

# 11

## Realising a Legacy

Stewart Hilland

### Learning objectives

- Appreciate the growing importance of creating event legacies and how this phenomenon stems from the expectations related to large scale, high profile public events.
- Examine the strategic approach that can be taken in leveraging event legacy.
- Explore the application of event portfolios across all sectors as a method of achieving legacies.

### Introduction

Although some events may be seen as ends in themselves, to be enjoyed for their intrinsic merits alone, many who design, plan and deliver events are interested in generating enduring outcomes that go far beyond the time frame of the event itself. This long term perspective is common in the public sector, where policy makers in national governments, local authorities and cities have turned to events because of the economic, social and other benefits that they are believed to bring. In this context, events are seen as agents of renewal, regeneration and redevelopment that offer wide-ranging legacy opportunities linked to the building of new facilities, infrastructure improvements, employment programmes, housing developments and so on. The utilisation of events for this purpose is generally associated with large-scale, peripatetic, sporting competitions like the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup and Commonwealth Games, that are staged at great cost to the host, and therefore require strong return on investment (ROI) to justify an expenditure that is largely funded out of the public purse. The assessment of these events, and others that are smaller in scale, but nevertheless important in terms of investment and consequence, has been the focus in academic literature, so the chapter will begin by considering aspects of this research as a route into a much broader examination of the public, not-for-profit and private sectors. The discussion will turn from high profile and high impact

single public spectacles to significant but less ambitious on-going events that are part of a more subtle, integrated and managed approach. The individual events in these situations may not command the same degree of attention that is accorded to their mega cousins but collectively, often as a portfolio, they have the capacity to be leveraged for substantial and far reaching gains.

## Legacy - a definition

Legacy has become something of a buzz word over the past decade or so and is now frequently used indiscriminately (and incorrectly) to refer to any form of beneficial outcome in any situation. So what is the correct usage of legacy in the context of an event and how does legacy differ from other terms, like event impacts and event outcomes, which appear in event management literature? A thorough analysis and discussion of event legacy is provided by Thompson et al. (2013), who unpick a concept that researchers have described as multifaceted (Chalip, 2002), elusive (Cashman, 2006) and still evolving (Gold and Gold, 2008). Based on the cross-checking of the terminology and its interpretation by writers in the field of sports events, five key considerations emerged in the thematic review:

- 1 The use of 'legacy' rather than another word like 'impact' or 'outcome'
- 2 If legacy is bestowed or planned
- 3 The temporal nature of legacy, so whether or not legacy has to be permanent/lasting or if it can be described as short term/long term
- 4 The need to think about legacy from both positive and negative viewpoints
- 5 The setting of legacy from local to global

Event situations are certainly complex and the finer details of the way that legacy is interpreted can be set out case by case, but the pervasive use of the word means that a general, overarching definition of event legacy would be helpful. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into a thorough discourse on this subject but reflecting on the findings of Thomson et al. (2013) and their five key considerations, a simple interpretation is offered that places legacy in the context of event effects. The term 'effects' is chosen because all events have effects; in a sense, the effect is the *raison d'être* of the event. Legacy is then seen as the long term or permanent effects that take shape before as well as after an event and they are effects that need to be specifically planned in order to avoid negative consequences.

## Long term effects: public sector event legacy

The rhetoric surrounding legacy is due in large part to the long term outcomes that are predicted from the investment in major international sporting competitions: notably the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup and Commonwealth Games. These events may be short in duration but they are high in expectations and the pressure on hosts to devise something distinctive and memorable frequently leads to a hefty commitment of public money. The most expensive price tag belongs to the Olympic Games: the 'basic' delivery cost is weighty in itself but the scale of funding jumps appreciably when the expenditure for major Olympic infrastructure and other projects is added on. In staging the London 2012 Games, for example, the operational, day-to-day costs for running the event amounted to £3 billion (DCMS, 2012a) and this was largely met from sponsorship, ticket sales, merchandise and funds provided by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). However, the total bill rocketed when outlay by the Olympic Delivery Authority on construction and transport developments, a figure of over £6.7 billion, was added on (DCMS, 2012a). In addition, public money is widely used to finance many other, secondary, schemes. These projects may not get off the ground without the push provided by the event and they usually require a funding involvement that extends well after the event. Turning to London again, the legacy story 'Beyond London 2012' produced in the wake of the Games (DCMS, 2012b) identifies a raft of legacy goals under the headings of 'Sport', 'Growth', 'People' and 'City', including many programmes that fit into this secondary category.

The scale of legacy ambitions connected with London 2012 is not unprecedented, as demonstrated by Leopkey and Parent (2012) in their detailed study of Olympic bid documents and final reports. The content analysis undertaken by these authors points to the growing significance attached to legacy goals in recent decades; a trend that is certainly influenced by the expectations of the IOC and also the need for Olympic hopefuls and eventual hosts to divert attention from the financial investment required for the long term rewards that the investment can generate. Although extensive infrastructure developments linked to the event generally receive the most attention and publicity, the types of legacy benefits go much further. They encompass cultural, economic, environmental, image, education, nostalgia, the Olympic movement, political, psychological, social, sport and sustainability themes, some of which have only an indirect or even tenuous connection with the event itself.

Part of the challenge with legacies is to define them precisely and be transparent about how they are to be realised. Often, legacy objectives become overly complex, as in the case of the Olympic Games where the

legacy themes 'have become progressively interconnected over time and, as such, are not distinct from each other and exist with significant overlap' (Leopold and Parent, 2012 p.935). Multifarious, interconnected and ambitious projects require careful orchestration if they are to succeed and whilst legacy is certainly on the agenda these days, it is frequently low down on the to-do list compared with other elements of the event planning process. Indeed, some host nations still view legacies as a bolt-on, in that they secure the event first because it offers legacy possibilities and identify specific projects later that can be accomplished by using the event as the driver. Legacies may even be added on as a knee jerk response to doubts over the achievement of expected effects: if they are unlikely to be met in the way intended, tag on extra legacy goals in the hope of gaining some longer term benefits and thereby demonstrating ROI. There are cases where legacy planning has been left until the event is over, like the well documented usage plan for the Athens 2004 Olympic facilities. This is a prime example of tardy practice that resulted in lost opportunities and revenues (Kissoudi, 2008).

### **Industry voice: Helen Rowbotham, Director of Consulting at CSM Strategic (formerly PMP Legacy) , UK**

It is amazing that it has taken so long for legacy planning to become common practice and be considered early in the strategic planning process. In the past, many hosts thought that the facilities were the legacy and that building them was all that was necessary. However, cities appreciate now that with all of the resources needed to host events, the opportunities to provide a broader legacy are far greater than the sports infrastructure. On the big projects, the investment is so significant and there is such a long lead-in time that the legacy planning needs to begin at the feasibility stage. This is still quite rare but it is how it happened with Glasgow 2014...we had a feasibility team made up of the Scottish Executive, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Glasgow City Council and Event Scotland. We worked together to explore legacy opportunities and challenges, using a cost/benefit approach. This is how it should be...a strategic approach to legacy planning right at the start, ensuring early ownership and a legacy focussed approach to event planning.

The proactive manner in which Glasgow 2014 embraced legacy is evident from the dedicated website and the extensive documentation assembled in the years leading up to the event: see, for example, *A Games Legacy For Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2009), which follows on from the bid documents (see Glasgow 2014, 2009). This example demonstrates that with some events, legacy is now being considered at a much earlier stage in the planning process. But is this early enough and are decision makers linking their event planning to a discernible legacy strategy: one where the event is seen as an opportunity to take advantage of what the host has to offer