

Creating the golden thread

An ambition for major events in the UK

Creating the golden thread

An ambition for major events in the UK

An expert advisory report from:
Warwick Business School

Commissioned by:
Spirit of 2012

Writing team:
Jonathan Neelands
Haley Beer
Mark Scott
Andrew Dixon
Ellie Smith

May 2024



Contents

Foreword.....	3
Executive summary	4
1: Context & background	
Background and scope.....	7
Mission and methodology	11
2: Creating the golden thread	
The golden thread of a national ambition.....	14
Common outcomes pursued by UK major events.....	15
An ecosystem approach to delivering the national ambition.....	17
An ecosystem focussed theory of change	22
3: Conclusions & recommendations	
Recommendations	25
Conclusion: These islands of wonder	28
Appendices	
Appendix 1: List of events included in analysis.....	30
Appendix 2: Roundtable attendees..	31
Appendix 3: Roundtable concerns and recommendations.....	32
Appendix 4: Suggested outcomes and outcome indicators	35
Bibliography and references	40



Big Big BIG Sing Day 2014, Glasgow, Image Credit: Dominic Coccozza

Foreword

"I am delighted to introduce this report, which sets out a national ambition for how we can strengthen the major events ecosystem and expand the social impact from the legacy of events. The UK is already a world leader in putting on spectacular events – as last year's Eurovision and Coronation demonstrate. Our events not only showcase the best of British talent and creativity, they bring communities together, creating shared memories that last a lifetime.

In January 2023, Spirit of 2012 published the results of an 18-month long inquiry into the ways that events build happy, thriving and connected communities. The report explored the impacts of a wide range of events that have taken place in the UK over the past twenty years, and made five key recommendations to strengthen the infrastructure and accountability, reach and delivery of major events to ensure a long-term legacy for the investment.

However, in exploring these different events, we were struck that what was often missing was a sense of what bound these events together and how they operated in a wider system of place-based change. The DCMS Select Committee referred to this as the 'golden thread'; we've sometimes described it as a 'connective tissue' that brings together the various impacts of events, and works to ensure they are more than the sum of their parts. This connective tissue should not be the job of individual event organising committees, rightly preoccupied as they are with delivering the event itself, but must be the joint responsibility of multiple stakeholders.

As Chief Executive of Spirit of 2012, the social legacy funder from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, I am proud that we have been part of this ecosystem over the past decade. We have awarded over 200 grants, reaching 3.5m people, supported 60,000 volunteering opportunities and over 86,000 people to participate in regular arts and culture or physical activity. We've seen first-hand that events can contribute powerfully to the creation of happier people and happier communities. We also know there is more that needs to be done to ensure that the UK's considerable talent in staging events is fully capitalised on, ensuring that events deliver on their potential to be mechanisms for lasting change.

This report is a major step forward in establishing a shared ambition for the role of events in society – one that seeks to seed diversity, optimism and connectedness within our communities.

I would like to thank the team at Warwick Business School for all their work on this report, as well as the many contributors from event organisers, local authorities and funders who generously shared their expertise."

Ruth Hollis
Chief Executive, Spirit of 2012



Image Credit: Spirit of 2012

Executive summary

Inspired by the unifying spirit of the opening ceremony and success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the UK's major events continue to positively project an image of the 'Best of Britain'. The UK's unique talents and strengths are showcased and enjoyed in events that increasingly emphasise the widely shared values of cultural and sporting excellence, inclusion, innovation, diversity, and community engagement.

Major events also serve as a driver for economic impact; an evaluation one year on from the Commonwealth Games 2022 found that activity funded by the Games had delivered approximately £1.2 billion of economic output, £79.5 million of social value, and 24,030 FTE years of employment.¹

Recent analysis of the UK City of Culture programme has found that for a relatively small programme cost of £103.1 million for the three titles held so far, of which £61.7 million is from public funds – additional investment of over £1 billion was generated into the local economies of host cities.

But despite the success of individual events, the UK Government's Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has raised questions about the UK-wide impact of the substantial investment required for staging major events. In 2022, for instance, expenditure by the UK Government and DCMS on major events was in the region of £1 billion.² The Select Committee further noted that a coherent UK-wide strategy was lacking, and called for future planning to include a systematic evaluation of events over time to maximise the learning from events and the value of their legacy impact.

"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."

Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Report, March 2022³

This expert advisory report is intended to inform the development of a UK strategy for major events, as recommended by the Select Committee. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that UK's major events can continue to generate positive outcomes. As such, the report draws on extensive analysis of business plans and evaluations of major sporting and cultural events staged in the UK since 2012.

The results of the analysis generated the input for three senior-level roundtables attended by event funders, event organisers, and senior officers from the culture, sporting, and event departments of local government from all four nations of the UK. The challenges, concerns, and suggestions that emerged from the roundtables have informed the recommendations of this report.

The findings from the analysis and the consultations identified common benefits that are afforded by events of all kinds. These include memorable collective experiences, civic pride, new partnerships, collaboration and capacity building, and economic and legacy impact.

¹ KPMG LLP (2024) *Evaluation of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games – One Year Post-Games Evaluation Report*, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-birmingham-2022-commonwealth-games-one-year-post-games-report> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

² House of Commons: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2022) *Major cultural and sporting events – Ninth Report of Session 2021-22*, Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9285/documents/160442/default/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

³ House of Commons: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2022) *Major cultural and sporting events – Ninth Report of Session 2021-22*, Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9285/documents/160442/default/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).



75th Anniversary of the Empire Windrush, Windrush Day 2024, National Maritime Museum Greenwich, Image Credit: Katherine Arundell

The report builds on significant existing initiatives such as the major event strategies of Scotland and Wales, and UK Sport's Gold Framework. The mission is to identify the 'golden thread' and 'connective tissue' that links events of all kinds, scales, and locations, and to make recommendations for a positive and progressive ambition-based and outcomes-led UK strategy.

The drivers for this will be:

- **a common evaluation framework with standardised metrics and methods for measuring and learning from the collective impact of major events across the UK;**
- **a compelling ten-year ambition that maximises the positive benefits and value impact of major events; and**
- **a more effective major events ecosystem of operations and management.**

A common evaluation framework for measuring the collective impact of major events across the UK should include the following outcome areas:

1. economic value;
2. stability and development of the event sector;
3. health and wellbeing;
4. social and cultural value; and
5. environmental sustainability.

We propose that the positive and aspirational benefits of major events, coupled with common outcomes, provide a foundation for a strong national ambition, that can guide the development of a UK Major Events Strategy. To gain UK-wide traction and support, the strategy will need to be based on a vision that is aspirational, unifying (across all four UK nations), inclusive, and celebratory.

The success of a national ambition for major events depends on orchestrating the collective work of multiple stakeholders at destination, regional, and national levels across a dynamic and interdependent ecosystem. In turn, the success of the ecosystem depends on the capacity of multiple stakeholders to collaborate on delivery.

We suggest a headline governance model that recognises the importance of national and local government as accountable bodies with the power to convene, make decisions, and maintain partnerships. The national ambition will be achieved by aligning the major events ecosystem to progress towards the five thematic outcome areas and by putting in place a common and consistent evaluation framework.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations that will strengthen the golden thread that unifies major events and maximise the impact value from significant levels of public investments:

- **Central UK Government and the devolved governments to convene investors, local government, and the events industry to develop a ten-year major events strategy;**
- **For DCMS to develop a national evaluation framework based on the five common outcome areas that will be consistently measured across events and over time;**
- **Spirit of 2012 and the AHRC to lead a consortium of funders, policy makers and major events organisers to establish a Major Events Data Observatory;**
- **DCMS to appoint a National Major Event Relationship Manager within the DCMS to collaborate closely with a designated Destination/Event Relationship Managers; and**
- **The business plan for the major event must take into consideration the need for dedicated funding to cover the post-event and legacy periods.**

Context & background

Background and scope 7

Mission and methodology 11

Background and scope

In the decade following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the various national events that marked Her Majesty the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, the UK has established a reputation for excellence in organising significant events. Since 2012, the UK has played host to multiple high-profile events including two Commonwealth Games, two Jubilees, and three UK Cities of Culture.

Additionally, numerous internationally recognised sporting events and cultural festivals, some held regularly, have been hosted in the UK. For example, in the ten-year period between 2012 and 2022, UK Sport — an arm’s-length body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) — secured 123 major sporting events for the UK.⁴

The UK also hosts thousands of annual local events, ranging from local adaptations of national celebrations to unique expressions of regional and local pride in specific cultural and heritage identities.

For the purposes of this expert advisory report, we define a major event as a significant gathering or occurrence, often with national or international significance, such as sporting competitions, cultural events, and festivals or commemorative occasions, which can be a catalyst for positive social and economic renewal. We recognise major events as a powerful tool in contributing to positive individual wellbeing and fostering of stronger community connections.

In March 2022, the Culture, Media and Sport Commons Select Committee produced their findings from an inquiry into the value, impact, and evaluation of major cultural and sporting events in the UK. The inquiry also considered the potential role of major cultural and sporting events in celebrating the UK’s national identity and values.

The inquiry was instigated by the realisation by MPs that several events of international importance were due to be hosted in the UK in 2022. The report, *Major Cultural and Sporting Events*, demonstrated that despite the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on public gatherings and on the sporting, cultural, and hospitality sectors, 2022 was going to be a bumper year for major cultural, sporting, and ceremonial events in the UK.⁵

In its written evidence submission to the Select Committee, the DCMS mentions eight major cultural, sporting, and ceremonial events that were expected to receive some form of funding from the public purse over the course of that year.⁶ These events included the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 (its start having been delayed by the pandemic), Festival UK* 2022 (later to become UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK), and the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

⁴ Ernst & Young LLP (2021) *The impact of major sport events: Study of soft power, trade and investment impacts*, London: City of London Corporation/UK Sport. Available at: <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/-/media/files/events/211130-mse-soft-power-ti.ashx?la=en&hash=13C1F12678069EE8DFB5FE43071B5DBE> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

⁵ House of Commons: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2022) *Major cultural and sporting events – Ninth Report of Session 2021-22*, Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9285/documents/160442/default/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

⁶ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2021) *Written Evidence Submitted by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the DCMS Select Committee on Major Cultural and Sporting Events (14 May 2021)*, London: House of Commons. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/35941/pdf/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).



Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013, Bridge of Brides,
Image Credit: Belfast Evening Telegraph

Alongside headline events, there were many other local, regional, and UK-wide festivals and sporting events taking place. These included established annual and biennial major events programmes in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, and other cities.

There is increasing evidence that the success of recent major events is encouraging local authorities and devolved governments to develop events strategies to accelerate their longer-term ambitions.

Based on the examination of evaluation reports, various studies, and documentation from the DCMS, our analysis demonstrates that there were at least 15 events that took place in 2022 which could be classified as major events in their respective fields.⁷

For these 15 major events:

- **There was event-related activity in all four nations of the UK**
- **85% of the total UK population lived within 50 miles of a major event**
- **Major sporting events took place in 25 cities across the UK**
- **Cultural events took place in over 130 locations across the UK**
- **There was direct attendance of circa 2.7 million at sporting events**
- **There was an estimated 5.2 million points of live engagement with cultural events**
- **Digital and online engagement reached 113 million people**

In March 2024, UK Sport released their report on the value of sporting events in 2023. The report found that the investment of £10.8 million from UK Sport and the UK Government had supported 16 major sporting events, generating £373 million in direct economic impact to the UK.⁸

⁷ A list of these events is included in Appendix 1

⁸ UK Sport (2024) *The Value of Events 2023*, Available at: <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/news/2024/03/06/value-of-events-report-2023-launched-alongside-the-sports-consultancy> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).



Eurovision Song Contest 2023, Liverpool,
Image Credit: Corinne Cumming/EBU

Britain at its best

These data demonstrate what Spirit of 2012 has called ‘the power of events’: the power to bring the UK together to share in the live experience of high-quality sports, cultural, and ceremonial occasions.⁹

The momentum established in 2022 continued into 2023 as the UK commemorated the 75th anniversary of the arrival to the UK of the passengers of the Empire Windrush, staged the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool on behalf of Ukraine, hosted numerous major sporting events, and celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III.

Inspired by the unifying spirit of the opening ceremony for the London Olympics 2012, major events continue to positively project an image of the ‘Best of Britain’. The UK’s unique talents and strengths are showcased and enjoyed in events that increasingly emphasise widely shared values of cultural and sporting excellence, inclusion, innovation, diversity, and community engagement.

Events present branding and soft power opportunities, with host destinations and nations using events as a tool to improve and strengthen destination and national branding, and to communicate narratives around their identity.

⁹ For the purpose of this expert advisory report the term culture/cultural includes heritage and ceremonial events.

¹⁰ The Football Association (2023) *Inspiring Positive Change Strategy Update 2023*, Available at: <https://www.thefa.com/news/2023/dec/20/inspiring-positive-change-update-20232012> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

¹¹ Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team (2023) *Coventry UK City of Culture 2021: Impact Evaluation*, Coventry: University of Warwick/Coventry University/Coventry City Council. Available at: <https://coventry21evaluation.info/strategy-reports/final-evaluation-report/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

¹² KPMG LLP (2024) *Evaluation of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games – One Year Post-Games Evaluation Report*, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-birmingham-2022-commonwealth-games-one-year-post-games-report> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Evaluations of these major events draw attention to their positive impact on inward investment, regeneration, wellbeing, and social cohesion. They are also noted to provide cultural and sporting opportunities and inspiration for communities facing multiple challenges.

Events have the power to be transformational. A 2023 report from Sport England identified that the number of registered female football teams in England had doubled over the previous seven years. The largest increase (almost 1,500 new teams registered) was in 2022–23, which was the season after the Lionesses won the UEFA Women’s European Football Championships 2022.¹⁰

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 adopted a targeted hyper-local co-creation approach and saw cultural participation increase by an average of 36% in key neighbourhoods in the city.¹¹

Major events also serve as a driver for economic impact. Evaluation one year on from the Commonwealth Games 2022 found that activity funded by the Games had delivered approximately £1.2 billion of economic output (measured in terms of gross value added or GVA), £79.5 million of social value, and 24,030 FTE years of employment.¹²



Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, London, Image Credit: Wiktor Szymanowicz/NurPhoto

Maximising the value and impact of major events

Major events, however, are expensive to stage. The expenditure by the UK Government and DCMS on major events in 2022 was in the region of £1 billion.¹³ Despite the success of the individual events, the Select Committee raised questions about the UK-wide impact of this substantial investment, noting the lack of a coherent strategy for linking major events to a wider UK ambition.

The Select Committee noted that a national plan would include the systematic evaluation of events over time in order to maximise both the learning from events and their legacy impact. The significant investment of public money in major events carries with it a responsibility to deliver outcomes and impacts that have UK-wide significance, and to provide the data and learning to measure these impacts over time.

In summary, the Select Committee concluded that:

"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."

The key recommendations from the Select Committee report that are addressed by this expert advisory report are:

- **Within the next two years, the DCMS should work with arm's-length bodies and industry to develop and publish a strategy for hosting the full scope of major events.**
- **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.**

Reporting in January 2023, the Spirit of 2012 Power of Events Inquiry found that events act as a catalyst for wider change, with long-term social and economic impacts in the host destinations and profound benefits for the people who participate.¹⁴

The report from Spirit of 2012 notes that the generation of long-term social and economic impact is not automatic when an event is delivered. It requires the hosts and organisers to have a shared vision focused on achieving specific outcomes, and the necessary resources to deliver impact over a long-term period.

Building on the Power of Events Inquiry and the Major Cultural and Sporting Events report, it is now becoming widely accepted that taking an overarching strategic approach to the integrated planning, delivery, and evaluation of individual major events will maximise their impact on the UK.

In response, this expert advisory report identifies the common benefits and outcomes of major events and advocates a strategic UK ecosystem approach to strengthen the golden thread and connective tissue which bind major events and their development over time.

The drivers for this will be:

- **a common evaluation framework with standardised metrics and methods for measuring and learning from the collective impact of major events across the UK;**
- **a compelling ten-year ambition that maximises the positive benefits and value impact of major events; and**
- **a more effective major events ecosystem of operations and management.**

¹³ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2021) *Written Evidence Submitted by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the DCMS Select Committee on Major Cultural and Sporting Events (14 May 2021)*, London: House of Commons. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/35941/pdf/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

¹⁴ Spirit of 2012 (2023) *How can events build connected, happy and thriving communities? Final Report*, Available at: https://spiritof2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-19-Main-inquiry-report-ACCESSIBLE_SP.pdf (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Mission and methodology

This expert advisory report is intended to support and inform the development of a national strategy for major events, as recommended by the Select Committee. Scotland and Wales have major events strategies that, like the UK Sport Gold Framework, will inform a UK strategy.¹⁵

The mission is to identify the golden thread and connective tissues that link events of all kinds, scales, and locations, and to make recommendations for a positive and progressive ambition-based and outcomes-led UK strategy.

To achieve the mission, the authors leveraged their existing expertise and projects, conducted desk-based research, and held a series of expert roundtable discussions with event stakeholders from across the UK who have significant experience of events.

The authorial team has direct engagement with several recent major event evaluations, including Coventry UK City of Culture 2021, Birmingham Festival 2022, the 2022 Commonwealth Games and UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK. This expertise was supplemented by extensive desk-based research (including analysis of major event evaluations) to provide the basis for a set of assumptions about the planning and delivery of events.

¹⁵ Strategies are available at Scotland's National Events Strategy - <https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/what-we-do/events> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 to 2030 - <https://www.gov.wales/national-events-strategy-wales-2022-2030.html> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

UK Sport Gold Framework - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gold-framework-2023-edition> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

These assumptions can be summarised as an 'ecosystem approach', the key features of which are:

- **The success of events depends on orchestrating the collective work of multiple stakeholders at destination, regional, and national levels across a dynamic ecosystem.**
- **The event itself is only one stage in a lifecycle process that includes pre- and post- event activity.**
- **There is already an ad-hoc and informal major events ecosystem, but it could be made more effective at delivering lasting and inclusive success.**
- **The ecosystem would benefit from a national ambition for events of all scales.**

We utilised our knowledge and desk-based research to construct a diagram of a prototype ecosystem for events, in which we map the stakeholders and their responsibilities. This exercise allowed us to identify key areas of concern that must be addressed to provide a strengthened events ecosystem with a connecting golden thread.

The prototype and working assumptions were then tested, developed, and nuanced through an initial workshop with grantees of the Spirit of 2012's funding programme. The workshop included representatives from a spectrum of events ranging from small community events to major events with both the sporting and cultural domains. This led to an initial refinement of the ecosystem prototype and working assumptions.

In addition, through our desk-based review and analysis of evaluations from major events within the UK and Europe from 2012, it became clear that there is a multi-stage lifecycle for major events. The planning, consideration, and funding of the various stages varies widely. Often, little attention or funding is directed at the post-event and legacy phases. This concern is highlighted in the first two recommendations from Spirit of 2012's Power of Events Inquiry.



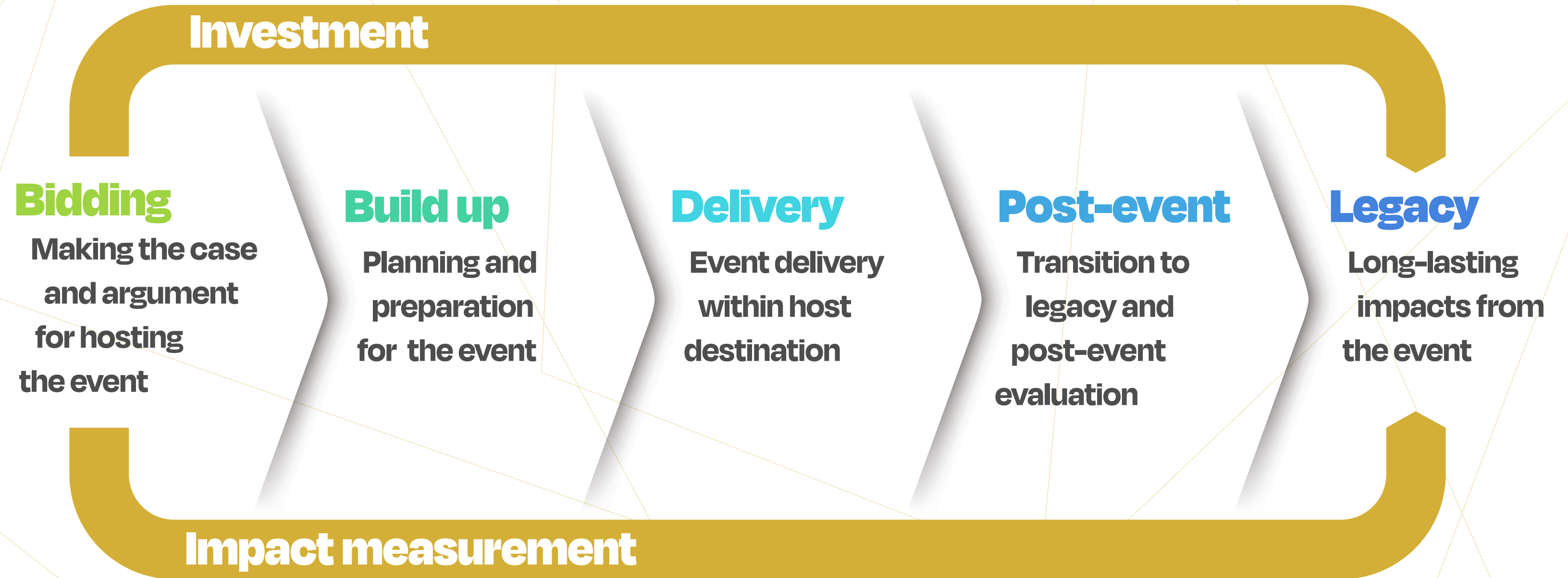
UCI Cycling World Championships 2023, Women's Elite Road Race, Glasgow, Image Credit: Mahoney/Swixpix.com

Three senior level roundtable discussions/seminars were held with event funders, event organisers, and senior culture, sporting and event officers from local government. The roundtables enabled us to further test, refine, and develop the approach, and ultimately ensure it appropriately reflected the ecosystem and its interdependencies.

Based on the roundtable discussions about the reality and challenges of delivering major events, and other sources of evidence, our initial assumptions were refined to consider:

- **The differences between sporting and cultural events.** UK Sport has a more developed long-term events strategy and investment policy through its Gold Framework.
- **The legacy effect of a major event increases when there is a longer-term destination strategy in place;** the major event acts as a catalyst for longer-term outcomes and investments.
- **Some major events are governed by international bodies such as the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.** These organisations delegate responsibility for delivery to local specialist teams.¹⁶
- **The differences between nations.** A UK major event strategy would need to align with the existing national major event strategies of Scotland & Wales.
- **The effectiveness of the major events ecosystem is dependent on collaborative partnerships supporting policy, investment, and destination management.**
- **The success of a UK major events strategy will depend on the quality and availability of shared evidence to underpin learning and progression.**

A list of attendees and a summary of the concerns and recommendations for action raised at the roundtables are in **Appendix 3** as well as detail of the initial provocations prompting discussion.



The five recommendations from Spirit of 2012's Power of Events Inquiry were:

- 1.** Long-term impact and a clear plan for 'what next' must be the driver for the decision to bid or host a major event
- 2.** The long-term impact of events must be underpinned by demarcated funding, accountability and governance
- 3.** Greater attention must be paid to who benefits from events and who is left out
- 4.** More events should be designed and curated with a broad range of stakeholders to build common ground across divides
- 5.** Events that use volunteers should have a clear strategy to boost longer-term community volunteering

¹⁶ A similar pattern occurs within the UK City of Culture programme, which is overseen by the DCMS with a local delivery team. Further, some major sporting events organised in conjunction with UK Sport follow this model if a national body such as British Gymnastics is unable to undertake the organisation duties.

Creating the golden thread

The golden thread of a national ambition..... 14

The shared headline outcome areas of UK major events 15

An ecosystem approach to delivering the national ambition.....17

An ecosystem focussed theory of change 22



The golden thread of a national ambition

The shared benefits of major events

There are significant differences between major events in terms of scale, duration, purpose, regularity, and location. However, events of all kinds have shared benefits that constitute **a golden thread of opportunity for a national ambition.**

1 Collective experiences:

Events aim to bring together large audiences to participate in shared experiences, whether live or digital, fostering a unique sense of community and collective engagement.

2 Inclusive community involvement:

Events are inclusive. They involve local communities, create meaningful volunteering opportunities, and promote pride in place and identity at both local and national levels.

3 Planning and delivery:

The planning and delivery stages are catalysts for civic pride, new partnerships, collaboration, and capacity building.

4 Talent showcase and development:

Events serve as platforms to showcase and develop talent at regional, national, and international levels.

5 Diversity and representation:

Events celebrate a diverse range of cultures, traditions, and perspectives, reflecting the modern and confident identity of the hosting destination and the UK.

6 Stakeholder collaboration:

Success depends on collaborative planning and delivery involving a range of stakeholders at destination, regional, and national levels throughout the event lifecycle.

7 Cultural significance and rituals:

Ceremonies and rituals, such as opening and closing ceremonies, are integral to the cultural significance of events, enriching the overall experience.

8 Funding and investment:

Events attract funding and investment from various sources, including public, philanthropic, and private investors, to whom they are accountable.

9 Economic impact:

Events contribute to the economic growth of the host destination and the region through income generation, tourism, and hospitality services.

10 Alignment with priorities:

Events align with regional, national, and UK priorities, addressing sector-specific as well as broader social and economic objectives.

11 Media attention and soft power:

Events attract media attention and leverage soft power and place branding, enhancing the reputation and visibility of the host location and the UK.

12 Legacy benefits:

Events aim to leave a lasting legacy by strengthening local cultural, heritage and sporting capacity, infrastructure, and community pride.

The shared headline outcome areas of UK Major Events

In addition to major events having common benefits which need to be planned for, our research revealed that the evaluation of major events is typically focused on **five common outcome areas**,¹⁷ which we have themed as:

1. **Economic value;**
2. **Stability and development of the event sectors;**
3. **Health and wellbeing;**
4. **Social and cultural value;**¹⁸
5. **Environmental sustainability.**

These five thematic outcome areas are defined below, and examples of the indicators used to measure each are provided.

These common outcome areas could form the core of an evaluation framework for a UK National Strategy. The framework would be consistently used by all major events to evaluate progress towards UK-wide outcomes and impacts. The framework would identify standardised metrics and methods for measuring progress and identifying opportunities for learning and progression.

Focusing on measuring and reporting on the core outcomes would provide continuity and consistency for evaluating the progress of and learning from a UK Major Events Strategy. Destinations and events will be expected to intentionally deliver on these shared outcomes, with a degree of proportionality in the weight given to each outcome to allow for scale and context (e.g., some regions will already have a strong events sector and therefore greater gains may be expected for the health and wellbeing or environmental outcomes).



These **five core outcomes** will be supplemented by additional outcomes that are specific to the event and destination, such as targeted outcomes for young people, underrepresented communities, and neighbourhoods, as well as specific legacy outcomes such as the power and endurance of civic alliances and inward investment targets.

Where possible our research is aligned with the OECD's impact indicators for culture, sports, and business events which were released in 2023.

In **Appendix 4** we provide a more detailed summary of example outcomes and outcome indicators to support the evaluation of the core outcome areas. In addition, the data sources and methodologies used in previous evaluations and indicators from the OECD Framework are provided.

¹⁷ For a detailed overview of the reports covered and the analysis process, please see Appendix 1.

¹⁸ We refer to culture in the broadest sense, encompassing, sport, heritage, art, and expressions of culture in everyday life.

A national ambition for UK major events

The positive and aspirational benefits of major events, coupled with the core outcomes, provide a foundation for a national ambition to guide the development of a UK Major Events Strategy. To gain UK-wide traction and support, the strategy will need to be rooted in a vision that is aspirational, unifying across the four nations of the UK, and celebratory.

We consider that the three dynamic strands of **Promote**, **Connect**, and **Enable** will make up the golden thread linking major events to a UK-wide vision.

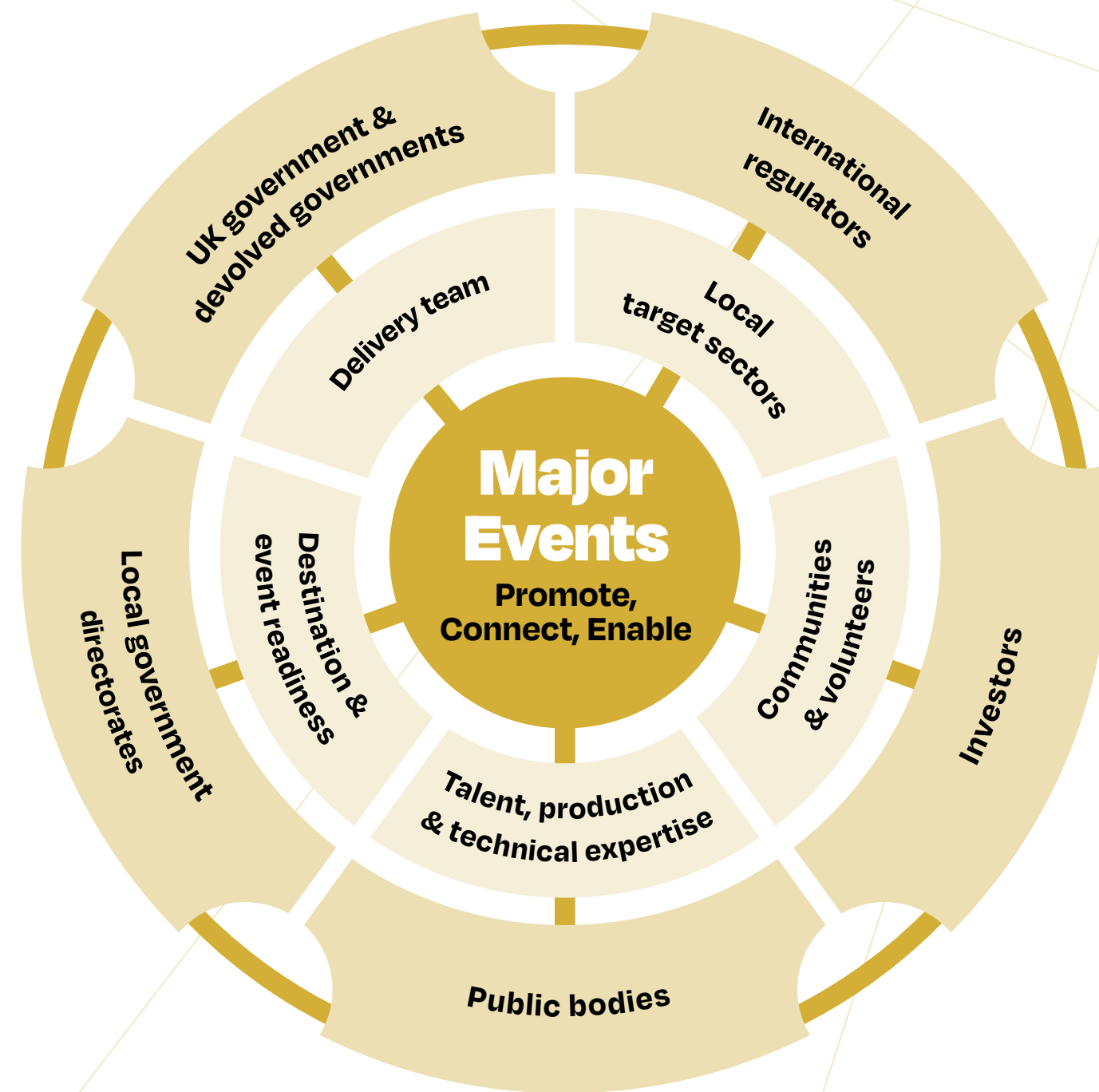
Major events provide the opportunity to:

- **Promote** excellence, ambition and pride at local and UK-wide levels
- **Connect** new alliances and partnerships necessary for the successful delivery of inclusive and unifying events
- **Enable** innovation and accelerate progress towards economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes that benefit destinations and the UK more generally.

The national ambition will be achieved through alignment of the major events ecosystem towards the five thematic outcomes, and by utilising a common and consistent evaluation framework.



An ecosystem approach to delivering the national ambition



The success of a national ambition for major events depends on orchestrating the collective work of multiple stakeholders at destination, regional, and national levels across a dynamic and interdependent ecosystem.

The effective operation of an ecosystem of major events involves the various inter-dependent stakeholders collaborating at national and local levels to take responsibility for **three key elements**:

1. **Aligning and directing policymaking and investment;**
2. **Effective destination and event management; and**
3. **Capturing evaluation, evidence, and knowledge exchange for learning.**

The ecosystem diagram shown here is not exhaustive but it shows the key players required for the successful delivery of any major event. The ecosystem’s inner circle shows the stakeholders related to Destination and Delivery.¹⁹ Events are becoming more linked to place, and successful place partnerships across a range of sectors are key to event success. The outer circle depicts the players linked to Policy and Investment; these help to shape the overall ambitions for major events and their policy and investment strategies.

Stakeholders will have their own interests, priorities and objectives. The challenge will be to encourage stakeholders to see the benefits of working with other stakeholders to realise a common ambition.

What links all the segments within the ecosystem is the need for evaluation and learning, as shown in orange. Having an interconnected learning environment for major events means that future events can learn from events that have gone before. This learning can also benefit the wider cultural, sporting and heritage sectors.

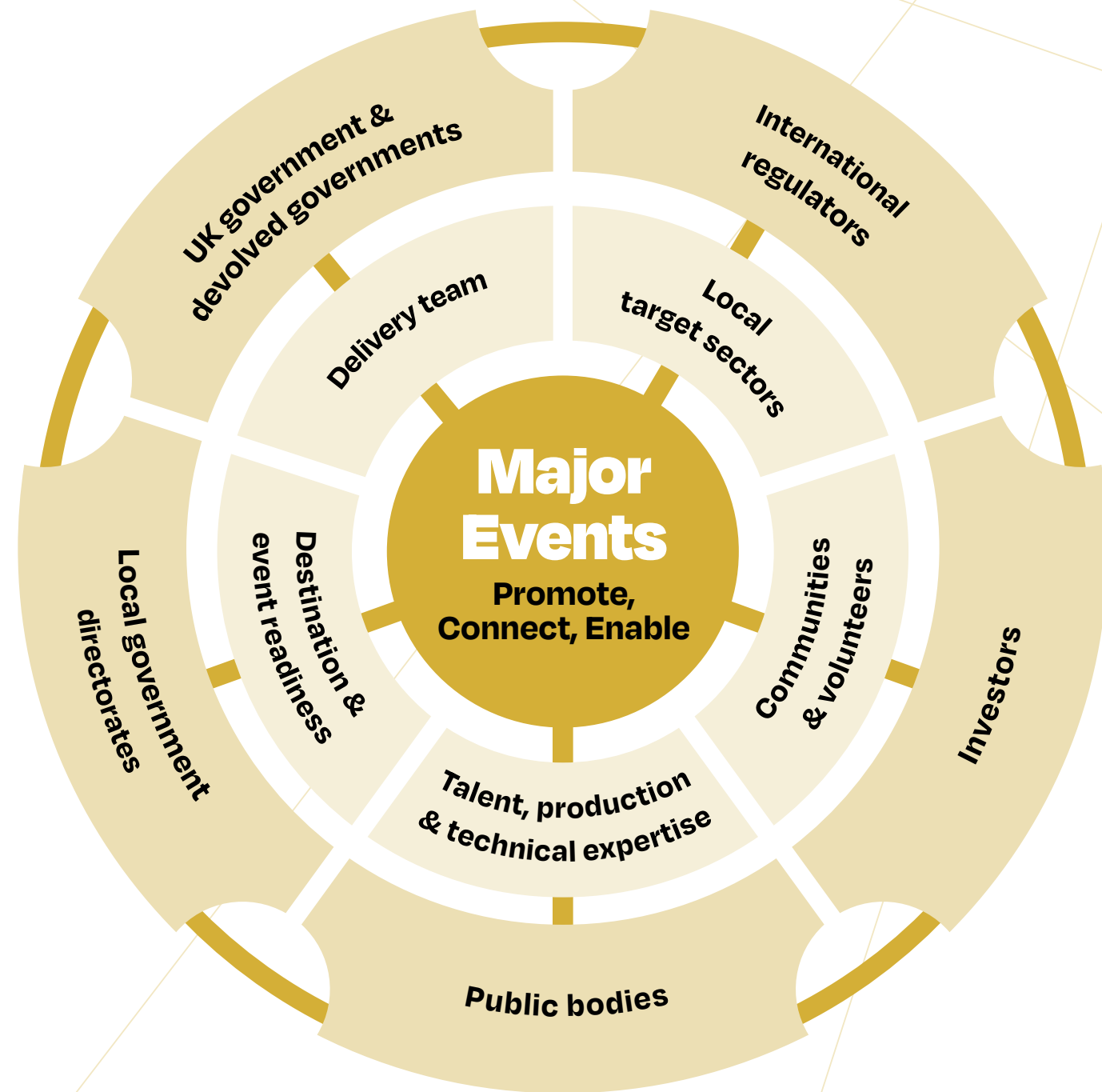
Each of these elements of the major events ecosystem includes multiple stakeholders, territories, and interests. For instance, the Policymakers and Investors circle includes various inter-dependencies between national and local government departments, national and international governing bodies, public bodies, lottery funders, and other actors who need to agree on and orchestrate the policy and investment interventions required to realise a progressive and unified national major events strategy.

The scale of ambition of major events requires a high degree of strategic alignment and shared execution priorities across the ecosystem of stakeholders. The impact value of major events is most powerful when these stakeholders become fully aligned in a delivery coalition – effectively a special purpose delivery team – in which roles and accountabilities are clear, and there is a relentless focus on the prioritised outcomes and goals.

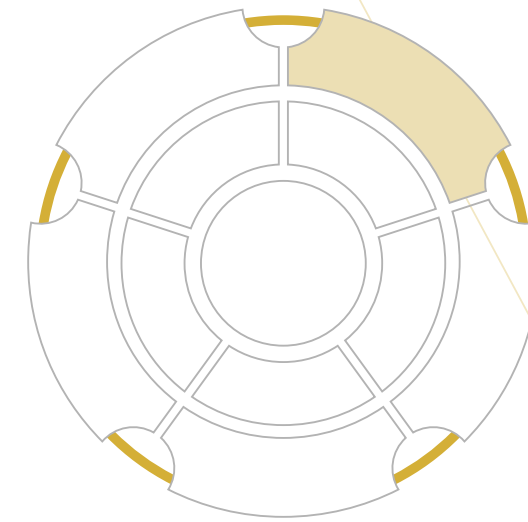
¹⁹ The concept of a destination ecosystem has been emerging in the literature relating to tourism and major events since 2020. That literature notes that the expansion and strengthening of business and government networks are well established as critical in leveraging and generating legacy impacts of major events. See: Mair, J., Chien, M., Kelly, S.J. and Derrington, S. (2023) 'Social impacts of mega-events: a systematic narrative review and research agenda', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(2), pp. 538-560.

Ecosystem stakeholders

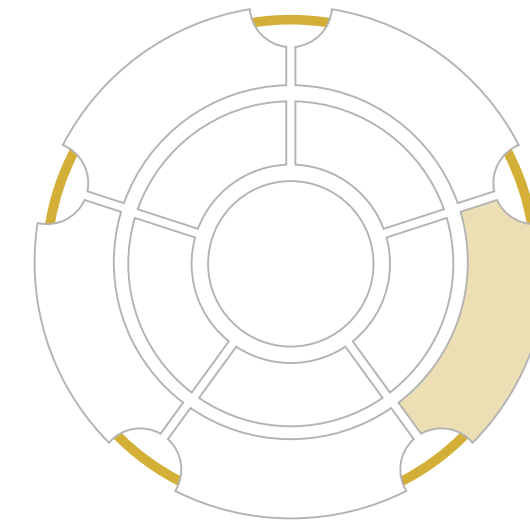
Policy and investment



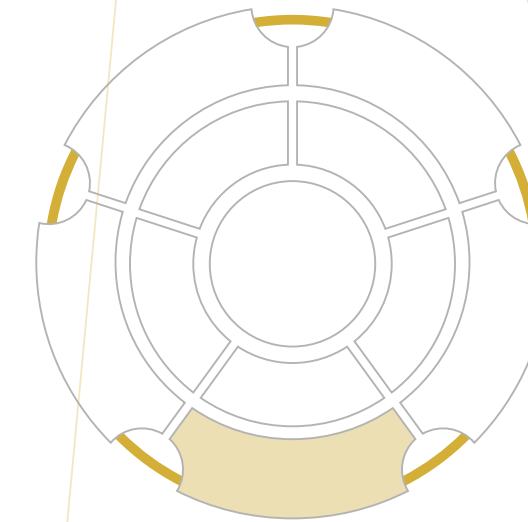
Evaluation and learning: All sectors of the ecosystem have a collective responsibility for evaluating and sharing learning:



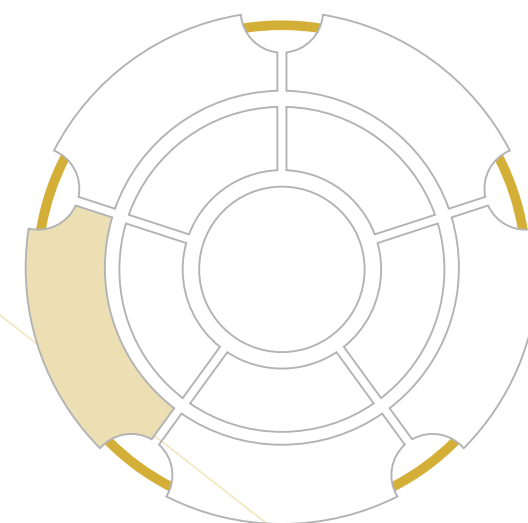
International regulators:
If applicable International Olympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Federation, FIFA etc.



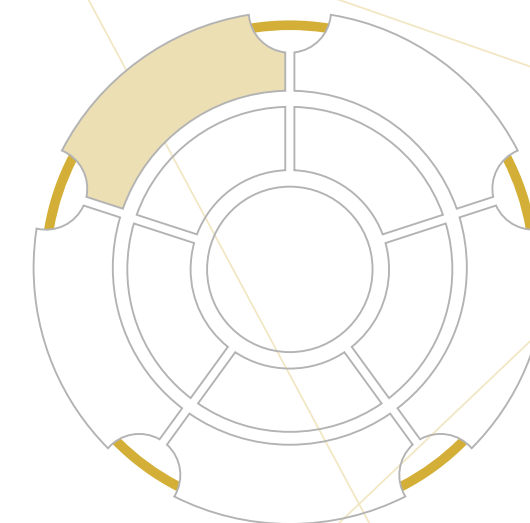
Investors:
DCMS, lottery funders, charities, trusts & foundations, public bodies, UK & local government, philanthropy



Public bodies:
Arts Council England, EventScotland, UK Sport, Sport England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and Arts Council of Northern Ireland

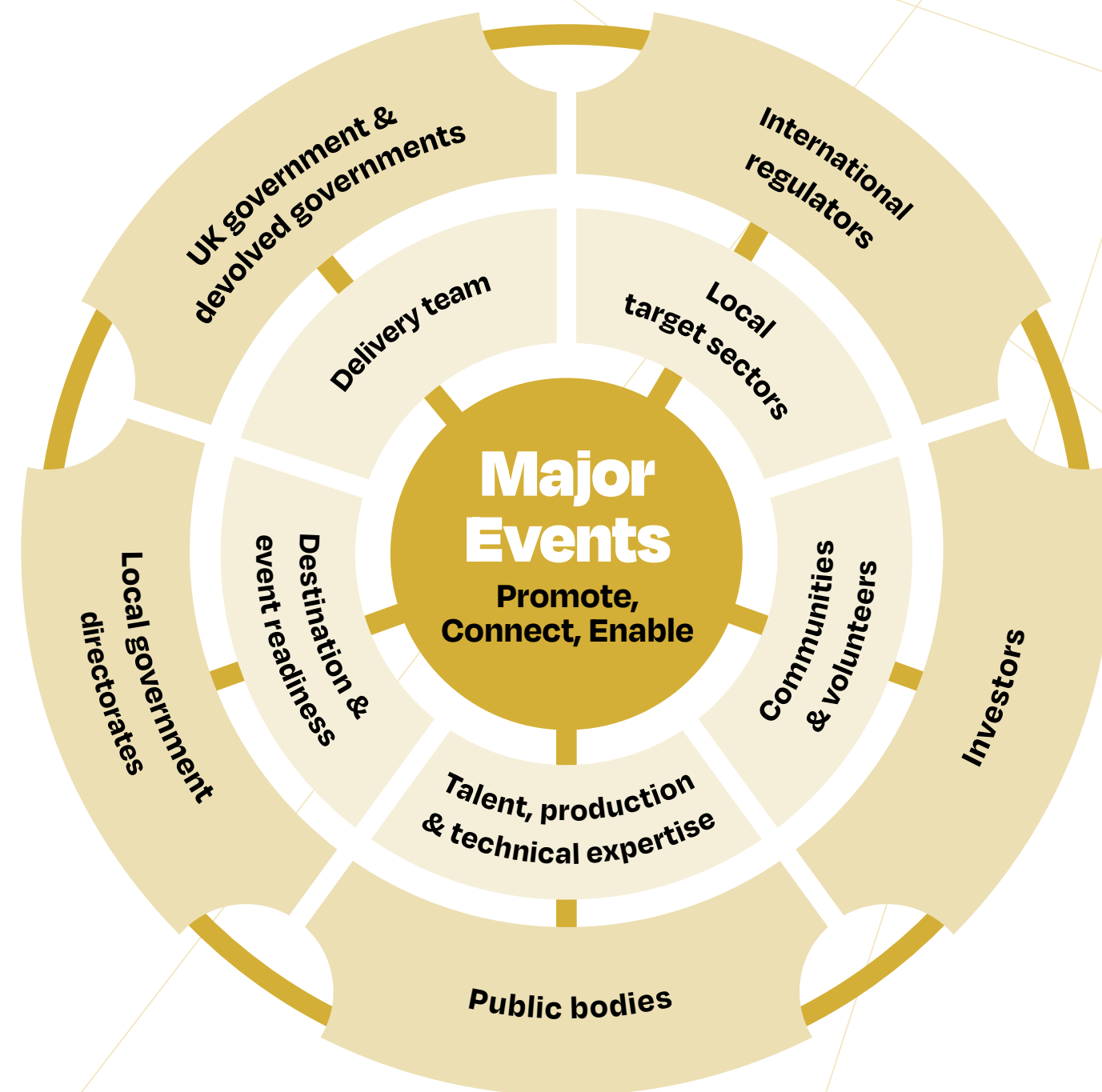


Local government directorates:
culture, sport, tourism, public health, economic development, education



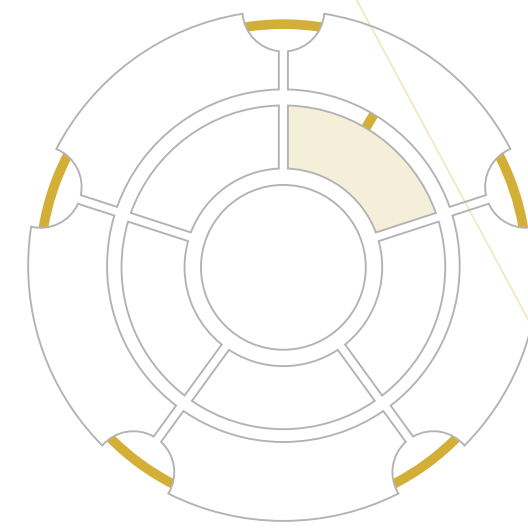
UK government:
government departments including DCMS, devolved governments

Ecosystem stakeholders

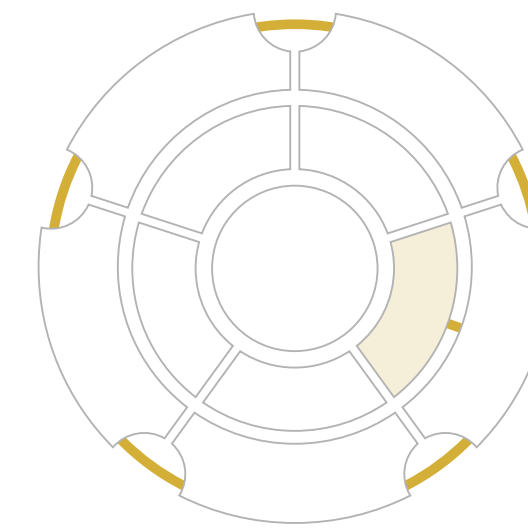


Evaluation and learning: All sectors of the ecosystem have a collective responsibility for evaluating and sharing learning:

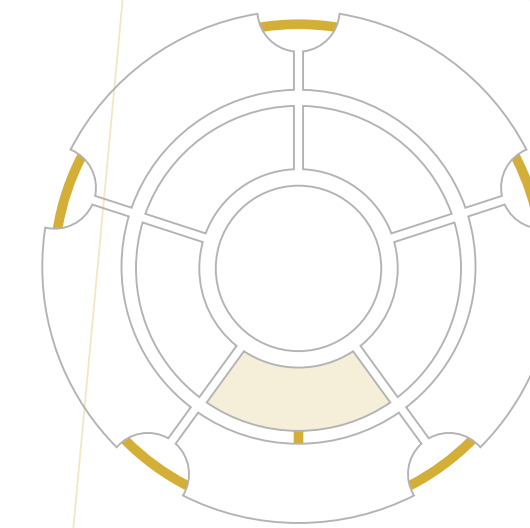
Destination & delivery



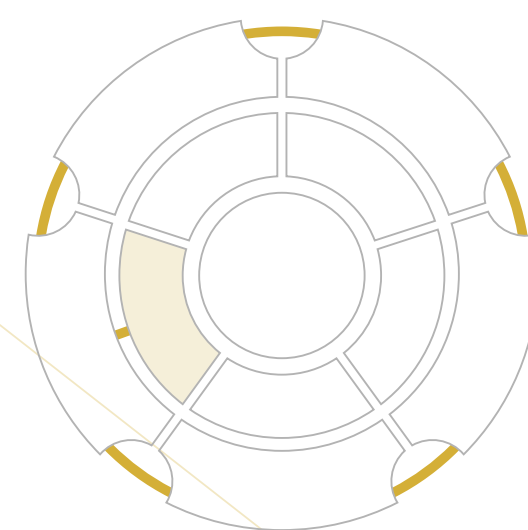
Local cultural, heritage and sports sectors:
professional, community, and amateur assets and services



Communities and volunteers:
audiences, neighbourhoods, faith groups, clubs, societies, volunteer organisations



Talent, production and technical expertise:
performers, competitors, producers, suppliers



Destination & event readiness:
local authority, uniformed and public services, event safety, licencing



Delivery team:
working with partners responsible for delivery phase

Ecosystem responsibilities

Each circle within the ecosystem has responsibilities linked to the national ambition to **Promote, Connect, and Enable**. **To achieve a connected golden thread for major events**, each element of the ecosystem must take particular actions so that the strategic aims of major events can be set in motion and maintained. At the same time, they must **recognise and respect** that **each element of the ecosystem is reliant on the others**.

The inner circle sets out the destination and delivery stakeholders who need to co-ordinate their actions to make an event happen.

These stakeholders rely on support and investment from the outer policy and investment circle's regional, national, and international stakeholders, who cannot create a successful major event lifecycle without the activities of the stakeholders in the destination and delivery circle. What connects all segments is the need for evaluation and learning, which forms the third golden thread circle.

We elaborate on the responsibilities at each level. We then summarise how these actions link to the national ambition and enable change within the UK major events sector in the Ecosystem Focused Theory of Change diagram, which is included in **Section 3** of this report.

Policy and investment layer

This layer of the ecosystem takes responsibility for shaping, determining, and growing the visibility of a shared national ambition for major events.

Primarily this will require policy stakeholders to:

- Create mechanisms for central leadership, oversight and guidance of the sector, and co-ordinate investment strategies that ensure the availability of the appropriate resources.
- Connect major events to relevant national and destination priorities and longer-term strategies, which align with the outcomes for other national and local government departments to improve health, wellbeing, education, and participation outcomes.
- Advocate for the cultural, economic, social, and other benefits of major events to the UK.
- Co-ordinate funding and co-investments for major events across the full life cycle of an event to deliver a sustainable legacy.

Leadership responsibility for convening and orchestrating the policy and investment layer rests with Central UK and the Devolved Governments.

Destination and Delivery layer

This layer of the ecosystem emphasises the responsibilities of nurturing and committing to the formation of strong place-based partnerships and ensuring sector readiness. Local stakeholders are required to:

- Develop a business plan for the life cycle of the event, including the financial and social capital contributions they need at each stage (e.g., at bidding versus during legacy).
- Convene and manage destination/event stakeholder partnerships to ensure that a wide range of communities and local sectors are involved in planning, delivering, and benefiting from the event.
- Design and adopt participatory governance models which allow for stakeholder voice across the lifecycle.
- Recognise that volunteers are vital to the delivery of major events. Appropriate volunteering structures should be in place within the delivery of the event and in subsequent legacy periods.
- Assess sector and event readiness early on in consultation with local stakeholders, allowing them to plan for and deliver the event and its programme.

Leadership responsibility for convening and orchestrating the destination and delivery layer rests with Local Government Directorates.

Evaluation and learning layer

The evaluation and learning layer stakeholders are responsible for clarifying the shared national ambition, and for supporting stakeholders to buy into, work collectively towards, and have accountability for shared outcomes.

They are also responsible for ensuring continuity of learning from event to event. To enable the measurement of outcomes and evaluation to be a connection point between actors in the major event ecosystem, and for this to be useful in driving shared outcomes, **we suggest the following actions are required:**

- **Theory of Change and stakeholder engagement:**
 - For new events, destinations should develop a theory of change outlining how their resources contribute to common outcomes and local strategies as well as the National Strategy when in place.
 - Involve local stakeholders and communities in selecting appropriate outcomes and discussing available data for baseline measurement.
- **Accountability and measurement:**
 - Stakeholders should consistently measure agreed-upon outcomes and share progress with the ecosystem.
 - Destination stakeholders need to decide on the frequency of measurement and reporting, integrating it into ecosystem-level decision-making.
- **Resource allocation and evaluation practices:**
 - Budget appropriate resources for evaluation practices to enable learning from both positive and negative outcomes.
 - Ensure discussions and analysis of collected data balance accountability and learning objectives across all elements.

- **Proportional use and funding responsibility:**
 - Use the framework proportionally considering budgets, skills, and capabilities of different organisations in the ecosystem.
 - Funders should provide resources and space for utilising this framework effectively.
- **Data observatory and learning accessibility:**
 - Establish a data observatory for major events to ensure evaluation reports are accessible for learning by current and future event stakeholders.
 - Utilise these reports to structure ecosystem meetings and learning roundtables.
- **Longitudinal data capture and progress measurement:**
 - Enable consistent and longitudinal data capture to measure progress on shared national ambitions.
 - Inform revisions based on current contexts, build best practices, and enhance confidence in major events as catalysts for positive impacts.

Leadership responsibility for evaluation and learning rests with Central UK and the Devolved Governments.

These actions are aligned with the Principles of Appraisal as identified in *HM Treasury's Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation*, which outlines how any business case should be assessed to maximise the public benefit if public funds are being used.²⁰ Major events typically have significant proportions of their funding from public funds; so, these actions would contribute to establishing best practice within the major events ecosystem.

²⁰ HM Treasury (2023) *The Green Book (2022): Central Government Guidance On Appraisal and Evaluation*, London: HM Treasury. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government/the-green-book-2020> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).



Coventry UK City of Culture 2021, Research Family Fun Day,
Image Credit: Simon Peter Green

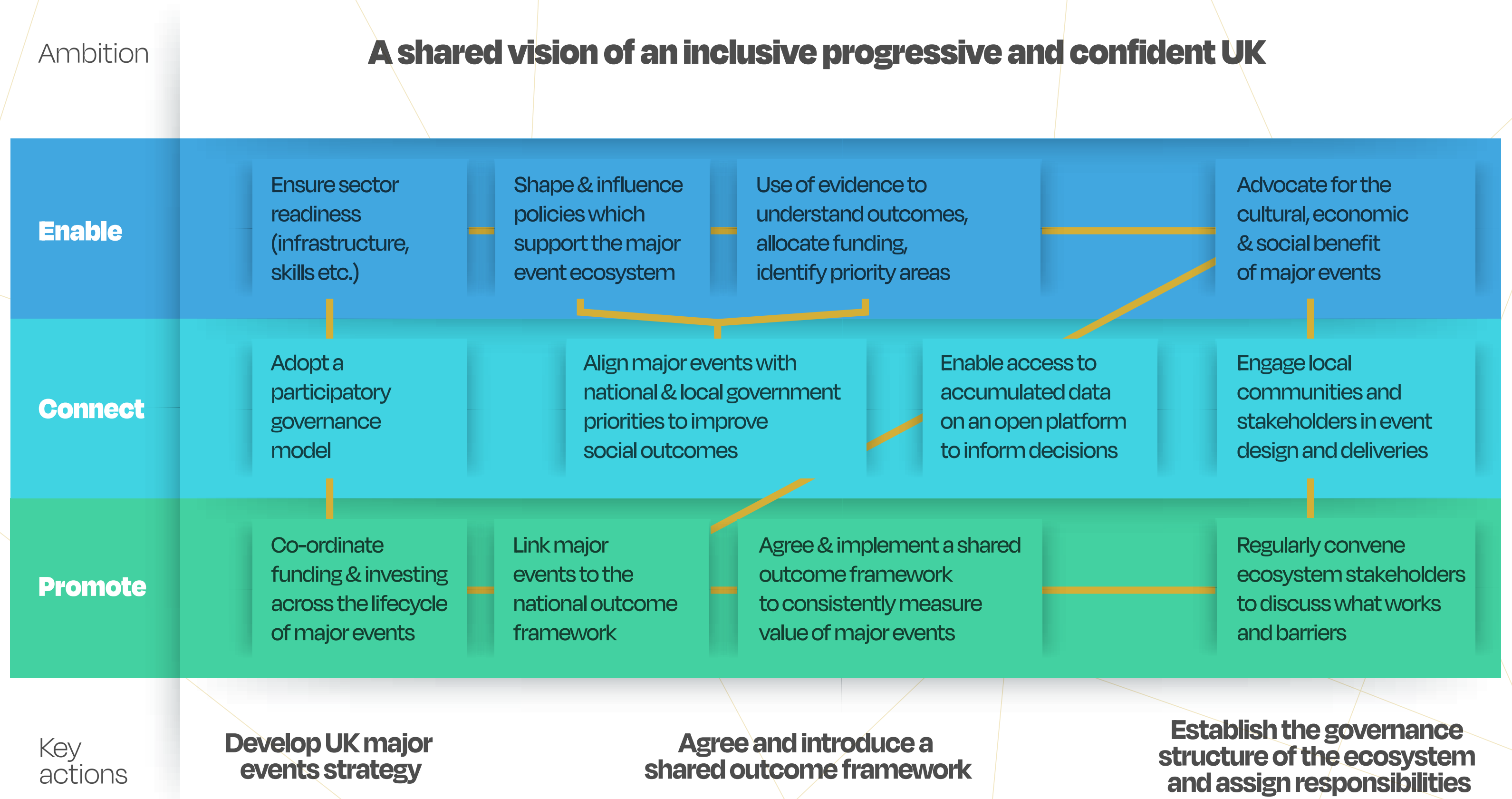
An ecosystem focussed theory of change to inform a UK national strategy for major events

The model of change diagram highlights the key actions that should be prioritised in order to realise the shared vision and national ambition for major events in the UK.

Actions identified in the model would help to contribute to the creation of a full Theory of Change which would include the logic model elements of investments, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The model would assist in identifying the appropriate outcomes (example outcomes are featured in **Appendix 4**).

The key actions, at the base of the diagram, have recommended tasks and **the golden thread** depicts how these tasks are interconnected and interdependent.

For example, having a strategy in place to co-ordinate funding and investment for major events will enable the events to connect to national frameworks, and help shape the common outcome framework. Collectively, these actions and associated tasks will help achieve a more effective major event ecosystem in the UK.



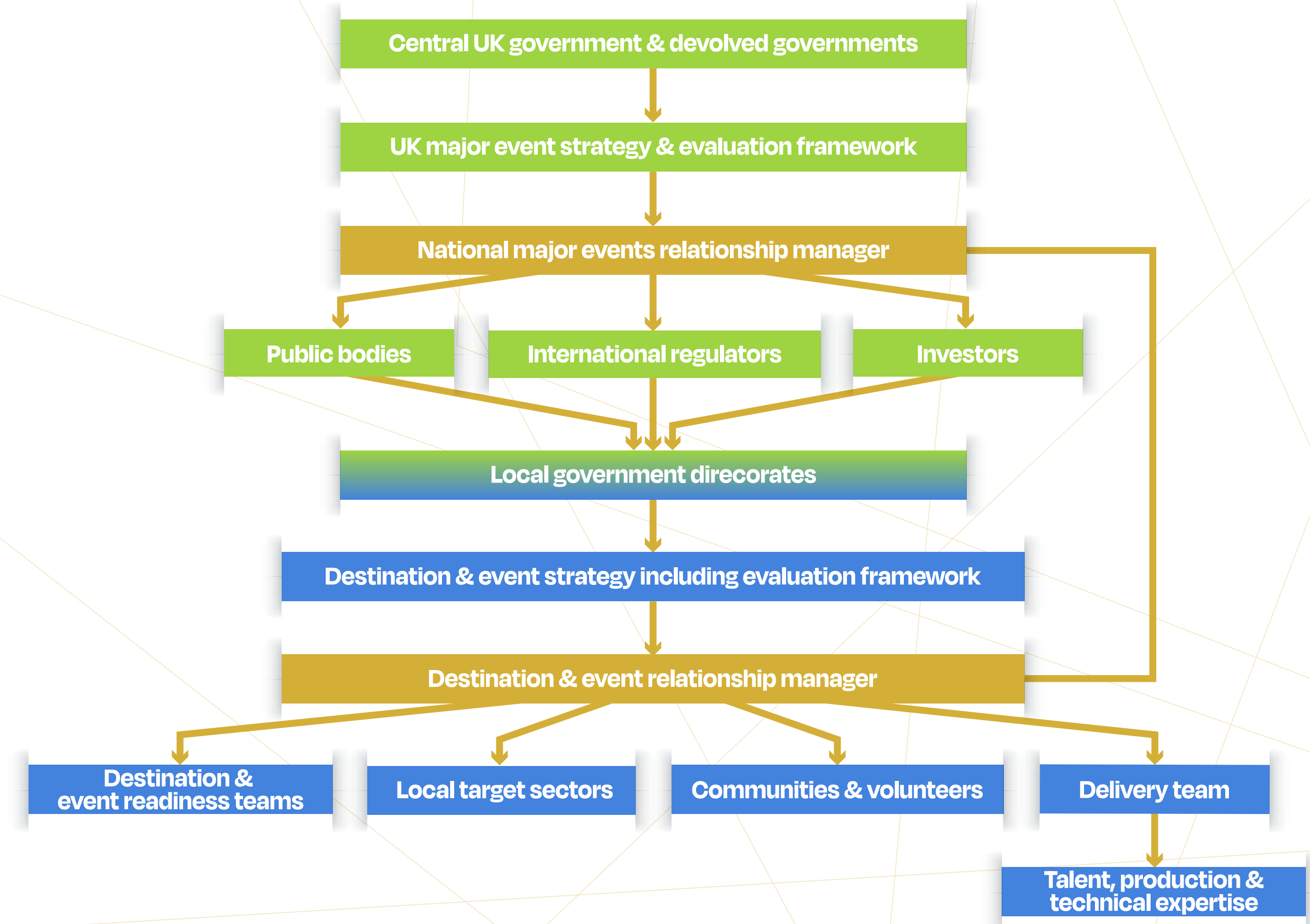
A headline governance model for the ecosystem

The success of the ecosystem depends on the capacity of multiple stakeholders to collaborate on delivery. On the right, we suggest a headline governance model that recognises the importance of national and local government as accountable bodies with the power to convene, make decisions, and maintain partnerships.

The DCMS appointed National Major Events Manager will be responsible for effective collaboration between policy makers and investors. Aligning policy and investment priorities with the major event strategy and the national evaluation framework.

Each event and destination needs to appoint a designated destination and event relationship manager to be responsible for effective collaboration between destination and event stakeholders including the delivery team.

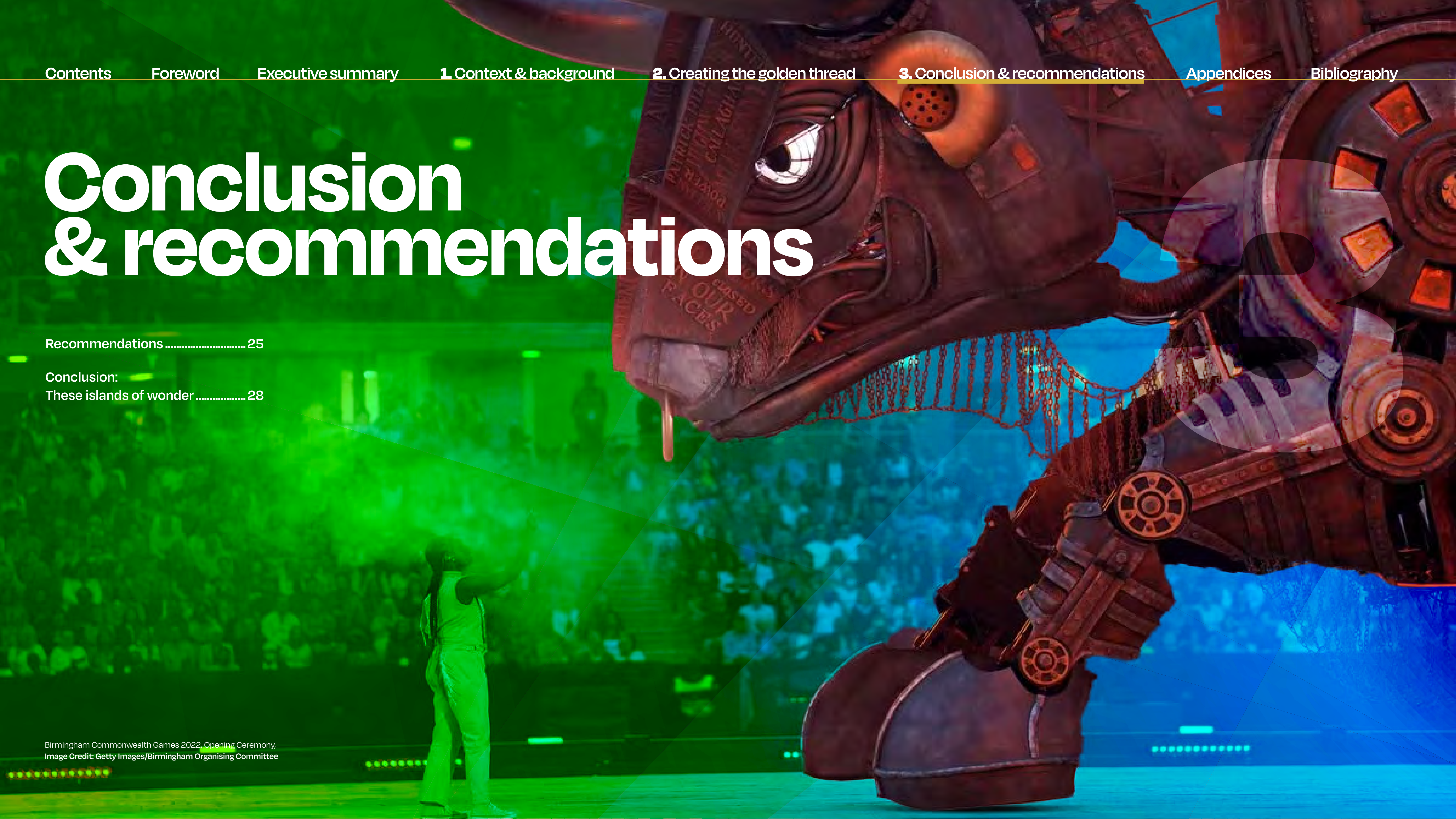
There should be a close operational relationship between the two relationship manager posts over the life-cycle of the event.



Conclusion & recommendations

Recommendations 25

Conclusion:
These islands of wonder 28



Recommendations

To ensure successful outcomes and sustainable legacies, major events require careful orchestration, strategic planning, and collaboration among the diverse players within the ecosystem.

The following recommendations are for best practices that can enhance management, funding, policy influence, evaluation, and data utilisation within the major events ecosystem to ensure events are more than the sum of their parts.

The recommendations presented here are the result of extensive consultation and are based on evidence from the roundtable discussions described above. A list of attendees of the roundtables is included in **Appendix 2**.

Applying these recommendations will support the key drivers of:

- a common evaluation framework with standardised metrics and methods for measuring and learning from the collective impact of major events across the UK;
- a compelling ten-year ambition that maximises the positive benefits and value impact of major events; and
- a more effective major events ecosystem of operations and management.



2023 Wheelchair Rugby European Championships, Cardiff,
Image Credit: Huw Evans Picture Agency

Recommendation 1:

Central UK Government and the devolved governments to convene investors, local government and the events industry to develop a ten-year major events strategy

Policy and investment stakeholders are instrumental in shaping policies that impact the major events ecosystem, **driving positive change and fostering an environment conducive to growth and sustainability.**

The key recommendation for policymakers is to collaborate with investors, local government, and the events industry to create a comprehensive 10-year major events strategy. This strategy should aim to maximise the value of events across social, cultural, sporting, and economic impacts. It should build upon existing strategies in Scotland and Wales, as well as the UK Sports Gold Framework, to create a unified approach that celebrates the diversity of the four nations.

The strategy should prioritise continuity across events and identify investment and policy opportunities for connecting sports, culture, and ceremonial events within the overall calendar. By developing this strategy, policymakers can strengthen the union of the four nations, enhance soft power, and provide a clear roadmap for managing and operating the events ecosystem. Additionally, policymakers should actively engage with stakeholders to shape policies that support the major events sector, driving positive change and fostering long-term growth and sustainability.

Recommendation 2:

For DCMS to develop a national evaluation framework based on the five common outcome areas that will be consistently measured across events and over time

Major events should make use of the national evaluation framework's standardised metrics/methods and **commit to open data and knowledge exchange.**

The recommendation is to implement a national evaluation framework for major events, utilising standardised metrics and methods, and prioritising open data and knowledge exchange.

This framework, based on common outcome areas, should be developed through collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including DCMS and lottery funders. It should facilitate comprehensive assessment, transparency, collaboration, and innovation across the lifecycle of major events.

Embracing this framework will enable a systematic evaluation of collective impact, enhance accountability, and contribute to the success and legacy of major events. The first step involves convening a coalition to discuss and refine the identified common outcomes.

Recommendation 3:

Spirit of 2012 and the AHRC to lead a consortium of funders, policy makers and major events organisers to establish a Major Events Data Observatory

To effectively demonstrate the economic and social value of major events, **it is crucial to centralise and align existing data sets related to their evaluation.**

Currently, evaluations and learning from major events are not stored in a central open-access repository, making it challenging to articulate their aggregated impact on the UK over time.

A National Major Events Data Observatory would address these challenges by providing robust, rigorous, and thoughtful measurement tools. It would:

- Aggregate data and conduct longitudinal studies.
- Promote standardised methodologies and knowledge exchange to improve the impact and learning value of major events and progress towards longer-term UK ambitions.

The observatory would enhance event quality, efficiency, and effectiveness. By centralising tools, models, and data, and promoting collaborative improvement and open communication, it would secure the central role of events in the UK's economy and cultural landscape, benefiting policymakers, investors and the major events industry.²¹

²¹ FRY Creative (2024) *Major Events Data Observatory - Feasibility Report*, Birmingham: FRY Creative.

Recommendation 4:

DCMS to appoint a National Major Event Relationship Manager within the DCMS to collaborate closely with a designated Destination/Event Relationship Managers

The two relationship managers will streamline co-ordination between policy and investment stakeholders and destination/event partnerships, investments, and governance, leading to successful outcomes for major events.

The relationship managers would hold a crucial position in major events, bringing together key stakeholders such as national government, local authorities, delivery teams, funders, and communities.

This collaboration is essential for achieving shared goals effectively. For any major event, it is important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder; this will help ensure that their contributions align with the overarching objectives of promoting, connecting, and enabling ambition for major events.

The national and destination/event relationship manager roles will involve facilitating communication, co-ordination, and collaboration among stakeholders across different segments of the event ecosystem.

This will ensure that resources are used efficiently, risks are managed effectively, and opportunities for synergy are maximised throughout the various stages of the event lifecycle.

Recommendation 5:

The business plan for the major event must give consideration to dedicated funding for the post-event and legacy periods

Incorporating dedicated funding for the post-event and legacy periods into the business plan/case for a major event is essential for maximising long-term benefits and ensuring a lasting positive impact on the host community and region.

When developing the business plan or case for a major event, it is essential to include provisions for dedicated funding not only for the event itself but also for the post-event and legacy periods. The impact of a major event extends far beyond its duration, and affects the host community, infrastructure, economy, and cultural landscape. Without adequate funding and planning for the post-event phase, the momentum gained from the event could be lost, leading to missed opportunities for long-term benefits.

Event organisers must be in a position to demonstrate the continuing benefits of major events to corporate supporters who, for relatively small amounts of money, can contribute to the continuation of activity over a legacy period.

Allocating resources specifically for the post-event phase ensures that the positive impact of the event can be maximised and sustained over time.

This may involve investing in legacy projects such as infrastructure improvements, community development initiatives, or sporting/cultural programmes that leave a lasting and positive impact on the host city or region.

It is crucial to include all the ecosystem stakeholders in legacy plans, and to clearly outline their roles and responsibilities so as to ensure effective implementation and co-ordination.



Conclusion: These islands of wonder

In conclusion, this expert advisory report calls for the development of a unifying UK Major Events Strategy, guided by an aspirational vision and underpinned by collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation. Such a strategy can unlock the immense potential of events across the UK.

The strategy will realise the vision to: **promote** excellence, ambition, and pride at local and UK-wide levels; **connect** new alliances and partnerships necessary for successful delivery and impact value; **enable** innovation and accelerate progress towards economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes that benefit destinations and the UK more generally.

Aligning efforts and resources across the major events ecosystem will achieve lasting positive outcomes for all four nations of the UK. Vitality, it will also equip the UK with the capability and capacity to build and maintain a world-class reputation for staging major events, bringing the UK to the world, and the world to the UK.

A national strategy will harness the unique talents and strengths showcased in major events, emphasising shared values of cultural and sporting excellence, inclusion, innovation, diversity, and community engagement.

1

National ambition:

There needs to be a ten-year ambition that maximises the value impact of major events, focusing on promoting, connecting, and enabling opportunities across the UK.

2

Inclusive vision:

A national strategy will be built on inclusivity, celebrating the diversity and strengths of all four nations of the UK. It can thus foster pride across the UK and generate new partnerships and collaborations, while also driving economic, social, and soft power impacts.

3

Collaborative governance:

Success depends on orchestrating the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders at destination, regional, and national levels. There needs to be a governance model that acknowledges the role of national and local government in decision making and in convening and maintaining partnerships.

4

Common evaluation framework:

To measure and learn from the collective impact of major events, there needs to be a common evaluation framework with standardised metrics and methods. This framework will ensure consistency and facilitate learning and improvement across the major events ecosystem. The data collected needs to be curated and made publicly accessible through the creation of a major events data observatory.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of events included in analysis.....	30
Appendix 2: Roundtable attendees.....	31
Appendix 3: Roundtable concerns and recommendations.....	32
Appendix 4: Suggested outcomes and outcome indicators	35
Bibliography and references	40



Appendix 1

List of events included in analysis

Reporting, resources and evaluations from the following events were reviewed as part of the desk research for this expert advisory report:

Sporting Events

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

Rugby World Cup 2021

Ryder Cup 2013

UEFA European Women's Championships 2022

Cultural Events

14-18 Now

Birmingham Festival 2022

Brent London Borough of Culture 2020

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021

Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013

Eurovision Song Contest 2023

Hull UK City of Culture 2017

Leeds 2023

Lewisham London Borough of Culture 2022

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture 2019

*The fifteen events from 2022 which featured in the analysis for that particular year included:

1. 2022 European Taekwondo Championships, Manchester
2. AJ Bell 2022 World Triathlon Championship, Leeds
3. UEFA Women's Euro 2022
4. Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
5. Volvo 2022 World Triathlon Para Series, Swansea
6. World Rowing Coastal Championships & Beach Sprint Finals 2022
7. Rugby League World Cup 2021 (took place in 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
8. 2022 World Taekwondo Grand-Prix III and Para Taekwondo Grand Prix, Manchester
9. World Gymnastics Championships Liverpool 2022
10. 2022 WDSF European Breaking Championships, Manchester
11. ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating MK John Wilson Trophy, 2022 Sheffield
12. UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK
13. Coventry UK City of Culture 2021
14. Birmingham Festival 2022
15. Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

✦ Events 1 to 11 feature in the UK Sport-commissioned The Value of Events 2022 Report and have been identified by UK Sport as major events that took place in 2022.²² Events 12 to 15 were identified by the DCMS as major events within their portfolio in 2022.

²² UK Sport (2023) *The Value of Events 2022*, Available at: <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/-/media/files/events/the-value-of-events-2022.ashx?la=en&hash=D6047838C3251444B4B71A0AD70EE201> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

Appendix 2 Roundtable attendees

– The senior representatives at the three roundtable events were:

FUNDERS ROUNDTABLE – COVENTRY

CHAIR: JONOTHAN NEELANDS, Warwick Business School

LAURA DYER MBE, Deputy Chief Executive, Places, Engagement & Libraries – Arts Council England

LISA DODD-MAYNE, Executive Leadership Team – Sport England

AMY FINCH, Head of Policy and Impact – Spirit of 2012

RUTH HOLLIS, Chief Executive – Spirit of 2012

ANNE JENKINS, Executive Director – National Lottery Heritage Fund

MOIRA SINCLAIR OBE, Chief Executive – Paul Hamlyn Foundation

EMMA SQUIRE, Director, Arts, Heritage & Tourism – Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

NICOLA THURBON, Senior Head of Regional Grant Making – National Lottery Community Fund

BEV WARD, Senior Major Events Consultant – UK Sport

EVENT ORGANISERS ROUNDTABLE – EDINBURGH

CHAIR: ANDREW DIXON, Director – Culture Creativity Place

DANIEL BATES, Chief Executive – Bradford UK City of Culture 2025

CAROL BELL OBE, Executive Director – Great Exhibition of the North

EMMA BEVERLEY, Director of Programmes – Leeds 2023

PAUL BUSH OBE, Director of Events – Event Scotland

FRANCESCA HEGYI OBE, Executive Director – Edinburgh International Festival

SAM HUNT, Executive Producer – Sam Hunt Creative,
Former Executive Producer – Hull UK City of Culture 2017

SHONA MCCARTHY, Chief Executive – Edinburgh Festival Fringe,
Former Chief Executive – Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013

BILL MORRIS LVO, Event Senior Expert Advisor and Board Member – Spirit of 2012

ROBERT PALMER, Consultant – Robert Palmer Consultants

MARTIN SUTHERLAND OBE, Chief Executive – Coventry UK City of Culture 2021

KULLY THIARAI, Creative Director and CEO – Leeds 2023

CLAIRE WHITAKER CBE, Chief Executive – Southampton Forward

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROUNDTABLE – LIVERPOOL

CHAIR: CLARE MCCOLGAN CBE, Director of Culture and Major Events – Liverpool City Council

CAROLYN ABEL, Head of Culture & Tourism – Southampton City Council

KATE BRINDLEY, Cultural Development Consultant – Sheffield City Council

ALISON CLARK, Assistant Director Culture, Sport and Tourism – Durham County Council

AMANDA DAVIES, Business Services Manager – Wrexham County Borough Council

SARAH ELDERKIN, Policy & Programmes Manager Culture – Manchester City Council

BILLY GARRETT, Director of Culture, Tourism and Events – Glasgow Life

NIC GREENAN, Cultural Partnerships Lead – City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

BRIAN JOHNSTON, Head of Tourism, Arts & Culture – Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

LOUISA MAHON, Head of Marketing – Renfrewshire Council

DAVID NUTTALL, Strategic Lead for Culture, Sport and Tourism – Coventry City Council

JOAN PARR, Service Director for Culture and Wellbeing – City of Edinburgh Council

EVE ROODHOUSE, Chief Officer, Culture and Economy – Leeds City Council

DAVID SHEPHERD, Strategic Director for the Department of Place – City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Appendix 3

Roundtable concerns and recommendations

The assumptions highlighted in the Mission and Methodology section were tested and developed through a series of senior-level roundtable seminars. A summary of the three roundtables, their audience, and the agenda points/provocations discussed are as follows:

FUNDERS ROUNDTABLE – COVENTRY

Audience:

Senior leaders from the main investors in major events including UK Sport, Sports England, Lottery and independent funders, Arts Council England, the DCMS, and others

Agenda/Provocations:

- Is there a major events ecosystem – what are the national and sector differences between culture, sport, and heritage?
- How could a collaborative ecosystem approach deliver a reduction in time, costs, and reporting?
- How might stronger funder collaboration ensure that there is appropriate investment at each stage of the event’s life cycle?
- Following Scotland’s example, to what extent could a UK/national major events strategy with a common set of outcomes, impacts, and evaluation protocols support productivity and progression in the major events ecosystem?

EVENT ORGANISERS ROUNDTABLE – EDINBURGH

Audience:

Creative and executive leaders of major events including sports, culture, and heritage, as well as destinations with coverage of one-off major events and established programmes of major events that repeat over time

Agenda/Provocations:

- What are the differences between time-limited and permanent events (for instance, the Commonwealth Games versus the permanent Edinburgh Festival and Manchester International Festival)?
- What can we learn from Scotland’s Event Strategy?
- How do you manage stakeholder collaboration and take multiple partners with you?
- What are the required conditions for ensuring legacy is productive?
- What can we learn from Europe?
- How do events build on each other?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROUNDTABLE – LIVERPOOL

Audience:

Representatives from all four nations, cities with established major events programmes, holders of major events titles, and shortlisted cities with successful cultural legacies

Agenda/Provocations:

- How can events build longer-term community engagement?
- What are the ‘levers’ for embedding culture, heritage, and sports in wider policymaking?
- What effects can major events have on long-term tourism impact?
- How can major events transform the public realm and infrastructure?
- What is the role of local government in convening and maintaining partnerships to secure major events’ legacy?
- How can evidence support and attract investment in culture, heritage, and sports?
- How can we manage the requirements of local versus national measurement frameworks?

Items discussed at the roundtables include:

ROUNDTABLE CONCERNS

Lack of Collaboration:

There is a need for closer collaboration between policy makers, investors, and event organisers to ensure continuity of learning from one event to the next.

Expense of Bidding:

The cost of bidding to host a major event varies widely. Local authorities are required to make the business case for the major event. This is currently happening because events are seen as catalysts for positive impact. However, events that come with a high bidding cost (sporting events in particular) are being overlooked due to financial pressures.

Communication Gaps:

Currently, there is a lack of effective communication between funders, grantees, and beneficiaries within major events.

Data Accessibility:

The ecosystem lacks shared access to the longitudinal major events data necessary for informing policy, investment decisions, and learning.

Reporting Challenges:

Data and progress towards outcomes are being duplicated in multiple reporting formats, leading to inefficiencies and confusion.

ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Cross-Government Working Party:

Establish a cross-government working party to co-ordinate major event legacy plans involving relevant departments such as DCMS, DHLUC, and others.

Regulators:

New ways of funding major events are required from regulators to reduce the financial burden on local authorities that are deciding whether to host major events. Special considerations should be made when local authorities are required to bid against each other for events that offer little reward.

Relationships Manager:

Introduce a shared relationships manager for major events to facilitate communication between funders, grantees, and beneficiaries, enhancing collaboration and continuity of learning.

Data Observatory:

Establish a major events data observatory for longitudinal measurement and continuous learning, ensuring shared access to critical data across the ecosystem.

Common Reporting Template:

Implement a common reporting template to avoid data duplication and streamline reporting processes, enhancing efficiency and clarity.

Items discussed at the roundtables include:

ROUNDTABLE CONCERNS

Investment Spread:

There is a need for a collective approach from policymakers and funders to ensure investments are appropriately spread across the life cycle of the event, and that the longer-term impacts and transitions to local stakeholders are adequately considered.

Community Representation:

Some vital stakeholders, particularly communities, have less influence and agency within the ecosystem and need better representation in decision-making processes.

National Strategy:

A national strategy that aligns the nation's support for initiatives in sport, culture, and heritage is lacking, affecting the overall co-ordination and impact of major events.

Legacy Considerations:

Legacy considerations need to be embedded across all government sectors to ensure long-term impact and sustainability of major events.

Evaluation Framework:

There is a need for a common evaluation framework to identify the indicators and outcomes for measuring value across sport, cultural, and heritage major events.

ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Coalition of Major Funders:

To agree on investment priorities, avoid duplication, and support each other at different stages of the major event life cycle.

Longer-term Legacy Planning:

Bids for funding should set out how a successful bid will contribute to longer term ambitions and how the transition to local stakeholders post-event will be delivered.

Stakeholder Management Plan:

Major events should provide a stakeholder management plan to ensure effective communication and collaboration, with a focus on representing beneficiary groups such as communities and local sectors in decision-making processes.

National Ambition and Strategy:

Develop a new national ambition and strategy for UK Major Events informed by existing frameworks such as the UK Sport Gold Framework and Scotland's National Event Strategy. Local authorities view the events they host as a portfolio; a national ambition and strategy would aid in developing these portfolios of events.

Social Value Prioritisation:

Investment criteria must prioritise not just the economic value of events, but also their social value and the benefits to communities.

Long-Term Legacy Plans:

Bids to funders should be rooted in longer-term legacy plans, outlining contributions to broader ambitions and ensuring smooth transitions to local stakeholders post-event.

A Major Events Evaluation Framework:

Develop a common evaluation framework to identify indicators and outcomes for measuring value across sport, cultural, and heritage major events.

Appendix 4 Suggested outcomes and outcome indicators

The following tables present suggested outcomes in relation to the five common outcome areas identified from a review of the evaluations of major events over the last decade. The Examples of Outcomes featured in this table are taken from evaluations of recent major events and demonstrate what have been used previously.

COMMON OUTCOME AREA	OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES	ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES
<p>Economic value: The influence a major event has on the economic conditions of host city, region, and/or nation.</p> <p>Assumed levers of change: investment, gross value added, business growth, visitors, employment, trade, skills, and media</p>	<p>Investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased inward investment within a place as a result of a major event split across public and private investment <p>Visitors/Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and increase of domestic and international visitors to the region and associated spend Improved external perceptions/attitudes towards host location Sustained increase in domestic and international visitors to the region Increased attraction as a destination choice Employment Number of employment, volunteering, training, apprenticeships/work placement opportunities Number of qualifications gained Number of new jobs created & safeguarded Improved skills and employability of local workforce <p>Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses/organisations supported Number of new businesses Trade Improved infrastructure to support investment and trade. Increased levels of trade and direct foreign investment (FDI) in the region and UK Gross value added (GVA) Short- and long-term economic impact in terms of GVA and employment <p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate national media coverage and interest Enhance the sector's profile through positive media coverage and marketing activity Increased promotion as a destination of choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in culture accelerates inward investment and economic growth in the region Delivery of economic benefits. Boost to local economies Progress towards sustainable economic growth of STEAM sector Supporting efforts to attract inward investment The creative sector is more established and sustainable Increased capacity, skills and ambition in the local cultural sector Improved employment opportunities. 	<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office for National Statistics Economy data: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy combined with local visitor surveys and business surveys Scottish National Performance Framework Economy outcomes: https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/national-outcomes/economy STEAM: https://www.globaltourismsolutions.co.uk/steam-model/ Tourism Economics (Oxford Model): https://www.tourismeconomics.com/ Media Monitoring: https://www.kantar.com/industries/media

Stability and development of the event sectors

COMMON OUTCOME AREA	OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES	ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES
<p>Stability and development of the event sectors:</p> <p>The influence a major event has on the stability and capacity of the local, regional, and national events sector responsible for event delivery</p> <p>Assumed levers of change:</p> <p>jobs in the sector (at city, region, or national level), sector skills (economic and educational), quality of jobs, infrastructure developments, creation of standards and policies for the sector</p>	<p>Jobs in the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new businesses in the sector based on relevant SIC (Standard Industrial Codes) and SOC (Standard Occupation Codes) codes • Number of new jobs in the sector based on relevant SIC (Standard Industrial Codes) and SOC (Standard Occupation Codes) codes • Increased understanding, accessibility and provision of career routes into the sector • Apprentices and trainees securing relevant qualifications which can be used to secure long-term employment <p>Sector skills: economic and educational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International cultural exchanges and partnerships • Positive & stimulating public, participant, & learner engagement with creative content/activities & STEAM in schools • Increased student curiosity and openness to new ideas and ways of thinking and problem solving • Cultural and sporting interventions to increase the educational outcomes of young people in a place • Raise the aspirations, abilities, and knowledge of residents through increased participation and learning in the sector • Partners, participants, and learners acquire new skills and intend to use them in the future <p>Quality of jobs in sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the event sector is like as a place to work (e.g., the Fair Work dimensions of effective voice, security, respect, opportunity, and fulfilment) <p>Infrastructure developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancements to transport infrastructure • Improved infrastructure to support investment and trade, including travel infrastructure and venues • New places created and equipped for creative, cultural, and sporting activity <p>Creation of standards and policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of operational and governance standards and policies that can be adopted by others • Increased data generation and capture leads to well-informed civic and cultural planning and decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skills and employability of local workforce • Increased access to volunteering, training, and employment opportunities among West Midlands residents • Workforce - An increase in the diversity and capacity of the region's cultural workforce • Network - New strategic relationships and partnerships are built in Birmingham and the West Midlands • The creative sector is more established and sustainable • Increased capacity, skills and ambition in the local cultural sector • Enable local platforms and skills development for culture in each town and city the work will visit • Increased skill and experience of freelancers employed to deliver projects • Connections are leveraged 	<p>Crossover with Table 1</p> <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS Business Register and Employment Survey: https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforbusinesses/businesssurveys/businessregisterandemploymentsurvey • ONS Education and Childcare: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare

Health and wellbeing

COMMON OUTCOME AREA

OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED

EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES

ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES

Health and wellbeing:

The influence a major event has on the physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing of citizens in the host city, region or nation

Assumed levers of change:

physical activity, cultural interventions for health and wellbeing, improvements to local facilities and services

Physical and mental health:

- Increased opportunities for physical and mental activity
- Increased levels of physical activity and mental health in target groups
- Increased journeys taken on foot and bike
- Improved levels of physical health and wellbeing and a reduction in health inequalities in inactive and under-represented communities

Wellbeing:

- Improvements in personal/community wellbeing
- Improvements in quality of life
- Improvements in levels of happiness
- Increased understanding of the role of culture/creativity in wellbeing
- Wellbeing strengthened across citizens, clinicians, and service providers

Improvements to local facilities and services:

- Improved facilities and opportunities for physical activity
- Improved access and opportunities for active travel
- System-level improvements to create pathways between public health, physical activity, and activity sector organisations that influence the opportunity to be regularly active

- Increase levels of happiness and engagement through arts and culture
- Increased happiness and wellbeing, including for young people
- Attendees of open air performances gain feel-good factors from being part of a mass participation event in the heart of the community
- Increased confidence
- Increased optimism post COVID-19
- Improved wellbeing
- Increased health and wellbeing with developed confidence and skills
- Cultural sector activity makes a significant contribution to the economic, environmental, social, health, and wellbeing targets for the region

Data:

- ONS Wellbeing statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing>
- ONS Personal Measures of Wellbeing: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/personalwellbeingsurveyuserguide>
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs>
- Scottish National Performance Framework Health outcomes: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/national-outcomes/health>
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Indicators: <https://documents.un.org/api/symbol/access?j=N1718480&t=pdf>

Methods:

- ONS Wellbeing survey questions
- Quality of life indicators
- WEMWEBS

Social and cultural value

COMMON OUTCOME AREA

OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED

EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES

ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES

Social and cultural value:

The influence a major event has on the social conditions of host city, region and/or nation

Assumed levers of change:

inclusion, equality, diversity, widening of participation, strengthened civic pride/pride of place, and procurement

Inclusion, equality and diversity

- Diversity of attendees/participants (in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion, income threshold, etc.)
- Volunteer numbers and diversity
- Apprentice/trainee diversity

Widening of participation:

- Increased participation in sector activity within targeted groups
- Number and extent of participation with underrepresented groups
- Number and range of co-created activities
- Targeted representation of citizens of the city in cultural leadership and programming
- Community-led production and programming increases participation and activism.

Civic pride/Pride of place

- Increase in locals reporting civic pride.
- Increase in number of residents who are proud to live locally and would speak positively about the city to others
- Citizens positively influence and shape the city they want to live in

Sense of agency/worth:

- Increase in confidence levels
- Increase in agency
- Positive changes to participant sense of worth & value

- Increased diversity of audience for sector
- Improved understanding of diversity
- Opportunities created in every postcode
- Change in perceptions of underrepresented groups

- Leadership and programming reflect and represents the citizens of the city
- Programmes, planning, and production of events involving citizens and communities
- Audiences that are more representative of the region's communities regularly attend or participate in cultural activities

- Improved perceptions of place as somewhere to live, work, study, and visit
- Improved community cohesion
- Perceptions of range, quality and relevance of creative/cultural activities

Social value procurement

- Sustainable procurement practices in relation to social value and human rights
- Event delivered in an ethical way, protecting human rights
- Ensuring no modern slavery

- Games supply chain delivers measurable social value back into the region
- Increased sense of place and identity; increased knowledge of and engagement with local heritage, culture and creativity across people, activity, and places & spaces
- Increased connection to place
- Residents are encouraged back into their town centres and change perception
- Increased levels of understanding and respect between different groups and increased levels of participation
- Increase in civic pride

Data:

- Active Lives Survey: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data/active-lives-survey>
- DCMS Participation Survey: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-survey-april-to-june-2022-publication>

Methods:

- Theory of Change
- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Outcome mapping
- Social Return on Investment
- Case studies of experience of participating
- Focus groups with underrepresented groups of their experience
- Value of change workshops

Environmental sustainability

COMMON OUTCOME AREA	OUTCOME INDICATORS COMMONLY USED	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES	ESTABLISHED DATA SOURCES/METHODOLOGIES
<p>Environmental sustainability: The influence a major event has on the environmental conditions of host city, region, and/or nation</p> <p>Assumed levers of change: net-zero, sustainable behaviours</p>	<p>Net zero:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total carbon footprint (with targets for neutrality) • Waste minimisation • Waste diverted from landfill • Net zero targets • Water footprint • Change in air pollution due to event <p>Sustainable behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target groups reporting change in sustainable behaviours and practices • % of contracts delivered in compliance with national/local sustainability standards • Delivered in an environmentally sustainable way, minimising waste and achieving carbon neutrality • Banning use of single-use plastic • Power plans that maximise use of grid energy and prioritise hybrid/green generators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proportion of journeys taken on foot and bike • Increased use of public transport, including by those with access needs • Games delivered in an environmentally sustainable way, minimising waste and achieving carbon neutrality • Cultural sector activity makes a significant contribution to the economic, environmental, social, health, and wellbeing targets for the region • Cultural programming is environmentally responsible and promotes environmental awareness • Change in behaviours and actions in relation to issues highlighted through UNBOXED, including in relation to environmental sustainability 	<p>Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of environmental metrics • ISO 14001 Accreditation • ISO 20121 Accreditation • Julie's Bicycle

Bibliography & references

Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team (2023) *Coventry UK City of Culture 2021: Impact Evaluation*, Coventry: University of Warwick/ Coventry University/Coventry City Council. Available at: <https://coventry21evaluation.info/strategy-reports/final-evaluation-report/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2021) *Written Evidence Submitted by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the DCMS Select Committee on Major Cultural and Sporting Events* (14 May 2021), London: House of Commons. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/35941/pdf/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Ernst & Young LLP (2021) *The impact of major sport events: Study of soft power, trade and investment impacts*, London: City of London Corporation/UK Sport. Available at: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/-/media/files/events/211130-mse-soft-power-ti.ashx?la=en&hash=13C1F12678069EE8DFB5FE43071B5DBE> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

The Football Association (2023) *Inspiring Positive Change Strategy Update 2023*, Available at: <https://www.thefa.com/news/2023/dec/20/inspiring-positive-change-update-20232012> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

FRY Creative (2024) *Major Events Data Observatory - Feasibility Report*, Birmingham: FRY Creative.

HM Treasury (2023) *The Green Book (2022): Central Government Guidance On Appraisal and Evaluation*, London: HM Treasury. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government/the-green-book-2020> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

House of Commons: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2022) *Major cultural and sporting events – Ninth Report of Session 2021-22*, Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9285/documents/160442/default/> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

KPMG LLP (2024) *Evaluation of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games – One Year Post-Games Evaluation Report*, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-birmingham-2022-commonwealth-games-one-year-post-games-report> (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Mair, J., Chien, M., Kelly, S.J. and Derrington, S. (2023) 'Social impacts of mega-events: a systematic narrative review and research agenda', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(2), pp. 538-560.

OECD (2023) *Impact indicators for culture, sports, and business events*, Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/impact-indicators-for-culture-sports-and-business-events_e2062a5b-en (Accessed 10 April 2024).

Spirit of 2012 (2023) *How can events build connected, happy and thriving communities? Final Report*, Available at: https://spiritof2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-19-Main-inquiry-report-ACCESSIBLE_SP.pdf (Accessed 10 April 2024).

UK Sport (2023) *The Value of Events 2022*, Available at: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/-/media/files/events/the-value-of-events-2022.ashx?la=en&hash=D6047838C3251444B4B71A0AD70EE201> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

UK Sport (2024) *The Value of Events 2023*, Available at: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2024/03/06/value-of-events-report-2023-launched-alongside-the-sports-consultancy> (Accessed: 10 April 2024).