

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Delivering the Transport Challenge Tuesday 11 March 2008

When the spectacle of the modern Olympics was last held in London, 1948, the Transportation strategy was a simple affair, about 3 pages of A4 typed sheets and that was it! Time has moved on and in the bid for the 2012 event, the 2012 Olympic Delivery Authority was required to determine their entire proposals as part of the bid. The success in achieving the promotion of the event effectively meant "you have told us you can do it and how you propose to do it, now deliver it"

Southern Branch members were given a taste of the depth and complexity of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) requirements at a presentation given by Clare Springett, an Olympic Delivery Authority team member whose challenging task is to put words into actions.

Clare presented an overview of the demands that are to be achieved for transporting the Olympic and Paralympic Family (Athletes, Officials, etc). – to and from venues, not only within London, but at provincial venues. Figures of 55,000 people moving on a daily basis in safe, secure and reliable transport with a journey time of less than 30 minutes and to be set down as close to a venue as possible are amongst the plans that have to be implemented and delivered. Having fulfilled this aspect the next demand would be for public attendances/travelling arrangements without causing too much disruption to the normal life of the venue locations.

Games transport: the challenge

- Provide safe, secure and reliable transport for all client groups
- Keep London moving and make hosting the Games a positive experience for the whole city
- Leave a legacy and facilitate the regeneration of East London
- Achieve maximum value for money and minimise cost

The emphasis for all venues will be making the games accessible but only by public transport with additional buses, tube services, trains etc. being the mainstay of mass movement. All these aspects will be heavily invested to ensure delivery. Primary routes have been determined both for London and 'external' venues and, for the duration of the games, priority routes will be implemented though whether this is in addition to existing bus lanes has yet to be decided.



Olympic priority lane used in Athens, 2004

Critical dates for the event will spread across most of the three summer months of 2012. The first key date will be 27 June when the venues, media centre and Olympic village opens up to 27 July when the Opening Ceremony takes place. The showpiece closes on 13 August to allow the equally attractive Paralympics to start on 27 August. The finale for this event will be 9 September and on 16 September the organisers can, hopefully, relax after managing to make the event one to remember at the same time leaving a lasting tangible legacy for London and the other purpose built venues.

Legacy is a much used word for this event and though it is early days in the arrangements it is evident that this aspect is a high priority with the main stadium being revamped and possibly used by a London football Club. The additional transport 'hardware' will remain such as enhancing the East London Line, additional capacity London Underground carriages to mention a couple. On top of all this, a massive regeneration of East London will be achieved, providing better standards of living and employment for its residents.



Clare Springett detailing the London Olympic venues

Clare's presentation was, in the main, an opener to the planned arrangements and despite many searching questions from those present many delegates left with a more favourable impression of the tasks ahead and the opportunity for those responsible to deliver the arrangements which will be under the world's microscope. The Committee is grateful to Clare and the Olympic Delivery Authority for this impressive presentation and we hope that a further updating event can be arranged again.