

# Major sports events in London

## Key information

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## Introduction

On **10 February**, the **Economy, Culture and Skills Committee** met to assess the economic impact of major sports events in London.

## Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

- Examine the contributions of major sports events to London's economy as a whole, as well as their more immediate contributions to local economies and surrounding areas
- Understand the challenges and drawbacks associated with hosting major sports events in London
- Understand the role of the Mayor and London & Partners in attracting major sports events to London and in supporting their delivery, and what impact their involvement has had to date
- Evaluate whether bidding for and hosting major sports events delivers a net benefit to London and if so, understand what actions the Mayor should take to attract more sports events to London

## Key issues

- London has hosted many major sports events in recent years. This includes large one-off events such as the 2024 UEFA Champions League Final and the 2024 European Professional Rugby Club Finals, as well as regularly recurring events like the Major League Baseball (MLB) London Series, Premier League

football matches and Wimbledon.

- London is home to a number of high-profile sports venues, such as the Emirates, the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Wembley Stadium and the London Stadium at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, that all regularly host major sports events. For example, as well as hosting Premier League matches, the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium has hosted several large American Football matches and is the first purpose-built National Football League (NFL) stadium outside the US. In addition to this, there are also events happening outside established venues, such as the London Marathon and RideLondon, an annual cycling festival in central London.
- A Mayoral document states that “in the context of major sports events, the Mayor defines impact as any measurable benefit felt by Londoners”. This encompasses economic impact, as well as ‘global reach’, environmental sustainability, and social integration. Economic impact is defined by the Mayor as the “total additional expenditure generated within London, as a direct consequence of staging the event”, which can further be divided into organiser and visitor expenditure.
- According to research carried out by London & Partners, between 2017 and 2020 each major sporting event staged in London contributed, on average, £3.4 million to London’s economy (in total it is estimated that the 305 sporting events staged between 2017 and 2020 contributed just over a billion pounds to London’s economy). Of these events, 52 per cent were supported by the Mayor or London & Partners. Sports events also generate indirect economic benefits: a 2024 report by the Mayor estimated that three NFL London games in 2023 brought in £110 million in indirect economic impact.
- A 2021 report by the City of London Corporation described major sports events as “soft power assets”, as they are broadcast around the world, welcome overseas visitors, engage local communities and affect public perceptions of the host. For example, the launch of the London MLB Series in 2019 incorporated several receptions and a business hosting programme. Research by the Mayor has also found major sports events to have a positive impact on London’s global reach, as matches were watched across six continents, as well as on social integration, with many events presenting volunteering opportunities for young Londoners.

## Key questions

- What impact do major sports events have on London’s economy and ‘global reach’?
- What are the more immediate contributions of major sports events on London’s local economies and the surrounding areas where events are being staged?
- What are the challenges and possible drawbacks to hosting major sports events in London?
- What is the role of the Mayor and London & Partners in attracting major sports events to London and supporting their delivery, and what impact has their involvement had?
- Does bidding and hosting a major sports event deliver a net benefit to London, and if so, what should the Mayor do to attract major sports events to London?

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