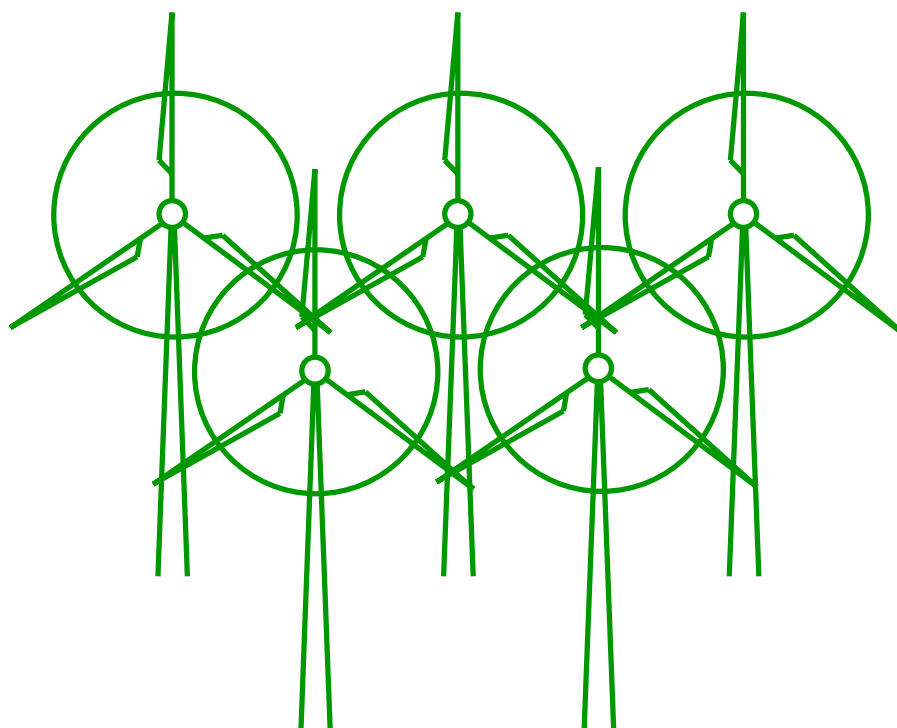


# **On the right track?**

**Does current performance on Olympic delivery raise questions about the Games and legacy that Londoners expect?**



**Report by Darren Johnson, London Assembly Member**

**Issue 4, July 2009 – Three years to go**

These are the individual views of Darren Johnson in his capacity as an Assembly member and are not the agreed views of the full London Assembly.

## **Introduction:**

With three years to go, Olympic organisers have detailed plans about almost every aspect of the 2012 Games. As the delivery of stadia and infrastructure picks up speed, it is the right time to question whether goals on sustainability, quality of life, and the local economy are being met.

This report provides an assessment of the progress being made in key areas, and asks whether the current performance raises questions for the next three years, and beyond. Is the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) living up to promises on sustainable transport for freight and workers, on paying a living wage and using local businesses, and on green energy and waste reduction?

It concludes that Olympic organisers must be willing to stretch themselves further in the areas where they have made good progress, and ensure that no part of the project is left behind.

## **Sustainable transport for freight and workers:**

### Current delivery:

Having set itself a target of delivering 50% of materials (by weight) to the Olympic construction site by rail or water, the ODA is currently achieving 57%<sup>i</sup>, and in June 2009 a new £20m tidal lock was opened on Prescott Channel, near the main stadium. This will allow 350 tonne barges to take waste from the Olympic Park to a specialist recycling centre in Rainham, Essex<sup>ii</sup>. However, rail freight sector representatives have called on the ODA to go further by requiring suppliers of all materials to use rail, rather than only those supplying bulk items. This could halve the number of road deliveries, cutting 800,000 lorry movements from the area.<sup>iii</sup>

10% of the 4,500 construction workers working on the Olympic Park are currently walking or cycling to work<sup>iv</sup>, and 67% travel by public transport to the Olympic Park<sup>v</sup>.

However, 400 bike parking spaces for over 4,000 workers are insufficient and will need to rise in number significantly as the workforce grows.<sup>vi</sup>



On transport infrastructure projects, the ODA have won plaudits from the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 and won industry awards for its sustainable approach to relocating major railway sidings from the aquatics centre site to the north east of the park. The project was described as a good example of best practice in sustainable construction and reduction of embodied CO<sub>2</sub>, with 99% of materials being either reused or recycled.<sup>vii, viii</sup> Having shown what can be achieved, this performance must be repeated across all Olympic transport infrastructure projects.

### Future plans:

Given their current progress, Olympic organisers are expected to deliver the public transport improvements that will form a significant part of the sustainable legacy promise. However, the achievements made so far will be undermined if plans to provide more than 7,000 car parking spaces in and around Games venues are not drastically scaled back.

Public transport efforts are also being undermined by including park and ride in the mix. Encouraging spectators to drive to car parks outside of London and then busing them the rest of the way does not count as public transport.

More is being done for people arriving at the Games on foot or by bike at this Olympics than at any other Games. So it is disappointing that organisers only expect around 5%<sup>ix, x</sup> of spectators to travel to London 2012 by the most sustainable means of transport. Much greater ambition is needed.



Most disappointing is the news that London 2012 has done nothing to question whether Olympic officials need to be provided with chauffeur driven cars. Current plans state that over 3,000 such cars will be made available, and if London 2012 is determined to provide them, they should do so only in conjunction with an automotive sponsor with an exemplary record of cutting emissions from its vehicles.

## **Supporting local business and workers:**

### Current delivery:

Regenerating the East End was one of the core promises of the bid for 2012. Beyond the investment in new facilities and housing at the Olympic park and Stratford, providing opportunities for local businesses and workers is vital if this aim is to be achieved.

Of the 946 companies currently working with London 2012, 68% are small and medium enterprises, 98% are based in the UK, 53% are based in London and 13% are from Olympic boroughs<sup>xi</sup>. Of the contractor workforce, 20% are from Olympic boroughs (compared with a target of 10%) and 10% were previously unemployed (compared with a target of 7%)<sup>xii</sup>. Despite concerns that the only measure of being a local worker was having a permanent address within the one of the five Olympic boroughs, it does not appear that migrant workers are dominating the work force. 63% are British citizens, a further 8% are Irish, and only 14% are from outside the European Union<sup>xiii</sup>.

### Future plans:

Given the progress that has been made so far to employ local workers, these targets should be significantly increased before the number of workers on the main site grows further. Of equal importance is the need to pay Olympics workers a living wage. The ODA currently claims that 2,344 workers are paid the living wage – 89% of those who voluntarily provide this information. However, with a total workforce of 4,434 only 53% are confirmed to be on a living wage<sup>xiv</sup> of £7.60 an hour<sup>xv</sup>. It is clear that reporting in this area must improve. The need for an Olympics-wide policy to pay a living wage increases as the workforce gets bigger.



Whilst 69% of contractors who have won work with the Olympics are small or medium enterprises there is no breakdown of this figure showing how the smallest businesses are getting Olympic opportunities<sup>xvi</sup>. The Olympics must be used to boost all small businesses (with between one and forty-nine employees), particularly small London based manufacturing companies. Despite having more enterprises than any other region in the UK London has the lowest proportion of small businesses (21% compared with the northwest's 28%) and lost a third of its industrial jobs between 1985 and 2006, a more pronounced rate of decline than the rest of the UK.<sup>xvii</sup>

An important part of supporting the local community and economy will be the delivery of a vibrant Olympic Village. Due to the failure to secure any private sector funding, plans for the village have been scaled back. There will now be 2,818 apartments and townhouses instead of 4,500. Whilst more than a third will be family homes, only 24% are for social rent and 12% for low cost ownership. However, an option has been included for allowing more than three quarters of the low cost homes to revert to market properties, which would leave less than a third of the village as affordable housing<sup>xviii</sup>.

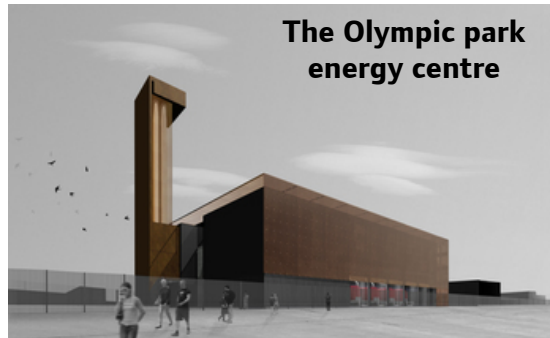
## **Energy and waste reduction:**

### Current delivery:

Climate change has been put at the centre of the London 2012 Olympics, and some impressive strides are already being made. As shown above, sustainable transport and construction targets are being met and in some cases exceeded. Also, all permanent venues are currently being built to BREEAM excellent energy efficiency standards.

However, the ODA has so far only identified 17% of the 20% objective for renewable energy for the park in legacy mode, although the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 understands that plans are in place to find the remainder.<sup>xix,xx</sup> Also, whilst the ODA's ongoing comprehensive carbon footprinting exercise has already been credited with influencing procurement for the Games, such as the decision to use recycled aggregate, it is hard to assess this work because its public release has been delayed until later this year.<sup>xxi,xxii</sup>

Finally, a site wide waste contractor has recently been appointed for the construction phase but the delay in putting this in place means that constructors have put their own measures in place, possibly jeopardising the target of diverting 90% of construction waste from landfill.<sup>xxiii</sup>



### Future plans:

Given that the ODA are still examining how to provide renewable energy for the legacy park it is worrying that it is still not yet clear how LOCOG will deliver 20% of Games time energy from renewable sources<sup>xxiv</sup>. Furthermore, there is no target for, or monitoring of, where the energy being used during the construction phase is coming from. The lack of ambition in this area is reflected by the fact that after the Games the energy centre's combined heat and power plant will only be low/zero carbon after the Games if a sustainable renewable fuel source can be found.<sup>xxv</sup> This is an area that needs improving.

Even if Olympic organisers were to be successful in minimising the amount of carbon they emitted, there will always be a residual footprint to off-set. London 2012 must recognise this and comply with the Commission for a Sustainable 2012's call for 'the remaining footprint to be mitigated by a combination of initiatives to reduce carbon in the community and through wider influencing schemes using the inspirational power of the Games to change behaviour'<sup>xxvi</sup>.

There is an ambitious target not to send any Games time waste to landfill, and commitments have also been made not to incinerate any waste generated during the events. However there are no plans to provide new waste processing and recycling facilities on the site, and no targets for what to do with temporary materials that are used during the Games but disposed of afterwards.

### **Conclusion – what hope for a sustainable legacy?**

With three years to go there has been progress towards delivering a Games that will be greener and do more for local communities than ever before. However, Olympic standards in these areas have never been high, and 2012's organisers could stretch themselves further to deliver a Games that is truly outstanding in all areas. As many of the plans for the Games themselves are already set in concrete, literally, focus should shift onto the long-term impact of London 2012, which is still very much up for grabs.

The new Chair of the Olympics legacy company has announced a major re-think for post-games options, with a new emphasis on a sporting legacy.<sup>xxvii</sup> In a four week period in 2008 only 48% of Londoners took part in sport or active recreation, compared to 67% in the same period in 2007, and only 23% of adults believe that London 2012 will make them more likely to do sport. It is therefore vital that any sporting legacy is available to all<sup>xxviii</sup>. Also, the legacy review and the fact that the Olympic village will be publicly owned<sup>xxix</sup>, should be an opportunity to increase energy efficiency standards, introduce innovative housing delivery models such as community land trusts, and deliver a car free development. Finally, managing as much waste as possible within London is a mayoral priority that can only be met by delivering around 100 new local waste facilities. With east London and the Thames Gateway due to grow faster than the rest of the capital, it would be a huge mistake to miss the opportunity provided by the Games to deliver exemplar new energy from waste and recycling facilities on the site.

The 2012 Games are making good progress along the path that it has set itself. But the question of where that path is heading is still to be answered.

These are the individual views of Darren Johnson in his capacity as an Assembly member and are not the agreed views of the full London Assembly.

- 
- i <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-06/recycling-waste-boosts-sustainable-transport-target.php>
  - ii <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-06/recycling-waste-boosts-sustainable-transport-target.php>
  - iii <http://www.rfg.org.uk/news/?pid=3158&lsid=3159&edname=28086.htm&ped=28086>
  - iv <http://www.london2012.com/news/archive/2009-06/olympic-park-workers-lead-on-sustainable-transport.php>
  - v Response to mayoral question 1825/2009, July 2009
  - vi <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-06/construction-workers-pedal-power-sets-pace-for-spectator.php>
  - vii [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - viii <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-04/oda-wins-highest-ever-rail-sustainability-award.php>
  - ix <http://www.london2012.com/documents/oda-transport/pace/pace-4.pdf>
  - x <http://www.london2012.com/plans/transport/getting-ready/transport-plan.php>
  - xi <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-06/local-businesses-steered-towards-london-2012-opportuniti.php>
  - xii London 2012 – Jobs, Skills, Futures: Employment and skills update, July 2009
  - xiii <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2008-12/olympic-park-workforce-breaks-3-000-as-big-build-accelerates-into-2009.php>
  - xiv London 2012 – Jobs, Skills, Futures: Employment and skills update, July 2009
  - xv [http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic\\_unit/docs/living-wage-2009.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/living-wage-2009.pdf)
  - xvi <http://www.london2012.com/news/media-releases/2009-01/scottish-firms-visit-olympic-park-to-compete-for-london-2012-business.php>
  - xvii <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/entrepreneur/article4748041.ece>
  - xviii Athletes’ Village briefing pack for London Assembly Members, 15th July 2009
  - xix <http://www.london2012.com/news/publications/pdf/oda-annual-report-2008-2009.pdf>
  - xx [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxi [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxii <http://www.london2012.com/blog/2009/05/08/london-2012-breaks-ground-in-sustainability.php>
  - xxiii [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxiv [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxv [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxvi [http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL\\_2008\\_Annual\\_Review.pdf](http://www.cslondon.org/documents/CSL_2008_Annual_Review.pdf)
  - xxvii <http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3144004&c=0>
  - xxviii [http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/London\\_2012\\_tracking\\_research\\_2008.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/London_2012_tracking_research_2008.pdf)
  - xxix [http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/GOE\\_QER\\_May09.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/GOE_QER_May09.pdf)