

Len Duvall AM
Deputy Chair of the Economy, Culture and Sport Committee
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
SE1 2AA

Dear Len,

Many thanks for your letter of 14th September 2011 regarding the Assembly report into the skills and employment opportunities during the 2012 Games. I am writing on behalf of the 6 Host Boroughs in response to the issues raised and to provide you with some additional information about the progress being made.

As you know, I wrote to you on the 28th of September 2011 highlighting the short window of opportunity available to influence the outcome of the sub contractor recruitment. Since then, we have been working with colleagues in the GLA, who are responsible for the Employment and Skills Legacy programme, to explore ways in which we can tackle some of the gaps identified.

The full picture of Games time employment opportunities is becoming clearer. Of the 100,000 contractor employment opportunities original announced, approximately 10,000 have been identified as suitable for entry level jobs in the Host Boroughs. In addition, LOCOG will be directly recruiting for approximately 1,000 customer service roles, also at entry level, which are of longer duration than the contractor positions.

The majority of the jobs will be located in the Olympic Host Boroughs and, as transport and accommodation costs are not being covered by sub contractors, we expect Host Borough residents to be at an advantage.

Working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and the FE colleges the Borough Brokerages are aiming to supply a minimum of 10,000 job ready candidates. Recruitment started in earnest in September and early indications are that the candidates being put forward are achieving a high success rate.

Good progress is being made on the challenging short term nature of the Games time roles and the possible disruption to the finances of people on benefits. Jobcentre Plus are writing to claimants to explain the process for

coming off and returning to benefit and have also provided assurances that there should be sufficient capacity within the national network to process claims speedily.

We are working hard to ensure as many people as possible do not need to return to benefit. We are engaged in active planning with partners to manage the end-of-Games process and wherever possible secure immediate follow on roles to prevent them needing to return to benefit. We will shortly start a conversation with employers, through ELBA, aimed at securing commitments from them to employ graduates of Games time roles.

We are also working with partners to better understand the possible impact of the security accreditation process, which is, as yet, untested. This and the long period between the job offer and the time the work starts could result in a high rate of attrition. As yet we have not reached a solution, but I am confident that the joint work we have been doing and the very good relationship that has been established between all stakeholders will result in effective solutions being put in place.

In response to the specific recommendations in the report;

Recommendation 2: *In their responses to this report by October 2011, the Host Borough Unit and the Mayor should update the Committee about the outcome of their discussions regarding the funding levels and flexibility of the GLA Olympic and Paralympic skills and employment programmes.*

Response: The Host Boroughs have always had concerns about how appropriate the 2012 Employment and Skills Legacy Programme will be to the responses required for Games time jobs. This programme is performing very well with many long term unemployed people securing jobs through the support it offers. However, it has very limited use as a route way to Games time employment. The appointment process for Games time jobs can be up to 9 months prior to the start date and involves a complex accreditation process for a period of work which will need to be supplemented to enable draw down of the output payment. Unemployed people on this programme prefer other more immediate opportunities in the labour market.

The most significant factor in securing job offers for residents is the activity undertaken by local partners. The LOCOG Employment and Skills Team, which includes secondees from the boroughs and Jobcentre Plus, has been very effective in establishing job specifications and recruitment processes which can be responded to through the services offered by the Borough Brokerage teams, Jobcentre Plus and the FE Colleges. These in turn have been effectively co-ordinated through the Host Boroughs Unit, which the boroughs also jointly fund.

In the light of my note to you, we are now working with colleagues in GLA to develop some tactical training interventions in particular to plug the

funding gap on ESOL needs, where people not receiving JSA have no access to support.

Recommendation 3: *The Mayor, the Host Boroughs and LOCOG must urgently meet the six London Prime Contractors and seek their commitment to supporting LOCOG's employment targets and filling Games-time roles with their clients. The Mayor must highlight the concerns of the voluntary and community sector as part of these discussions, as well as promoting the existing employment support networks which Prime Contracts should be linked into. The Mayor should report back to this Committee by October 2011 on the outcome of these discussions.*

Currently the structure of the Work Programme, which is very similar to the Host Boroughs Legacy Programme, deters Prime Contractors from working on Games time jobs, for the reasons outlined above. We anticipate as the gap between recruitment and the job starts closes, the Prime Contractors might become more engaged. We have built them into our communication arrangements in the hope that this will be the case.

As we learn more about Games time recruitment, we are turning our attention to what we need to do immediately after the main event, to keep as many people as possible in sustainable jobs. It may be that the Prime Contractors have more to offer at this point, as they can provide in work support. We will be exploring this shortly

As you can see, much progress has been made since you visited us earlier in the year. Following your visit I conducted a Readiness Review on behalf of the Chief Executives and Leaders and Mayors to assess the local capability and capacity to respond to this challenge. Over the summer partners have acted on the recommendations and this has ensured that we are in a position to maximise the employment opportunities offered. In particular, as a mark of the priority they place on tackling worklessness, the 6 Olympic Host Boroughs have committed substantial resources to this activity against a background of public sector cuts.

As well as putting in place processes to support our residents, we have established clear and transparent monitoring arrangements, jointly with LOCOG, which reports performance monthly and enables senior managers to take swift and appropriate action where needed.

Early indications are that this effort has been wisely invested, as we are seeing recruitment events where job offers are being made to over 90% of the candidates interviewed.

I hope you can see that much progress has been made, our ambition is to exceed the local employment targets set out in the LOCOG Employment and Skills Strategy, and the boroughs are doing everything in their power to achieve this.

The support offered through your committee is much appreciated.

Warmest Regards

Mary Conneely

Host Boroughs' Unit

(On behalf of the six Olympic Host Boroughs)