

Introduction

We announced in *Programme for Government* in 2001 that the Executive would seek to develop a major events strategy for Scotland. This builds on the work that we have done to secure the Ryder Cup for Scotland in 2014 and our bid to host the European Football Championships in 2008 (Euro 2008).

The development of a major events strategy for Scotland began in summer 2001 and it has involved some 18 months research, consultation, appraisal and evaluation. This work has been overseen throughout by a steering group involving representatives of the key public sector bodies already involved in events: **sportscotland**, VisitScotland, the Scottish Arts Council, Scottish and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, CoSLA and the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

They have been helped in this process by Objective Performance Limited (OPL), one of the world's leading sponsorship and events companies. The OPL team has included members from Australia - notably Craig McLatchey who was part of the leadership team for the successful Sydney Olympics in 2000 - as well as the UK and Scotland. In the course of 2002 OPL met with more than 80 individuals and organisations involved in major events both here in Scotland and overseas. In October 2002 they presented their report to the steering group. That report and the conclusions agreed by the steering group now forms the basis of this document which outlines our strategic approach to Major Events 2003-2015.

Why develop a major events strategy?

Scotland is an event-rich country and these events serve to boost our international profile and image. World-class cultural and sporting events such as the Edinburgh Festivals or the Open Golf Championships (which we host on average at least every second year) are instantly associated with Scotland in many people's eyes. They demonstrate that we are a dynamic and modern country capable of making an impact - and delivering - on an international stage. They also serve to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to our shores who come to experience events that are uniquely Scottish.

The staging of major sports events here also provides inspiration and ambition and encourages participation and competition at all levels. Governing bodies of sport and other sport organisations benefit from increased exposure and influence. Athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers benefit from preparation programmes and the competitions themselves. Our athletes have the opportunity to compete under home conditions in front of the home support and young people in Scotland are inspired to participate and excel.

There are many organisations and agencies in both the public and private sectors responsible at present for delivering successful events in Scotland. Although each one can deliver success individually we have found overwhelming agreement with the view that, in order to fulfil our potential and compete on an international stage, Scotland must develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach to major events.

Despite our enviable reputation, consultation on developing the major events strategy has demonstrated key areas that must be addressed if Scotland is to raise its game and achieve its ambition to become one of the world's foremost events destinations by 2015.

- **Improved co-ordination between event organisers and funders in Scotland.** There is for example no single diary or register of events in this country to avoid clashes. The public sector funding organisations would welcome more formal arrangements for collaboration. Potential sponsors would welcome a more co-ordinated approach from those seeking support for their events. Event organisers would welcome a single point of entry when considering Scotland for their events.
- **Better links between major events and other strategic priorities - such as marketing Scottish tourism and business.** Because major events are dealt with on a one-off basis, Scotland is failing to capitalise on the opportunities to underpin key tourism, business or other marketing messages by making the links to major events. The most successful events demonstrate excellence in Scottish culture and sport. We should be doing more to make connections to existing strategies including the *Tourism Strategy* and *Tourism Framework for Action*, *Scotland's National Cultural Strategy*, *Sport 21* and *Smart Successful Scotland*.
- **Better use of existing and new infrastructure throughout Scotland.** Scotland has a unique set of assets - whether it is world-renowned golf courses, its wild and dramatic scenery, its major football and rugby grounds or its modern conference facilities. We could capitalise on these and maximise their use by a coherent strategic approach to events. A strategic approach would also help identify gaps and assist in the proper planning of new facilities to avoid the creation of “white elephants”. It would help to spread the benefits of events to areas throughout Scotland and outside the traditional high season.
- **Better knowledge about international events, and agreed mechanisms for appraising and evaluating the impact of events.** The international events industry is increasingly competitive and requires increasing degrees of sophistication from bidders. The cost of bidding for and developing existing events is also increasing. There is a need to have high quality information about events that are available and the nature of any international competition. There is also a need to have robust methods for appraising proposals to invest in events. This should look at costs and benefits and should be shared as far as possible between all the public sector agencies involved in events.
- **Build expertise to reduce the risk of unsuccessful event bids.** There is no formal opportunity to learn from the success - or failure - of others who have bid for similar events in the past. Those bidding to bring events to Scotland must therefore reinvent the wheel every time they bid; this wastes valuable knowledge and can lead to less professional approaches to event owners.
- **Build best practice partnerships between public and private sectors to maximise the benefits of hosting events in Scotland.** A strategic approach would enable the public and private sectors to work together more effectively, to learn best practice from each other and to agree how best to deliver objectives common to both to the benefit of the Scottish economy and Scotland's international image. This approach would also help existing events develop to reach their full potential.
- **Better return on investment and economies of scale from developing a portfolio of events.** Bidding for and developing one off major events can involve high risk. By

developing a portfolio of events, fixed and start-up costs can be shared as well as the costs of research and impact measurement tools. A portfolio approach can spread the risk of a single bid for an individual event.

Proposals for Scotland's major events strategy

Based on this assessment of our current approach, we have identified the four key areas for action:

- **Building Scotland's international image** by maximising the benefits of our existing successes and our "icon" events including the Edinburgh Festivals and the Open Golf;
- **Developing a portfolio of sporting and cultural events** to underpin Scottish tourism and Scottish brand messages, to strengthen our sporting and cultural environments and to attract visitors to areas of Scotland with spare accommodation capacity, particularly outside traditional high season;
- **Co-ordinating existing activity** and exploring opportunities to enhance existing events being taken forward by public and private sector partners;
- **Building a centre of knowledge and expertise** on securing, promoting and delivering events to secure Scotland's reputation as a premier events destination by 2015.

EventScotland

In order to deliver these objectives a new body will be established to give central co-ordination and leadership to the drive to secure major events for Scotland. Called **EventScotland**, this will be a tight organisation and its main task will be to work in partnership with public bodies including those represented on the steering group and private sector events organisers to deliver a portfolio of events in Scotland. This body would build on the success of existing events such as the Edinburgh Festivals and the Open Golf Championships and on the experience gained during the Ryder Cup and Euro 2008 bids, and it would seek out opportunities for hosting major events, working closely with other players. This new body will be small, flexible and arms length from Government.

In detail, EventScotland's main tasks will be to:

- (a) **share information** on the size, date and nature of existing and proposed events in Scotland. It will make available detailed information to partner organisations with an interest in events and provide information to the public through platforms such as visitscotland.com. As well as direct relationships with key players, an element of this function may include the establishment of a commercially secure "extranet" available to partners.

The provision of a centrally held events calendar for Scotland is an essential pre-requisite if we are to achieve our aim of becoming a foremost events destination by 2015. EventScotland will develop with partners the protocols necessary to ensure that this often commercially sensitive information can be gathered and shared appropriately to the benefit of all.

- (b) **Assess, evaluate and determine** which events EventScotland should support. This will include an economic, social and environmental appraisal of proposed events to determine whether they fit agreed priorities and how much - if any - EventScotland funding should

be provided to it. EventScotland will work closely with public sector partners who already fund events to develop a common approach to event appraisal.

EventScotland will prioritise:

- Events which highlight and capitalise on the unique visual appeal and landscape of Scotland
- Events which showcase Scottish culture and sport
- Events which Scotland can “own”, nurture, develop and (on occasion) export
- Events which require little or no infrastructure additions, or which tie to planned infrastructure development
- Events which underpin the priorities of the Scottish Executive and other public sector agencies involved in major event organisation
- Events which have an intrinsic appeal to Scots
- Events which highlight and promote the unique appeal and proposition of individual locations (city, town or rural)
- Events which focus on quiet times of the year
- Events which offer a direct economic return on investment through tourism, promotion of Scottish business or other means
- Events which stimulate a sense of pride in the local population
- Events which are sustainable and which are accessible to a wide range of communities and groups
- Events which can secure favourable broadcast and print media coverage in key tourism/investment markets
- Events of an international, prestige and leading status
- Events capable of generating new and/or complementary initiatives within the same sector at national, regional and grassroots levels
- Events which offer commercial and showcase opportunities for Scottish businesses
- Events which are available, achievable and affordable

(c) EventScotland will stipulate conditions to govern use of the public money available to it. The role of EventScotland will be to add value to events rather than to replace or duplicate existing funding sources. It will require stringent evaluation of events to assess their success and it will develop these detailed criteria in conjunction with the other public sector organisations that already fund events. It will develop a methodology to ensure that these assessments and checks can happen quickly in order to maintain the commercial competitiveness of EventScotland.

(d) EventScotland will lead and support partners in **securing new events for Scotland**. This will involve identifying events available internationally which Scotland should bid for; building the appropriate partnerships to deliver successful bids; and interacting with event owners to bring these events to Scotland. Where appropriate, EventScotland will support other partners (local authorities, sports governing bodies or event organisers for example) rather than lead a bid itself.

This is some of the most commercially driven work which EventScotland would undertake requiring it to put together quickly private/public sector funding or underwriting packages, contract hotel accommodation and sponsors and secure Ministerial endorsement where necessary.

- (e) EventScotland will help to **develop and improve existing events** in order to maximise their benefits across the whole of Scotland. This again is commercially driven work involving, for example, identifying sponsors to work with existing event owners to extend their current activities, or working to develop satellite events in Scotland associated with existing successful events.
- (f) It will develop and maintain a rolling **portfolio of events** in line with strategic objectives (increasing visitor numbers in areas/times of spare capacity; promoting Scottish tourism/Scotland the Brand key messages; developing events to address health, education, and closing the gap issues). This area of work will require in the first instance a close working relationship with the Executive and other public sector partners in order to maintain a portfolio that closely reflects Executive objectives.
- (g) EventScotland will develop a **centre of knowledge and expertise** to underpin and inform the above activity. It would learn from, codify and make available information about the funding, promotion and delivery of existing successful events. It would also learn from and make available information about the lessons learned from bidding for events including the Ryder Cup and Euro 2008.
- (h) It will **promote and communicate** EventScotland as the hub of Scotland's major events strategy to partners, Ministers, the Scottish public and the international events audience.
- (i) EventScotland will be **accountable to Ministers** and demonstrate an effective link to **secure Ministerial endorsements** as required. The clear and demonstrable support of Government is an essential element of a successful international events organisation.

The organisation of EventScotland

EventScotland will be a joint venture between the Executive and VisitScotland. Although it will receive its funds through VisitScotland, it will account for these funds separately and EventScotland will operate independently of VisitScotland in its day to day activity. It will be governed by a Supervisory Board chaired by the Minister for Tourism Culture and Sport with representatives of **sportscotland**, VisitScotland, the Scottish Arts Council, Scottish and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, CoSLA and the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Minister will also invite key private sector organisations to be represented on the Supervisory Board.

EventScotland will also establish an Operations Advisory Group to assist and advise the Chief Executive.

Funding for EventScotland

Ministers have agreed in the Budget 2003-06 that they will allocate £10m new funds to the implementation of a major events strategy for Scotland (£2m in 2003-04, £3m in 2005-06 and £5m in 2005-06). It is intended that this new money would form the principal part of the budget for EventScotland. In due course, EventScotland would seek to bring in sponsorship funds from private sector companies in support of their work. Other public sector agencies would also co-fund individual events along with EventScotland in order to maximise the benefits of these events to Scotland. The EventScotland funding would add value to other partners' funding rather than duplicate or replace it. The funding role for EventScotland might

be to support international marketing of the event or to facilitate its broadcast through the web, TV or video production. Such footage could then be used to attract other events in Scotland or to promote Scotland more widely overseas.

Next Steps

- Set up EventScotland to begin operation in spring/summer 2003
- EventScotland to draw up detailed business plan for approval by the Supervisory Board
- Compile a portfolio of events 2003-2015