

LOCOG response to ECS Committee on *Sold Out? Update on ticketing for the Olympic and Paralympic Games*

15 February 2012

Dear Dee,

Thank you for your letter to Seb sent to us today, and the accompanying ticketing report.

We are committed to providing a full breakdown of ticket sales, and believe the best time to do this is once we have completed the final sales process – we still have nearly 4 million Olympic and Paralympic tickets to sell and our priority is to get those into the hands of sports fans. We are firmly committed to providing 75% of the total number of tickets to the British public, and if we can deliver more than this, we will.

Olympic and Paralympic ticketing is a complex process – around 11 million tickets to around 1,000 sporting sessions, with a range of different clients including the British and international public, sponsors, stakeholders, international sporting federations, and the 200 National Olympic Committees who also manage tickets for the competing athletes and their families.

We are also in the process of testing and licensing our venues - some of which have not yet been built - and finalising our plans for the final phase of sales to the British public in April. We will publish a full breakdown when we have the final numbers, rather than issuing an update during a process which is not yet complete. Our commitment to provide 75% of tickets to the British public stands, and if we can deliver more than this, we will.

The report raises a number of specific questions which we have answered below.

Thanks,

CRAiG.

THE LONDON ASSEMBLY ECS UPDATE ON TICKETING FOR THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Q&A on London Assembly ESC Committee Report

Disclosure of Information

Q. Did you distribute tickets roughly equally between price points for each event and what evidence can you provide to demonstrate this? (Page 3, para 2).

A. Yes. We have always said this, and we can confirm this is the case.

Why won't you provide a breakdown of the number of tickets available at each price point for each event? (Page 3, para 3)

- A. We are committed to providing a full breakdown of ticket sales, and believe the best time to do this is once we have completed the final sales process. This is a process still very much in motion and we still have nearly 4 million Olympic and Paralympic tickets to sell and our priority is to get those into the hands of sports fans.

We are firmly committed to providing 75% of the total number of Olympic tickets to the British public, and if we can deliver more than this, we will.

This is a complex piece of many moving parts, for example, in recent weeks as part of our continuing work on venues, seating configuration and seating capacity we have announced that we have created more tickets for Box Hill/ Road Cycling whilst at the same time confirming a reduction in ticketing number for Greenwich Park. In addition we are managing thousands of tickets being returned from both the re-sale process and from ticketing returns from client groups including 205 National Olympic Committees, International Broadcast Rights Holders and other groups.

Q. Do the most popular events have a disproportionate number of highly – priced tickets? (Page 4, para 3)

- A. No they do not; at all sports sessions we have broadly the same number of tickets at each price band but this is not an exact science because of each venue's specific shape and configuration.

Q. Have you sold the vast majority of your tickets? What do you know about those left to sell?

- A. We have now sold approximately 7 million out of our 11m tickets now available. As a result of detailed work on venue configurations we are pleased to say that we have increased the number of available Paralympic Games tickets by approximately 500,000. As a result we now approximately 4 million tickets still to be sold including roughly 2.5 million Olympic tickets (including 1.5m Football – the football draw is in April) and 1.5 million Paralympic. These tickets will go on sale in April and remain on sale until sold. We have always said our priority is the 1 million plus people that applied for tickets in 2010 and were unsuccessful.

Q. LOCOG's sole reason for existence is an event being staged as the result of a huge investment of public funds. You are using your private company status to cloak your ticketing approach with secrecy. (Page 4 and Page 7).

- A. We do not hide behind our private company status, we have always said we will publish information on ticketing when we have a complete and accurate set of data and information. With ticket sales on going, continuing seat configuration being worked through and seating still being finalised we simply do not have a full picture to present at the moment.

Q. Why did you not learn from Sydney, which published ticket data after the ballot in response to public pressure, but before the Games? Why could SOCOG do this but you will not? Why are you even less transparent than Sydney?

A. Sydney was over 10 years ago was a very different Games characterised by very different levels of demand (both international and domestic), different technology systems available at the time and a completely different venue build programme. London has many more temporary venues which are still not built and which we are still finalising and configuring. We stand by our commitment to release this data when we have an accurate and final picture.

Q. Without any sense of the tickets available for each session, there was no way for individuals to assess their chances of obtaining a desired ticket?

A. The challenge here was not the supply of tickets it was the incredible demand. We could not give any assessment of odds of obtaining tickets unless we could accurately predict demand. We tried very hard to do this through the Sign Up registration scheme.

Throughout our marketing and communications campaign we continually promoted the lower profile sports, and encouraged the public to apply for heats as well as finals.

As we know for many events the unprecedented demand for Olympic tickets far and above exceeded supply; for example, we received 1.3 million applications for the 100m men's final and 2.1 million applications for the Olympic Opening Ceremony.

Ticketcare

Q. How many applications from disabled people for companion tickets under the Ticketcare scheme have you received? And how many tickets have you now allocated? (Page 4, para 6)

A. We received 1,319 applications for LOCOG funded Ticketcare companion tickets from successful ticketing applicants. 1,315 applications were approved as 4 were deemed ineligible. The applications were split across both the Olympic Games (404 applications) and Paralympic Games (911 applications).

Q. Why was this a much lower number than the 6,500 that you made available? (Page 4, para 6)

A. We have not restricted the number of Ticketcare companion seats or indeed limited them to 6,500. We have met virtually all the applications (bar 4) that were made and we anticipate many more Ticketcare companion seat applications in final phase of ticket sales which we will seek to meet. These

companion seats are in addition wheelchair access and other accessible seating that we are providing.

Sponsors Tickets

Q. Will you publish the total number of tickets purchased by sponsors (as a whole; not individually) for each event? (Page 5, para 5)

A. We will provide this information once we have an accurate and final break down of data on ticket sales. We can confirm that tickets from sponsors will continue to come from the 25% allocated to client groups including 205 National Olympic Committees who are distributing tickets to the international publics, international athletes and their families.

Q. Will you ask sponsors to tell the public how many tickets they are making available to the public through promotional activity? (Page 5, para 6)

A. We have already encouraged our 55 sponsors to do this and we estimate that roughly 50% of their tickets will go to the public. We will continue to encourage them to do this, and will share this report with them, but it is of course this is entirely a matter for each of the 55 sponsors.

Flaws in the ticket sales process

Q. Why did you over sell synchronised swimming tickets? Was this an isolated incident and how can we be confident that this will not happen again. (Page 6, para 3)

A. There was a data error in the quota available for sale which resulted in too many tickets being sold. The error was discovered when we were doing follow-up checks. Once discovered, we did a complete audit of all 960+ Olympic and Paralympic sessions to confirm that a similar error was not made elsewhere. No other errors were found.

We have approximately 4 million tickets to sell later this year and all numbers against all sporting sessions are being constantly audited and cross checked to ensure that numbers are correct before they go on sale in April this year. The April sales process will be different to that which we ran in 2011.

Q. What testing was carried out of the ticket re-sale system? Why did this not identify the problems that occurred at launch? (Page 6, para 3)

A. Testing was carried out by Ticketmaster and LOCOG in advance of the launch of re-sale platform. The circumstances of the opening day of re-sale saw a significantly higher level of demand than we had predicted and tested

for with over 300,000 site visitors trying to purchase more than 10,000 tickets offered for re-sale. 7,000 tickets were successfully re-sold but it became apparent that the system was not producing a satisfactory customer experience given the high levels of demand.

Therefore as soon we spotted this we took the decision to take the site down and manage the re-sale process differently in a much more manageable and customer friendly process. We therefore re-opened the re-sale site later in January on a buy back basis only – where LOCOG guaranteed to buy back all tickets that people wanted to sell. The tickets we have purchased have been returned to the public allocation which will go on sale in April.

Q. How have these faults been corrected? What lessons have been learnt for remaining sales? (Page 6, para 3)

A. Our next public ticketing sales will be in April and we are currently finalising this sales process. We have always said that we will prioritise those who applied for tickets last year but were unsuccessful. Therefore this system will be different to last year's ballot process and the re-sale platform. We will announce the details of the April sales process in due course. In the meantime we are undertaking a comprehensive testing process with Ticketmaster.

After the April sales process we will re-open the Re-sale platform, however, following from lessons learnt this year, this re-sale platform will operate slightly differently, and we will split tickets being returned from tickets being offered for sale, and offer these tickets in batches on a regular basis to provide a more manageable and customer friendly process mindful that we are facing over-whelming levels of demand.