

The legacy impact of the 2012 Games for London – and, by extension, South East England and the country as a whole – has been debated and discussed at length. But the victory of London should be a victory for the UK. Have Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales benefited from our victory to secure the Games? This case study takes a special focus on Wales.

Welsh Olympic Legacy?

Labour MP Kate Hoey knows sport. In fact, she was the UK Sports Minister from 1999 to 2001. However, she doesn't know what is happening with the 2012 legacy in Wales following Games, and went so far as to cite a 'government failure' in relation to the ability of the Government to secure a legacy impact for the rest of the UK. "The rest of the country was also promised legacy and I have no idea what is happening... unless things change, I fear a backlash." Her confusion echoes the concerns of Plaid Cymru MP Hywel Williams, who voiced concern that Wales is losing out on a potential figure of £437m funding for the Olympics, and that "we will have little or nothing to show for it (the Olympics) instead". A recent report by MPs on the Welsh Affairs Select Committee backs up some of these concerns with estimations that Wales could lose around £100m in lottery funding to pay for the London games. But what is the reason for this potential financial loss?

Funded by the UK but Benefits only for England?

The key to this problem lies in the fact that the London 2012 Games are considered as 'UK spending'. Because of this, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are funding them,

even though England is the only country that will actually host them. Plaid Cymru MP Williams believes that in his personal constituency in North West Wales the positive impact of the Games will be minimal. This is a logical concern given the fact that there is no real proximity to the Games for North West Wales. Williams argues that extra funding might be needed to secure any legacy impact for Wales, which cannot happen because of the 'UK spending' tag, but that if independent Welsh funding was accessible, another £330m would be available for the country. Then, he argues, a legacy impact might be possible. His criticism of the then Labour Government was quite scathing:



"In my constituency in north west Wales the positive impact of the Olympics will be limited, if not non-existent. However, the London Olympics will be based almost exclusively in the south-east of England, less than a handful of business contracts have been given to Welsh firms, London politicians have admitted that it is a scam to use public money to regenerate one of Europe's richest cities and those currently in the Labour UK Government refuse to admit that Wales will lose out."



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Are there any Significant Benefits for Wales?

A Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) spokeswoman countered the negative claims of Plaid Cymru, saying that Welsh businesses were benefiting from the acquisition of Olympic contracts, such as a contract for provision of the steel frame for the majestic Aquatics Centre, which was awarded to a Welsh firm. The DCMS further countered criticisms by stating that 32 venues in Wales had been identified as potential pre-Games training camp venues. To strengthen this point, one might observe the fact that the Australian National Paralympic Committee have signed an agreement to hold camps in Wales. It is also true that the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff will be hosting some rounds of the Olympic football competition. The DCMS further clarify that Wales will benefit from 4 major projects totalling £1.67m from the Legacy Trust as part of an initiative called 'The Power of the Flame'. These

projects will offer developmental opportunities for young people in the fields of art and sport.

START THE DISCUSSION

- This case study perhaps raises the more general issue of non-London GB residents feeling disenfranchised from the Games. As a Londoner/non-Londoner, how do you feel about this issue?
- If the Games are to be held in London, should Londoners be picking up a higher bill than everyone else?
- Do you agree that there has been a 'government failure', as cited by Kate Hoey?

FIND OUT MORE

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CREDITS

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