How can it be distributed? How can that copyright content be monetised to help reinvestment back into sports journalism? We want to be able to explain these things to the Government and to any other stakeholders sitting around the table.¹⁰⁸

57. When we put these suggestions for safeguarding the news media's access to major events to the Minister, he focused on the media's role in amplifying events, telling us:

in some of the bids or some of the bidding processes that I have had visibility of, one of the elements that are part of the criteria is making sure that encouragement and support for that sport can be maximised. Again, it goes back to either the listing and/or how the news media are included in this would be part of that mix, i.e., what are you going to be doing if you want to bid for this event in this sport, how will you leverage it to get more people engaged and more young people excited about that sport? Media plays an important role in that.¹⁰⁹

58. **The news media are vital stakeholders for major events, amplifying them at home and abroad and delivering greater value for money. Moreover, beyond this purely instrumentalist role, there is an intrinsic value to free and reliable reporting of major events. It is, therefore, concerning to hear of increased restrictions on reporting at major events and that the news media's requirements are not always fully considered in event planning and delivery. DCMS and UK Sport should, in consultation with news media organisations, update the Gold Framework to set out requirements for publicly funded events to protect media freedoms and consider coverage requirements from bid stage and throughout the lifecycle of each event.**

107 Qq119–200

108 Q200

109 Q348 [Nigel Huddleston MP]

4 Delivering a meaningful legacy

59. Leaving behind positive legacies for communities is a crucial part of delivering value for money for public investment in major events, with the British Film Institute concluding that “fundamentally, the UK public wishes to see a return on investment for public money used to support major cultural and sporting events”.¹¹⁰ The Government states that “while Birmingham 2022, the Festival and Platinum Jubilee each have their own plans to deliver their optimum impact and leave a legacy, the fact that DCMS is coordinating the three events will help to maximise their reach and ensure value for money”.⁴⁰ In this chapter, we examine different types of legacy and consider how positive legacies are best achieved and, crucially, measured, with specific reference to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Types of legacy

60. Spirit of 2012 observes that “major events leave different types of legacies: artistic or sporting, economic and infrastructural, and social”, and that these legacies can be “planned and unplanned” and “both positive and negative”.¹¹¹ We also heard that the legacies major events leave for individuals are shaped by the nature of their engagement: “people experience national cultural or sporting events four different ways: live as a spectator attending the event, through the media, as volunteers, as participants in community or cultural programmes associated with the event”.¹¹²

61. Volunteering is a significant way in which the public can engage with major events and derive lasting benefit from them. Some 70,000 people volunteered during London 2012, while the 2017 UK City of Culture’s 2,000-strong volunteer workforce “is still on the ground in Hull, going strong”. We heard:

Such volunteering programmes are a major means to securing a social legacy of events. They help bring people of different backgrounds together, strengthening civic pride and help develop shared identities.¹¹³

62. However, even when planned for, positive legacies can be difficult to deliver. Dr Debbie Sadd told us that “much was made of all the potential benefits to be gained from hosting London 2012, but the perceived financial benefits and business boosts were very limited in scope and spread”.¹¹⁴ Moreover, although one of London 2012’s legacies was expected to be improving uptake of grassroots sport and physical activity, there is little evidence to suggest this was achieved”.¹¹⁵ Spirit of 2012’s CEO therefore cautioned that “we need to be incredibly wary about creating legacy as a panacea for all social ills”.¹¹⁶

63. In contrast, Dr Franco Bianchini was more optimistic about the potential impacts of major events, telling us that “it is only really in the last few years that the question of the social impact of legacies—for example positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of people, positive impacts on social capital, on making people feel more confident,

110 British Film Institute ([MCS0026](#))

111 Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))

112 Ibid

113 Ibid

114 Bournemouth University ([MCS0002](#)) para 3

115 Ibid, para 23

116 Q16 [Ruth Hollis]

skilling them up, increasing pride in a locality—has become central”.¹¹⁷ He attributed this shift to the numerous examples around the world “of physical infrastructure created by cultural mega events that have not worked, have not been fit for purpose and have become redundant pretty quickly”.¹¹⁸

64. For example, academics cited Glasgow’s velodrome, a legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, as “a case of sporting authorities demanding a venue which suits the needs of elite sport, while [completely] ignoring the needs of residents”, because “velodromes and other specialist sporting venues are difficult to repurpose, and due to rapid changes in sporting technology are often rendered obsolete quicker than all-purpose facilities, including leisure centres”.¹¹⁹ They told us:

the positive “legacies” of sporting events, used alone as catalysts for sport/tourism development and facility management, are contentious and often overrated, and (in their current form) represent a risky endeavour on the part of the UK Government, the UK’s devolved administrations, and local governments. They are ultimately no replacement for full-scale public-sector investment in these sectors.¹²⁰

65. Similarly, The National Museum Directors’ Council suggested that the “Millennium Dome at a cost of £800m acts as visual reminder of some of the pitfalls” of failing to deliver value for money. It told us:

With a lot of public investment but no tangible legacy, the Dome represented not only a missed opportunity but also acted to alienate members of the public and cultural partners from such flagship projects. For example, £800m is roughly equal to total public annual investment in museums in England, organisations that could have arguably had a much greater impact had this amount been spent in the sector instead.¹²¹

Case study: Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

66. Given the public’s wariness about white elephants resulting from major events, it is perhaps unsurprising that the legacy plans for 2022’s events signal a shift away from physical infrastructure towards a focus on other social and environmental legacies. Ian Reid told us that 95% of the venues being used for Birmingham’s Commonwealth Games pre-dated the city being appointed host.¹²² Of the two major capital projects, only Sandwell Aquatics Centre is an entirely new build, and yet:

the purpose this venue is being built for is not the games; the purpose is for community use. The council’s strategy is to move their community leisure facilities from existing facilities into this brand new, state-of-the-art facility. They have a very strong handle on the demand and how that facility will be used by the community. It is very much being adapted for the games; it is not being built for the games and adapted for the community.¹²³

117 Q17

118 Ibid

119 Dr Matthew McDowell, Dr Jung Woo Lee and Dr Gavin Reid ([MCS0021](#))

120 Ibid

121 National Museum Directors’ Council ([MCS0022](#))

122 Q84

123 Q97 [Ian Reid]

67. Visiting the city's other major infrastructure project, we heard how the Games have provided a catalyst for renovating Alexander Stadium, including increasing its spectator capacity. The stadium will also serve as a base for Birmingham City University's sports and exercise faculty post-Games, and we were told that this legacy usage will help to reduce the venue's financial pressures on Birmingham City Council. We are, however, disappointed that the council has so far been unable to provide us, even on a confidential basis, with any headline figures relating to such continuing use. This does little to assuage our concerns over the robustness of the long-term financial aspirations for Alexander Stadium.

68. Beyond infrastructure, the Government told us that among the wider legacies expected from the Commonwealth Games include:

a number of firsts including the first games with more women's medals than men's, the largest integrated para-sport programme for any Commonwealth Games, the first carbon neutral games, the largest Business and Tourism programme of any Games and the first Games to fully integrate volunteers from all delivery partners into a united volunteering programme.¹²⁴

During our visit to Birmingham the director of legacy, Nicola Turner, told us that she hoped part of the legacy of the Games would be embedding these firsts in planning for future competitions.

69. At the volunteer selection centre in the Library of Birmingham, where interviews were being held for some of the 41,300 people who applied for the 13,000 roles during the Games, volunteer recruiters told us how the Games are an opportunity to champion both the West Midlands and its residents. We also heard about their interest in long-term volunteering opportunities, which supports Spirit of 2012's claim that "volunteering can lead to stronger social connections and has the potential to strengthen grassroots sporting and cultural organisations which often rely on the time commitment of volunteers".¹²⁵ Yet there were some concerns that without proper investment, grassroots sports clubs will not have the facilities to accommodate any increase in demand resulting from the Games. This again shows the importance of aligning major events with wider policy and spending priorities.

Challenges

70. Evidence to our inquiry highlighted three predominant challenges for delivering and assessing the legacies of major events: how they should be funded, how they should be managed after the event and how they should be evaluated.

Funding

71. UK Sport makes the case for the wider social benefits arising from major events to be delivered through "specific and dedicated legacy programmes and initiatives". When it comes to funding such initiatives, they told us that "the greatest success is typically achieved when parallel investments are made by Government into legacy programmes (i.e., parallel to supporting staging costs)".¹²⁶ Similarly, Spirit of 2012 told us:

124 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

125 Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))

126 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))

Social legacy planning needs to be funded. Having designated legacy funding within the overall funding of events might be an approach that DCMS and devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales may wish to consider.¹²⁷

72. The Commonwealth Games' director of legacy told us that the legacy programme is being funded through fundraising and a multi-partnership approach, rather than any allocation from the Games' core budget. The Minister later told us that it is "not unusual or unreasonable" for "the more creative elements" of an event such as the Commonwealth Games "to be supported by other means, whether it is local government or additional central government funding or private sponsorship". He added:

There is not a lot in the Commonwealth Games contractual requirement on legacy, for example, but if we want to get full benefit out, then we work with local authorities and other bodies to make sure that we put the money in there as well.¹²⁸

Lasting structures

73. A challenge to delivering lasting legacies from major events is what happens to organisational structures once an event is over. Academics acknowledge that the organising committees for major events "often commit and construct legacy aims, yet disband when the event is over and have limited or no accountability to fulfilling long term legacy".¹²⁹ This was echoed by Rosanna Machado from the Platinum Jubilee Pageant, who told us:

As we are a company set up just to put on this event, we will not be in existence after this event, because we will shut down after that. We are trying to partner with other organisations so that that work can continue afterwards.¹³⁰

74. As such, we heard that there is a clear role for local and central governments, which "are (relatively) more permanent" and therefore "often drivers of the long term value creation and sustainable legacy".¹³¹ Spirit of 2012's Ruth Hollis agreed that:

Taking a lead in how we measure the social impact of events is another very important role for DCMS, so that we have some coherence, some gel between the events and how we measure what success looks like over the longer term. Arguably it will be there over the longer term whereas the organising committees will pack up and leave after the event, and in the local authority things move on and priorities move on.¹³²

This is the approach being taken by Coventry City of Culture, where legacy is being delivered through a "theory of change with a set of long-term impacts and outcomes", including embedding creativity throughout policy making so that the structures might continue after the event has ended.¹³³

127 Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))

128 Q291

129 Dr Verity Postlethwaite, Dr Geoffery Z. Kohe and Dr Gyözö Molnár ([MCS0011](#))

130 Q110

131 Dr Verity Postlethwaite, Dr Geoffery Z. Kohe and Dr Gyözö Molnár ([MCS0011](#))

132 Q20

133 Q8 [Chenine Bhathena]

Evaluation

75. Evaluation enables organisers, funders and stakeholders not only to demonstrate the impacts of major events, but to learn from them for the future. For example, DCMS intends that the evaluation of the Commonwealth Games will “capture and communicate the wider benefits of hosting a major multi-sport event and help contribute to the evidence base to inform decisions on whether the UK should bid for future multi-sports events”.¹³⁴

76. Although it might seem obvious that “major cultural and sporting events should be monitored and evaluated by an independent third party with appropriate expertise”,¹³⁵ Simon Morton from UK Sport cautioned that “we are not there in terms of evaluating. Right across the sector people are asking how we should measure social impacts. There is not a good, cohesive, singular answer to that”.¹³⁶ Spirit of 2012 told us:

It is essential major sporting and cultural events are evaluated, and that the process of evaluation is reflective and encourages delivery teams and artists to understand the reasons for success and failure. Not all evaluations of major cultural events have done this well. There has been a tendency in some evaluations to over-inflate statistics about participation, by double-counting participants and errors due to small sample sizes of surveys. It would be good practice for DCMS statisticians to review.¹³⁷

77. The length of any evaluation is also key, and we have heard calls for long-term evaluations to capture the full picture of an event’s impact over and above any initial “feel-good bounce”.¹³⁸ Spirit of 2012 would “like to see much greater emphasis placed on the long-term legacy for the people who are involved, the communities and the social impact of events”.¹³⁹ Likewise, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences told us that “it is not a successful measure to only consider the lifespan of the festival but meaningful investment is for the long term, so [requires] looking to continue to monitor the impacts after 12–14 years” and that such evaluation “needs to be appropriately resourced with a sufficient lead in time”.¹⁴⁰

78. DCMS intends to measure the impact of 2022’s major events “through a series of robust evaluations” that “will establish the impact of [their] activities on community cohesion at the local, regional and national level and assess the difference in participation levels across different groups in society”.¹⁴¹ However, the 2022 Commonwealth Games will be subject to just “a three-year independent Games-wide evaluation”, due to report in 2023: one year after the event itself.¹⁴²

79. Legacy programmes and independent evaluation are vital for delivering long-term value for money from major events. However, current funding structures and limited evaluation periods give the impression that they are not a priority, as illustrated in the case of the Commonwealth Games. To ensure learnings are taken forward from 2022’s events, we intend to revisit this topic in a follow-up session later this year or early next.

134 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

135 British Film Institute ([MCS0026](#))

136 Q253

137 Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))

138 Q41 [Ruth Hollis]

139 Q2 [Ruth Hollis]

140 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences ([MCS0003](#))

141 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))

142 Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, [Legacy Plan](#), (March 2021), p 9

5 A missed opportunity

80. The Government is spending a lot of money on this year's major events. Yet while individual occasions may well deliver memorable moments, we see no golden thread linking the events or tying them to a vision for the future of this country. If the UK is to leverage major events fully, they must unite people at home and abroad around a sense of shared culture. However, we see no sense of how 2022's events will take us on a journey of renewal as a country—despite the many differing views about the image of Britishness that the events should promote.

81. Recent years have seen major events policy formed through little more than ministerial fiat, and nothing illustrates this better than the vague and shape-shifting nature of *Unboxed: Creativity in the UK*. There is no one in Government with clear ownership for 2022's programme of events, and few meaningful links between the events themselves. *In the future, we call on the Government to 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.*

Annex: Summary of visit to Coventry and Birmingham

Our visit coincided with Coventry's year as UK City of Culture (May 2021 to May 2022) and Birmingham's preparations to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Coventry

Public realm and buildings

We were shown around key city centre public spaces by Jo Shore, Head of Public Realm at Coventry City Council, who explained how playgrounds and walkways had been rebuilt by local artists using materials and designs to tell stories about Coventry's history.

At Drapers' Hall, a Regency building shut for 30 years and soon to launch as a 170–250 capacity concert and music education venue, we heard how the ethos behind its regeneration was to give every young person in the city access to music lessons and instruments. We met local schoolchildren who had just participated in Punchdrunk Enrichment's 'The Lost Lending Library': an immersive storytelling experience, which typically tours to schools. Peter Higgin from Punchdrunk Enrichment told us about the value of creating immersive creative experiences for children, and how stories can help children connect with their local history.

We also heard from Geoff Willcocks, Vice-Chairman of Historic Coventry Trust, that the City of Culture title has created impetus for the Trust to accelerate its programme of work restoring historic buildings and putting them to new uses.

Discussions with local leaders and stakeholders

We met Coventry City of Culture Trust's CEO Martin Sutherland, Creative Director Chenine Bhathena and Director of Audience Strategy Laura McMillan, as well as CEO of Coventry City Council Martin Reeves and Leader of the Council, Councillor George Duggins.

Chenine built on her oral evidence to us by outlining the theory of change behind Coventry's approach to City of Culture, which is centred on its citizens and has resulted in a model of co-creation between creative and communities. She outlined the cultural exchange that has taken place between Coventry and Beirut, Bogota, Nairobi and Detroit.

On legacy, Chenine explained that culture and art have been embedded into the policy-making and wider governance in the city and she expects the benefits of that to continue beyond the year-long programme. Likewise, Martin Reeves explained that although many of the public works in the city were in train before City of Culture, the title accelerated their progress and improved the artistic vision and quality behind them.

Reflecting on how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the economic and cultural impact of being City of Culture, Martin Sutherland acknowledged that in the short term visitor numbers have been lower than projected, but expressed hope that the renewed attention on the city will increase inbound visits in the longer term. He also explained that the

pandemic had necessitated a shift from building partnerships to utilising other forms of funding, such as trusts and foundations. Chenine echoed that the increased funding that has come into the city's cultural sector will be sustained post-2022 because of the relationships that have been built. Martin spoke about how they expect to see greater returns in the coming years, noting that culture is at the heart of economic regeneration.

Later, we met City of Culture stakeholders such as Lottery funders, arts companies and local leaders including the Lord Mayor Councillor John McNicholas. We discussed the long-term impact of the City of Culture title and heard more about the practical difficulties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some stakeholders also spoke about Coventry's history of welcoming refugees, and how culture and cultural spaces can be integral to this process.

Cultural highlights

At the Herbert Gallery, we received a tour of the Turner Prize exhibition and Coventry Biennial exhibition 'HYPER-POSSIBLE', which takes three moments from the city's recent (art) history and engaged local, national and international artists to imagine radical futures.

During a tour of Coventry Cathedral, Dean John Witcombe credited the BBC Four documentary 'Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain' with increased visitor numbers from across the UK, explaining that footfall from May to August 2021 was equal to the whole of 2019.

At Coventry Central Library, we heard about community art projects including the Caravan Gallery's participatory Pride of Place Project in Tile Hill. This mobile exhibition space engages with people who may not typically access traditional gallery spaces, and empowers local people to explore their surroundings by contributing creatively to its display. We experienced an Arts Council England-backed initiative to make VR content accessible to the public, which highlights the fact that although the UK produces a huge volume of VR content, much of it is hard for people to access. We also heard about the 'One Million Reads' project, which challenges people to reflect on the different types of content they might read or hear.

Birmingham

Volunteer programme

We visited the volunteer selection centre in the Library of Birmingham. The volunteer programme received 41,300 applicants (17,000 from the West Midlands), and 16,000 interviews are being conducted to fill 13,000 roles during the Games. The age range is more varied than at previous events, with more younger volunteers and a specific programme to engage 500 14–17-year-olds. Speaking to volunteer recruiters, we heard that the Games are an opportunity to champion both the West Midlands and its residents. There was interest from some volunteers in long-term opportunities, but some concern that clubs will need better facilities to accommodate the increased demand likely to be inspired by the Games.

We later discussed with Nicola Turner MBE, Head of Legacy, the lessons that have been learnt from London 2012's volunteer programme. These included the need to maintain and

utilise volunteers' data and build a workforce that reflects the demographics of the city. Nicola also expressed a need to maintain engagement with those who expressed an interest in volunteering but either did not complete their application or did not make it through the selection process. Drawing together what we heard from the volunteer recruiters and organisers, we reflected on the fact that legacy can be delivered by connecting volunteers with sports organisations to support increased participation.

We heard that other legacy work has been delivered on a partnership basis, with the budget met through fundraising rather than any allocation from the Games's core budget. We heard about the integration of social value into the evaluation (a first) and productive conversations that organisers are having with suppliers about what constitutes genuine social value. Furthermore, it is hoped that the introduction of accessibility standards will be maintained throughout future Games.

Briefings from organisers

On skills and training, CEO Ian Reid reflected on the contribution that is already being made to the local labour market and introduced four of the 27 apprentices currently working in the Organising Committee. They spoke about how the scheme had helped them develop more professional skills, learn how to work under pressure, and discover their talents.

Ian told us that ticket sales were already going well, including when benchmarked against the previous Glasgow and Gold Coast events. On sustainability, the Games are meeting their goal to be carbon neutral by planting more than 2022 acres of forests in the West Midlands rather than buying carbon credits.

Given the importance of the six-month culture programme running alongside the Games, Creative Director Martin Green CBE spoke about his frustration that there was no money for cultural events as part of the core budget. Although the Covid-19 pandemic had undoubtedly caused challenges for the Queen's Baton Relay, it was already proving a success. Martin also outlined some of the programme's highlights, including launch event 'Wondrous Stories', a large-scale public spectacle by dance-circus company Motionhouse.

Director of Sport Matthew Kidson gave an overview of the competition schedule, highlighting the gains that have been made in diversifying the programme. This schedule includes a fully integrated para-sport programme, a higher number of mixed events, and more medal events for women than for men, which is a first in multi-sport game history. The team had flexibility to choose events beyond the compulsory swimming and athletics and considered the commercial viability of certain sports when, for example, choosing to host beach volleyball. Matthew mentioned that pre-game training camps would be a good hosting opportunity for UK sports spaces, and a chance for them to establish themselves as effective partners ahead of the Paris Olympics in 2024. The games team are already working with DCMS to gift equipment to good causes.

Alexander Stadium

At Alexander Stadium, first built in 1975, we heard how the Games have provided a catalyst for renovating the space, including replacing a temporary stand with a more permanent structure that will allow for longer legacy usage. For example, Birmingham

City University has signed a continuing use contract and it is hoped that this will help to reduce the Stadium's financial pressures on the Birmingham City Council, which we were told are currently in the region of £2 million per year.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Government's role in hosting major events

1. We welcome the Government's commitment to building on the UK's strong reputation for delivering major events but believe more could be done to develop a strategic approach to hosting them, particularly beyond the realm of major sporting events. In an increasingly competitive national and global landscape, such a strategy would assist with the effective allocation of resources and ensure decisions to host major events are joined up with wider Government priorities. Within the next two years, DCMS should work with industry to develop and publish a strategy for hosting the full scope of major events. (Paragraph 12)
2. The lack of guaranteed funding for UK City of Culture hosts creates unnecessary uncertainty and risks undermining other fundraising efforts. *The Government should guarantee successful hosts of UK City of Culture an appropriate amount of national funding from the outset, rather than require the host to wait for a decision, to enable organisers to focus their efforts on securing other sources of funding.* (Paragraph 18)
3. The recommendations and reforms proposed in the fan led review of football governance should not be hanging over the Football Association as it goes into a bidding process for the 2028 UEFA EURO. *The Government must ensure implementation of the review's principal recommendation, the establishment of the independent regulator for English football in legislation, is completed by the time the campaign to host the 2028 competition begins in earnest.* (Paragraph 26)

Communicating a vision

4. Since the event's inception in 2018, the aims for Festival UK* 2022/Unboxed: Creativity in the UK have been vague and ripe for misinterpretation by the press and public at large. We see no evidence to refute such scepticism now. The desire for it to seemingly cater to everyone, everywhere, is a recipe for failure and investing £120 million in something when the Government, by their own admission, "did not know what it was" is an irresponsible use of public money. Despite ambitious "stretch targets" for engagement, just a few months out there remains a worrying lack of detail about how that will be achieved, particularly when it comes to touring projects internationally. We therefore intend to scrutinise how 2022's events are leveraged overseas in our subsequent inquiry on promoting Britain abroad. (Paragraph 36)
5. Handled sensitively, major events can be an opportunity for communities to reflect on difficult subjects and grow from them. Organisers and stakeholders, including the media, should not shy away from interrogating potential fault lines, but carefully assess and manage cultural risks accordingly. (Paragraph 45)
6. The listed events regime is vital to the UK's sporting and media landscape, amplifying major events and enabling the country to capitalise on its investment in them and their stars. As people's consumption of media content changes, this crucial tool needs to be gold-plated for the future. *The Government should review extending the protections currently offered under the listed events regime to digital and on-*

demand content. The Committee reiterates its view that sporting events which are a long-established centrepiece of our national sporting heritage, such as the Six Nations Rugby Tournament, should be added to the live listed events regime. (Paragraph 51)

7. The news media are vital stakeholders for major events, amplifying them at home and abroad and delivering greater value for money. Moreover, beyond this purely instrumentalist role, there is an intrinsic value to free and reliable reporting of major events. It is, therefore, concerning to hear of increased restrictions on reporting at major events and that the news media's requirements are not always fully considered in event planning and delivery. *DCMS and UK Sport should, in consultation with news media organisations, update the Gold Framework to set out requirements for publicly funded events to protect media freedoms and consider coverage requirements from bid stage and throughout the lifecycle of each event. (Paragraph 58)*

Delivering a meaningful legacy

8. Legacy programmes and independent evaluation are vital for delivering long-term value for money from major events. However, current funding structures and limited evaluation periods give the impression that they are not a priority, as illustrated in the case of the Commonwealth Games. To ensure learnings are taken forward from 2022's events, we intend to revisit this topic in a follow-up session later this year or early next. (Paragraph 79)

A missed opportunity

9. The Government is spending a lot of money on this year's major events. Yet while individual occasions may well deliver memorable moments, we see no golden thread linking the events or tying them to a vision for the future of this country. If the UK is to leverage major events fully, they must unite people at home and abroad around a sense of shared culture. However, we see no sense of how 2022's events will take us on a journey of renewal as a country—despite the many differing views about the image of Britishness that the events should promote. (Paragraph 81)
10. Recent years have seen major events policy formed through little more than ministerial fiat, and nothing illustrates this better than the vague and shape-shifting nature of Unboxed: Creativity in the UK. There is no one in Government with clear ownership for 2022's programme of events, and few meaningful links between the events themselves. *In the future, we call on the Government to 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. (Paragraph 82)*

Formal minutes

Tuesday 8 March

Members present:

Julian Knight, in the Chair

Kevin Brennan

Steve Brine

Clive Efford

Julie Elliott

Rt Hon Damian Green

Dr Rupa Huq

Simon Jupp

Jane Stevenson

Giles Watling

Draft Report (*Major cultural and sporting events*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 82 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Ninth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 9.30 am.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 6 July 2021

Chenine Bhatena, Creative Director, Coventry City of Culture Trust; **Dr Franco Bianchini**, Associate Director, Centre for Cultural Value, University of Leeds; **Ruth Hollis**, Chief Executive, Spirit of 2012

[Q1–54](#)

Tuesday 7 September 2021

Ian Reid, Chief Executive, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games; **Martin Green**, Chief Creative Officer, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Chief Creative Officer, Festival UK* 2022; **Rosanna Machado**, Chief Executive, The Platinum Jubilee Pageant

[Q55–114](#)

Tuesday 19 October 2021

Andrew Moger, Director, News Media Coalition; **Barbara Slater**, Director, BBC Sport

[Q115–200](#)

James Hampson, Director, UK & External Affairs, British Council; **Simon Morton**, Chief Operating Officer, UK Sport

[Q201–253](#)

Thursday 18 November 2021

Nigel Huddleston MP, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; **Carrie Cooke**, Deputy Director, Unboxed and City of Culture, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; **Sian Joseph**, Deputy Director, Ceremonials, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Q254–349](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

MCS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 #WeMakeEvents ([MCS0010](#))
- 2 BBC ([MCS0030](#))
- 3 Bournemouth University ([MCS0002](#))
- 4 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences ([MCS0003](#))
- 5 British Council ([MCS0032](#))
- 6 British Council ([MCS0024](#))
- 7 British Film Institute ([MCS0026](#))
- 8 Community Leisure UK ([MCS0018](#))
- 9 Dandelion Collective Festival UK*22 ([MCS0009](#))
- 10 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([MCS0012](#))
- 11 Festival UK* 2022 ([MCS0025](#))
- 12 GAMA Healthcare ([MCS0005](#))
- 13 Glasgow Life ([MCS0013](#))
- 14 LGB Alliance ([MCS0029](#))
- 15 McDowell, Dr Matthew; Dr Jung Woo Lee; and Dr Gavin Reid ([MCS0021](#))
- 16 National Museum Directors' Council ([MCS0022](#))
- 17 Natural History Museum ([MCS0004](#))
- 18 News Media Coalition ([MCS0033](#))
- 19 News Media Coalition ([MCS0028](#))
- 20 Oriane Nermond; Dave O'Brien; and Neil Lee ([MCS0031](#))
- 21 Postlethwaite, Dr Verity; Dr Geoffery Z. Kohe; and Dr Gyöző Molnár ([MCS0011](#))
- 22 Safer Disinfectant Network ([MCS0016](#))
- 23 Spirit of 2012 ([MCS0014](#))
- 24 The Local Government Association ([MCS0019](#))
- 25 UK Centre for Events Management, Leeds Beckett University ([MCS0017](#))
- 26 UK Music ([MCS0023](#))
- 27 UK Sport ([MCS0027](#))
- 28 UK Theatre and Society of London Theatre ([MCS0008](#))
- 29 University of York Management School ([MCS0007](#))
- 30 VisitScotland; and EventScotland ([MCS0001](#))
- 31 Whigham, Dr Stuart; Professor Alan Bairner; Dr Jack Black; and Dr Ali Bowes ([MCS0006](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of UK music festivals	HC 49
2nd	Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner	HC 260
3rd	Concussion in sport	HC 46
4th	Sport in our communities	HC 45
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner	HC 260
6th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 261
7th	Racism in cricket	HC 1001
8th	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate	HC 1039
1st Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 273
2nd Special Report	Economics of music streaming: Government and Competition and Markets Authority Responses to Committee's Second Report	HC 719
3rd Special Report	Sport in our communities: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report	HC 761
4th Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Ofcom Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 832

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The Covid-19 crisis and charities	HC 281
2nd	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic	HC 234
3rd	Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report	HC 291
4th	Broadband and the road to 5G	HC 153
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC	HC 1119
6th	The future of public service broadcasting	HC 156
1st Special Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19: TV licences for over 75s Government and the BBC's Responses to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 98

Number	Title	Reference
2nd Special Report	The Covid-19 crisis and charities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 438
3rd Special Report	Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report: Government Response to Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 885
4th Special Report	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 894