

Olympics & Paralympics Transportation - Update Thursday 12 May 2011

Following the previous presentation, in March 2008, when the initial strategy for moving the vast numbers of participants, spectators and media was outlined, Southern Branch asked that Clare Springett returned to provide the latest update now that the event is just over 12 months off. This update presentation was made to a well attended branch event on Thursday 12 May when over 40 delegates were treated to a detailed insight on how the initial plans have now been implemented.

Clare provided some mind-boggling data.

71,500 Olympic and Paralympic 'family' members – Athletes, media, marketing partners who need to be moved between the various venues with an aim for reliability, safe and secure transportation with a journey of less than 30 minutes, to the nearest access to the venue. This group will be transported in various road vehicles, depending on the size of each group.

Based on previous games, estimates have been made of the number of spectators for each day of the games and for each discipline/venue with numbers ranging between just under 100,000 to just over 800,000, the latter being 2 days mid-games when swimming events overlap with athletics. As an example Day 7 indicates that over 180,000 spectators will be leaving one venue between 2300 and midnight.

Following the Atlanta games when spectators, in the time honoured US fashion drove to the stadium road traffic congestion resulted in chaotic scenes and long queues even making it necessary for athletes to change and 'warm up' in their coaches, valuable lessons have been learnt. The 2012 games will be accessible only by public transport or 'Green' corridors with an emphasis on the Olympic Park (3km x 3km) and River Zone venues where higher attendance figures are anticipated.

Clare showed a couple of pictures from previous games which illustrated the possible implications of high crowd numbers



Queue starts here, through the car park floors, over the footbridge and ends here

In there, somewhere, is the Olympic Torch



In an encouraging note, Clare advised that the Games Transport Infrastructure is good and "all on track" with increased capacity either in place or reaching that objective on all rail networks. She mentioned Stratford Regional Station was trebling passenger throughput, the Lea Valley Lines (that run alongside the Olympic Park) had increased capacity by 400%, the Great Eastern Main Line is increasing its services by 100% at Stratford. Some examples of the investment that has been put into the transport networks to cope with demand.

High Speed 1, a new railway, is worth mentioning in that regular services will operate from Brussels with a journey time of 1 hour 40 minutes and Paris 2 hrs 10 minutes. Is it worth staying at these points and commuting daily?

The Olympic Network Routes were detailed and followed much that originally intended, and advised at the previous presentation, though the finer detail was still to be exactly determined in respect of times of operation and how the dedicated 'Olympic Lanes' would be marked.

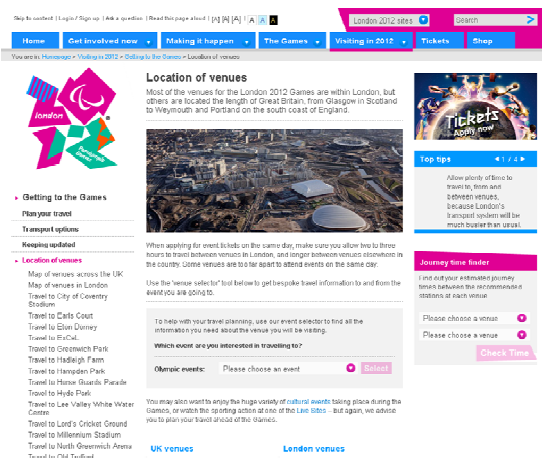
Clare continued with explaining Travel Demand Management. Despite the investment of £6.5bn, transport will be a challenge throughout the entire event with an estimated 20 million additional trips during the games with a stunning additional 3 million on the busiest day alone. It was stressed that these were additional trips to the 3.5 million currently made on the London Underground. It is evident that on certain occasions and at certain locations demand would exceed capacity.

To address this and to allow London's 'normal' life to continue as best possible many options were considered on a feasibility basis being reduced to those which were considered reasonable and practicable to influence

travel behaviour for 'remaining London'. Though there were 'out of town' venues which were also included in the considerations London was obviously considered the 'hot spot'.

Starting soon and continuing through to the games awareness campaigns, Olympic route network advice together with travel information services will be available with specific web sites, journey planning guidance and mapping for spectators.

The commercial life of the capital remains a major consideration and a Business Influencer Campaign is in progress providing travel advice for business was launched in November 2010 when over 40 organisations representing 204,000 companies in London have already agreed to pass advice to their members on the game transport challenges. In addition it is targeted that a further 500 companies, employing over 200,000 will sign up to site specific advice with, at the time of presentation over 73 already enlisted.



Clare told us that many organisations, when approached had underestimated the possible impact to their staff daily travel needs; many thinking it would have little or no impact. In summary, London 2012 is the largest event ever staged in the UK with massive opportunities and challenges for the country and, most comforting of all, there has been significant progress on all aspects of the games management.

Awareness and viable communication was the main thrust to reduce pressure on the transport network and consequential affects on business. A recent innovation is the Games Travel Page which is located alongside that of ticket sales and will enable visitors to plan their travel arrangements when purchasing their tickets.

Clare closed the presentation advising that there had been nothing bigger than this organised in the UK which had and continued to present tremendous challenges to the organisers, competitors and the public. This was offset by the potential benefits in terms of business for the UK, prestige in demonstrating the we can put on a show that will be appreciated across the globe and leave a valuable legacy following the investment that has been made in infrastructure and transport.

The Branch is extremely grateful to Clare for giving up her time and making the presentation with optimism and enthusiasm.

Note: With so much information being provided, this report is abbreviated to cover the major aspects/highlights.