

County Council Meeting – 7 February 2012

Statement / Updates by Cabinet Members

2012 Olympics in Surrey

With less than 6 months to the London 2012 Games, I wish to report to full Council about the increased momentum in preparation for the Games, and the increased effort being put into creating a lasting legacy from the Games.

My vision from the outset has been to use the London 2012 Games as a catalyst for bringing business, community and health benefits to everyone in Surrey. This vision has remained unchanged from the time when we were neighbours of the Games, to today when we are actually hosting the Olympics.

At the last count, Surrey companies had won nearly 300 Games related contracts, bringing over three-quarters of a billion pounds into the local economy. Which I am sure you will agree is a welcome boost during these economically challenging times.

We are preparing to welcome the world to Surrey. We have 15 foreign teams who will train in Surrey before the Games. The latest addition being the Sweden Paralympics team, who are over 100 strong, and are negotiating the use of our finest sports facilities to prepare for the Paralympic Games this summer.

On 20 January we launched our P&G Surrey School Games, with over 100 young people taking part in over a dozen activities at ACS Cobham. The Surrey School Games are truly inclusive bringing together state, independent and special schools. This year our challenge was to create a programme of events that was bigger and better than the record-breaking Games of 2011. I can confirm that we plan to have 50% more top quality county finals and 50% more young people taking part, and more funding raised through grants and sponsorship.

Preparations for the Torch relay and Olympic Cycling events are progressing on schedule, and there is a great deal of public and business engagement taking place to prepare our residents to celebrate these opportunities and to plan ahead. This afternoon we are hosting Andy Hunt, a member of the Board of the London Organising Committee and the Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association. I think he will be delighted by the progress that we have made.

In summary, Surrey companies have won more contracts than any other area in the South East, Surrey venues are hosting more teams than any other authority in the South East, Surrey schools are taking part in the best School Games in the country. On day one of the Games Team GB's first gold

medal will be won or lost on the streets of Surrey at one of the biggest sporting events ever held in the UK – the Olympic Cycling Road Race, in front of a million spectators and a TV audience of over one billion.

I am satisfied with progress so far. I am satisfied, but not complacent. Because I know that the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be judged not on what we achieve during one glorious summer. No, we will be judged on the legacy that we create for 2013, 2014, and for many years beyond.

Let me now touch on legacy. The Surrey 2012 team is working to raise the profile of Surrey to an international audience through the visiting nations, and by strengthening our support to the tourism sector. Many local libraries and museums are being transformed into tourist information points, we are training taxi firms on how to give a world-class welcome to visitors, and we are working to increase cycling tourism to the Surrey Hills, so that our beautiful countryside is showcased to more people.

Another exciting development that was announced a few days ago was that in 2013 there will be a festival of cycling. Similar to the London Marathon, there will be a 'Marathon on Wheels', starting in London and travelling through Surrey, a cycling ride which will raise a great deal of money for charity, encourage more people to get healthy and reinforce our place as a cycling county.

Surrey has so much to offer the world, it has world-leading commerce, a beautiful tourist destination and a vibrant and varied cultural and heritage offer. On 29 May, the 'Go Surrey' Festival will take place at the Royal Albert Hall, and I would like as many Members as possible to enjoy a celebration of Surrey Culture and Heritage, so please put the date in your diary. You can expect performances by over 1000 talented young people, providing an evening of fantastic entertainment. This will be a fitting curtain-raiser for a year that will celebrate not only the Diamond Jubilee, but also a once in a lifetime festival of culture and sport.

Thank you.

Denise Saliagopoulos
Cabinet Member for Community Services and 2012 Games
7 February 2012