

# **PLANNING FOR RESORT REGENERATION: THE ROLE OF THE OLYMPIC 2012 BID FOR WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND, DORSET (UK)**

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games for the English seaside resort of Weymouth and neighbouring Isle of Portland, Dorset. This is done through discussing the resort life cycle theories of Butler (1980) and Russell and Faulkner (1998), and investigating where events can 'fit' into these lifecycle theories. Weymouth claims to be 'The First Resort' because King George III and the Royal Family spent their holidays there over 200 years ago (Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, hereinafter WPBC). Like many English resorts Weymouth has suffered a decline in the number of tourism visitors and was therefore awarded the last of the Tourism Development Action Programmes in 1992 to encourage key organisations to think strategically about their planning to overcome the processes of decline (Agarwal, 1999). This was seen not to be a success (Agarwal, 2002) and the interest here is whether hosting the Olympics could be the external driver to assist in the regeneration process.

This paper places the hosting of events into the overall tourism planning process and identifies the need to consider positive and negative impacts on the local community i.e. beyond the economic impacts. The Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (hereinafter WPNSA), was built as a centre of excellence for sailing and is now finding itself host to the sailing events of the 2012 Games; the only event wholly held outside of London. This paper was written before the

announcement that London had won the bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympic Games and research undertaken in 2004 when London had been short-listed as a candidate city but were running third in the evaluation stakes. It was also at a time when the Summer Games were at the forefront of people's minds with the Athens Olympics about to be held in August.

Increasingly, towns and cities are using events as a means of serving a host of policy objectives from delivering tourists, to regenerating communities and celebrating moments in time to arousing civic pride, inspiring the arts and stimulating regional economies (Ali-Knight and Robertson, 2004; Bowdin et al., 2001; Derrett, 2003; Hall, 1992). A number of impact studies have been undertaken that identify the different types of impact and conclude that it is difficult to make each factor mutually exclusive and that economic impacts also influence the socio-cultural impacts of the local community (Fredline and Faulkner, 2000; Fredline et al., 2003). Examples have already been seen in Manchester and Cardiff (Law, 1993) where the promotion of sport and leisure events, have contributed to the successful regeneration of city centres and inner areas. A summary of the main reasons for hosting mega-events (Jago and Shaw, 1998) can be found in Table 1.

## **Resort regeneration**

Most mega and major events are hosted in large cities and towns and most research has focused on urban regeneration. This paper focuses on the role of a mega-event on a seaside resort. The history of the 'English Resort' began in the eighteenth and nineteenth century when changes in society such as the increase in leisure time and more disposable income, coupled with transport developments, allowed the populous to visit the seaside. This growth continued until the 1970s and the advent of package holidays overseas. However, it was the inability to change and evolve that led to many resorts failing to provide a product that meets modern expectations and requirements in the quality of entertainment, accommodation and service delivery (Moore, 2001). Resort regeneration, the development of initiatives to prevent economic decline especially seen in UK coastal resorts (Agarwal, 2002), is often linked to resort lifecycles through the theories of Butler (1980), Russell and Faulkner (1998) and Prideaux (2000).

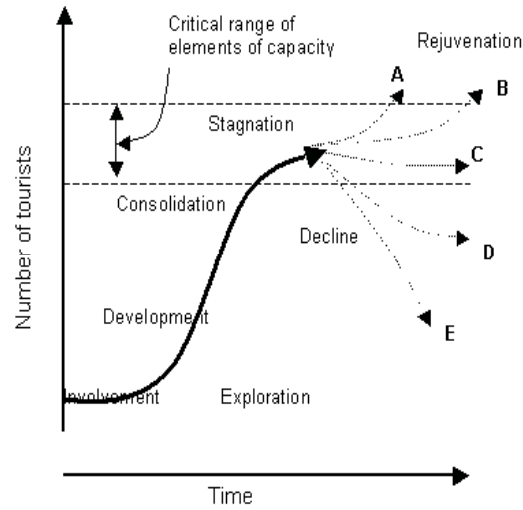
**Table 1 Reasons for growth in Mega-Events**

- 1 Positive imaging — putting the region, city and community on the map.  
(Monclus, 2003) — Barcelona, (Stamakis et al, 2003), (Law, 1993), (Chalkley and Essex, 1999), (Auld and McArthur, 2003)
- 2 One city seeks to emulate the success of another city  
(Madden, 2002), (Searle, 2002), (Toohey and Veal, 2001), (Waitt, 2001), (Brissenden, 1987)
- 3 Economic development potential as seen by government  
(Hall, 1992), (Auld and McArthur, 2003), (Jeong, 1999) (Hughes, 1993), (Crompton & McKay, 1997) (Mathieson and Wall, 1982),
- 4 Segmentation and specialisation within the tourism market  
(Chalip L, 2002), (Crompton and McKay, 1997), (Morse, 2001), (Shackkley, 2000)
- 5 Availability of government grants for sports, art and culture  
(Hall, 1992), (Gunn, 1994), (Persson, 2002)
- 6 Attracting of investment by the use of profile and image  
(Burgan and Mules, 1992), (Shone and Parry, 2001), (WTO, 1997)
- 7 Promotion of civic pride and the desire to overcome adverse circumstances  
(Brissenden, 1987), (Chalkley and Essex, 1999), (Law, 1993)
- 8 The changing nature of leisure activity in western society  
(Boniface and Cooper, 1994), (Cooper and Fletcher, 2000), (Faulkner et al, 2000), (Pearce and Butler, 1999), (Crompton and McKay, 1997)

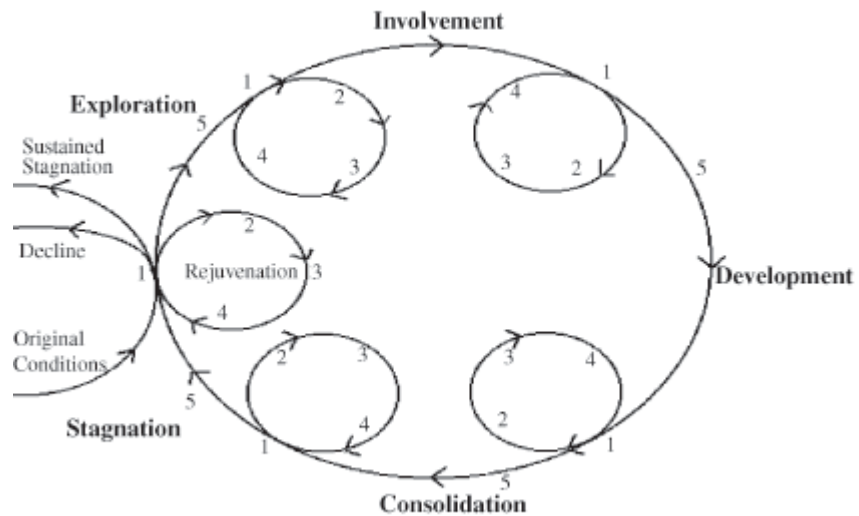
Source: Sadd 2004 (adapted from Hall, 1992; Getz, 1997)

Whilst destinations can have life-cycles (Butler, 1980; Faulkner et al., 2000), an examination of Butlers' resort cycle model (Figure 1) highlights the need to ensure that the organisation of events should be directly linked to an overall resort development strategy. This is because many events, whilst taking place in tourist areas, are not just dependent on the tourist market for their success or even organised specifically for tourists. Most events will attract local residents and tourists or be organised by community groups for their own purposes. Getz (1991), questions Butler's theory by arguing that some destinations are constantly evolving thereby concurring with the Russell and Faulkner model (Figure 2). Events have been used to add differentiation to the product, lengthen stay and encourage repeat business such as the Edinburgh

**Figure 1 — Butler’s Model (1980) adapted to illustrate the role and timing of the introduction of events**



**Figure 2— Russell and Faulkner’s cyclical representation of Butler’s lifecycle model with entrepreneurial triggers**



Festival (Ali-Knight and Robertson, 2004). In English seaside resorts the overall lifecycle does not reflect the annual seasonal life-cycle created by the influx of tourists during the school summer holidays.

Russell and Faulkner (1998) believe that 'triggering' mechanisms cause sub-cycles to occur within each stage of the model so that the life-cycle is not linear but constantly evolving and re-inventing itself. Events can play this role within resort destinations through their uniqueness and experience. Events are used to reduce the extremes in seasonality of a seaside resort with the development of facilities and then programmes to cater for target markets such as the conference market during the shoulder months of the tourism season. This concept could be broadened to use major and mega events as part of the broader resort strategic development and the resort lifecycle used to help identify when these 'entrepreneurial' triggers should be used to continue the cycle of development.

Russell and Faulkner (1998) argue that as these demands change, it is the 'entrepreneurial' drive and activity that brings the destination back into the Butler's Lifecycle model and therefore drives the destination forward.

Agarwal (2002) discusses the resort restructuring opportunities through analysis of the resort lifecycle and included Weymouth within her case studies. She writes that whilst Butler's model is extended to include regeneration as an option, little is known about the role regeneration can play and how restructuring is achieved. Events in seaside resorts have predominantly focused on conferences, entertainment and currently casinos as catalysts for regeneration. Resorts have found it difficult to diversify from the sand and sun that was their attraction pre-1970 and have therefore found it hard to compete with overseas resorts. Although part of the 'package' few English resorts have used sport or sports events as a main attraction (Eastbourne successfully hosts the Lawn Tennis Association's Women's International Championships that acts as a warm-up event for Wimbledon). Cowes has become synonymous with the hallmark sailing regatta but is really a seaport town and not a seaside resort (that has a beach as a main attraction). It will be interesting to see if Weymouth and Portland, as a satellite centre, will benefit from the London 2012 Games. Research undertaken on Garfield County, a community area close to Salt Lake City Winter Olympics 2002, were indifferent to the Games but supported the idea of a marketing

awareness campaign throughout the Games (Deccio and Baloglu, 2002). Weymouth and Portland residents won't be peripheral to the sailing events but will be from the main centre of action in London.

### **Tourism planning and associated impacts**

Tourism planning and resort planning in particular, with the three levels suggested by Gunn (1994), national, regional strategic and local, need to be integrated to produce an adoptable strategic vision. Weymouth and Portland unsuccessfully tried to utilise the Tourism Development Action Plan to regenerate itself (1992–95), and now they await the opportunity to host an Olympic event to be more successful in this area. Turco et al. (2002) argue that the planning of events should take a holistic approach, looking beyond the economic impacts, gather information regarding the communities and special interest groups and if used effectively may help to develop good community relations, thereby overcoming objections and limiting the possible negative impacts. Furthermore, events should play a role in the destination tourism plan and that sound planning should accompany the pursuit of events. (Andersson, 1999; Getz, 1997). The Appendix demonstrates strategies aimed at communities and destinations contemplating a bid for a mega event or in the process of planning an event.

### **Place distinctiveness of Weymouth and Portland**

Agarwal (2002) believes it important to recognise and appreciate a resort's place distinctiveness and then to use this in the restructuring strategies to offset the possible decline. In Weymouth and Portland's case, the local distinctiveness is its unique sailing waters and the decision to support the building of man-made features to complement and capitalise on the distinctiveness of not only the harbour, but also the adjacent setting of the World Heritage Coastline. These attributes were recognised by Lord Coe and Princess Royal, at the official opening ceremony of the WPNSA in June, 2005 (WPNSA).

Weymouth is a medium sized seaside resort on the south coast of England, 160 miles from London, with a population of approximately 60,000. It has sandy beaches and shallow offshore waters with a sheltered harbour containing reputedly some of the best sailing waters in the

world. The resort traditionally has been a family destination attracting a strong domestic tourist market base but has suffered in the last 30 years due to the increase in overseas travel (Argarwal, 1999, 2002). Weymouth is connected to the Isle of Portland which is the former home of the Royal Navy Base, HMS Osprey, and it is upon this land that the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) have developed the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA) with assistance from the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Dorset County Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, Sport England, English Institute of Sport and other sponsors.

### **The Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy**

It is this venue that will host the 2012 sailing events for both the main summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. The WPNSA was formed in 1999 as a not-for-profit organisation to acquire the lease on the site, to bid for funds and grants and to facilitate the building of the centre and yet also to work alongside the London 2012 bid team. A local company, Sail Force Ltd, won the tender to run the centre with the overall responsibility of the entire operation remaining with the WPNSA. Whether this set up will continue to be successful without any conflict prior to the hosting of the 2012 sailing will remain to be seen. The original three aims of the WPNSA were to promote the sport of sailing, provide community use of the facilities and to contribute to substantial local economic regeneration (WPNSA).

For Weymouth and Portland, the sailing facilities have been developed irrespective of the Olympic bid as the intention was to build 'state of the art' new facilities for sailing that were more accessible than Cowes on the Isle of Wight. This uniqueness is in itself a catalyst for change because of the ability of the centre to host elite sailing events. The additional facilities that will be required to host the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events will cost an estimated £17 million. It is planned to utilise and develop existing accommodation stocks but also to use cruise liners to accommodate the visiting VIP's, officials, media and competitors. Additional pontoons will be required so it is planned to build a new marina that will be sold off after the Games and to build temporary structures for the duration of the Games. Spectators will be

encouraged to use park and ride facilities to reach the open air viewing areas to be positioned around the perimeter of the harbour and bay (Sadd, 2004).

The WPNSA is already playing its part in hosting major events, including the J24 World Championships in September 2005; the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships, the 29er World Championships and the 49er European Championships in July 2006. The main impacts identified by the Borough Council for these events are economic, media coverage and the lasting legacy of demonstrating an international 'Weymouth welcome'. They also develop event management abilities in the operation of the event and demonstrate how the local infrastructure, facilities, services and organisations are able to coordinate a successful world class event (WPBC, 2005).

### **Primary research**

Research was carried out in Weymouth and Portland as soon as the announcement was made in 2002 of the UK bid for the 2012 Olympic Games. One of the aims was to identify the relevance and importance of the bidding and hosting of the Games for the local community. Quantitative and qualitative research was undertaken with key stakeholders and the residents of the Borough. The role of the latter in the planning for the hosting of events in general and the sailing as part of the Olympics was an important part of this research. The research undertook to investigate both the positive and potentially negative impacts of hosting events. How relevant were the characteristics of Doxey's irritant factors in this case?

The research to evaluate the community's views on the impacts of hosting events within Weymouth and Portland was carried out with the assistance of the Borough Council, Local Chamber of Commerce, Sailing Authorities, Citizen's Panel and individual citizens via questionnaires (447 returned from 1000 with 27 spoiled) with follow-up semi-structured interviews. The respondents recognised the significance of hosting festivals and events not only as generators of income, but also as civic celebrations. The relative importance of events to the lives and community of the residents of Weymouth and Portland generated a 42% response rate for the questionnaire. The positive and negative impacts



identified go beyond only the economic and reach into the lives of the residents and the image they have of themselves and their community.

Despite the presence in Weymouth of the Citizen's Panel, the Community Partnership and the council newsletter, the majority of residents, as evidenced within the questionnaire responses, do not feel involved in the decisions their council makes. The Citizen's Panel is heavily weighted towards the 55+ age bracket and retired residents portraying a bias that is acknowledged in the research. In addition, it was felt by some residents that the business community and some members in particular, have a much louder say in the activities that take place in Weymouth and Portland. Whilst the residents will welcome the sailing events to the area, there is some fear that people, including locals, will stay away from the events due to overcrowding. This displacement has been the subject of research related to the previous Summer and Winter Olympic Games (Hiller, 1998).

### **The use of events in place distinctiveness**

From the community's point of view, it is not the individual life cycles that are of importance, rather the overall portfolio that is of greater importance (Getz, 2000) and in Weymouth and Portland's case their unique ability to be able to host events relating to the sea and military connections. Weymouth markets itself as the "eventful" resort and believing itself to have a "level of expertise" in organising military parades in addition to their record of hosting Tall Ships on an unprecedented three occasions. Within the research carried out in 2004, the overwhelming positive impacts of events on the community were evidenced by 58% of the questionnaire respondents indicating a desire for more large-scale events to be held in the town with many indicating the preference for more nautical events as seen in Figures 3 and 4.

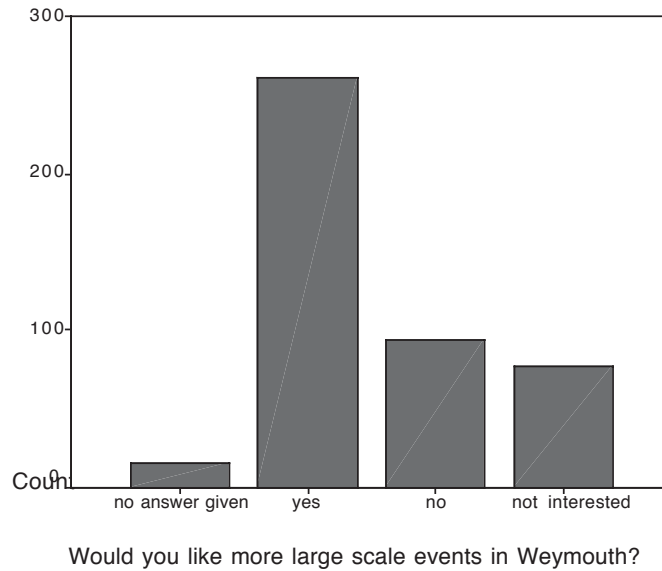
### **Weymouth and Portland community issues and involvement**

Any event associated with the Olympics, is expected to generate large external benefits where the benefits are widely spread and justify funding from public monies. Getz (2003) argues that events can be categorised by the strain the event places on the destination's

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**Figure 3 — Capacity for residents to accept more tourists**

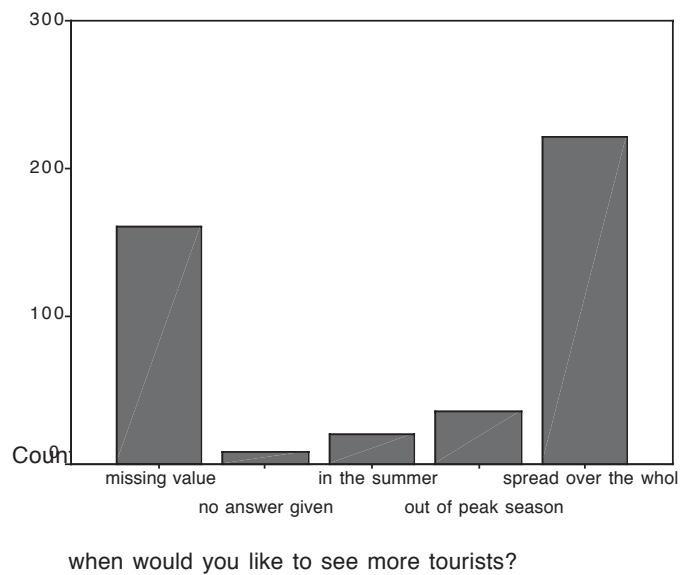

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**Figure 4 Public interest in large-scale events in the areas.**


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infrastructure and whilst communities may not need new facilities, they encourage the event as a catalyst for positive infrastructure improvements because external funds can be obtained. For many residents of Weymouth and Portland, the issue of the relief road is of vital importance to the impacts of any major events within the surrounding area. As the London 2012 bid was successful, there is added impetus for the scheme to get the approval needed to progress within the short term, otherwise the road will continue to be a contentious issue for the town's residents and a source of confrontation with the council.

Without the Olympics bid being successful, it was anticipated that the road issue would not be resolved quickly and the whole area, including the economic well being of the town, would suffer greatly as more businesses relocated due to the road congestion (interviews with residents, 2004). They have already lost the distribution centre for New Look, a locally based national retail clothing business. However, this raises the issue of how events are used to get through changes that are not acceptable to all. What was quite a powerful environmental lobby against the relief road may now be sidestepped for the necessity of the road to carry the capacity required of the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events.

Doxey's often quoted irritant index includes congestion as a factor causing dissatisfaction amongst local residents (Cooper et al., 2005; Shaw and Williams, 2000). This can be caused by people or by their use of transport, especially cars. There will be cases of "The Los Angeles" effect (Hall, 1992, and Getz, 1991), where the local residents will go out of town for the duration of the event to avoid the negative impacts caused by the road congestion. Some visitors may even stay away, who would normally visit the area, due to over inflated prices, perceived or real, during the period of the Olympic events as seen in Athens 2004 (Carlin, 2003).

### **Carrying capacity issues**

One of the issues identified by the research was that of visitor numbers. Carrying capacity relates to the point beyond which further levels of visitation or development would lead to unacceptable deterioration in the physical environment, the visitors' enjoyment and residents' acceptance (O'Reilly, 1986; Theobald, 1999). Carrying capacity plays a

pivotal role by intervening in the relationship between visitor and resources. The character of the resource — i.e. its natural features — is equally important and the resort/area must decide its physical limits and robustness to continued tourism development (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; O'Reilly, 1986).

For sports events there are two types of visitors: participants and spectators. Different types of events focus on one or the other (Green, 2001) or lie on a continuum from being competitor to spectator driven (Gratton, Dobson and Shibli, 2000). Most sailing events are predominantly participant based but in the case of the Olympic sailing events the host destination will be concerned with both participants and spectators. The London 2012 bid document estimated attendance of 15,000 per day, yet the local council estimate the figure to be far higher and even in excess of 70,000 per day. This is within the town's carrying capacity as evidenced through their hosting of the Tall Ships Festival on three separate occasions when the town accommodated over 100,000 visitors. In this instance it is easier to estimate the number of participants, and there are estimated to be 400 sailors from 61 nations competing for 54 medals in 126 races (WPBC).

### **Weymouth and Portland's forward planning**

One conclusion derived from the research, via the literature review and interviews, is that each event is unique and that whilst there are trends that can be seen to occur, the key to success lies in forward planning. Weymouth and Portland Council began planning as soon as it was announced that the UK were preparing a bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, although the WPNSA was planned before this, but it is only in the last 12 months that the community has become more involved. Athens did not plan early enough and suffered from adverse publicity, culminating in many potential visitors staying away and some events being left undersold. Conversely, the organisers of the Beijing Games have been told to slow down as many facilities are already near completion, and will need to be 'mothballed' for three years, whilst not generating any income.

In Weymouth and Portland the local community have also been involved in forward planning with school children designing posters and leaflets illustrating the natural features of the area. Local businesses are carrying large banners on the outside of their buildings supporting

the 2012 bid and advertising the important role Weymouth and Portland are to play if the bid is successful. Local College students made a DVD for the International Olympic Committee to see the benefits of hosting the sailing in the Weymouth and Portland area.

### **Opportunities for regeneration**

The opportunities for the Weymouth and Portland area to regenerate are already recognised through the research questionnaire by the residents and several suggestions have been put forward for ways to do this irrespective of the Olympic sailing coming to the area, including the upgrading of seaside accommodation owned by the council into 'boutique' style hotels to attract wealthier visitors to the area. Even if the result of the Singapore IOC vote had not been in favour of a London 2012 Games, the WPNSA still intended to hold world class sailing events, although the opportunities for resort regeneration may not have been as immediate. The fact that several world class sailors and windsurfers have relocated to live in the Weymouth and Portland area because of the natural facilities, in addition to the WPNSA, may yet encourage more people to move to the area and thus regenerate the towns image through its water sports facilities.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council are very committed to the hosting of the sailing events and they are realistic enough to realise the momentum that has been gained by the bid procedure even on the local population, should continue in its bid to revitalise the image of the town. They are presently redesigning their marketing campaign to include the proximity of the World Heritage coastline, the development of the WPNSA and surrounding areas and in particular the natural facilities of the harbour and beaches. They recognise the economic significance of tourism to the town and are within their tourism team planning events throughout the whole summer to keep the community spirit alive. Press coverage and media interest shown in the area since the July decision has already resulted in several initiatives including the opportunities to advertise the Olympic venue status of the town at every opportunity not just by the council but local businesses and the community at large (Gallivan interview, 2005).

It can be concluded from the research that too much emphasis on the economic benefits should not over shadow the other possible impacts both positive and negative. Whilst the local communities will experience

short-term disruption through traffic restrictions, tow-away zones, road closures and car parks converted to other uses (Sadd, 2004); there will be the opportunities for long-term gains especially from resort regeneration through media exposure, community spirit and a relief road. The main strategies and actions that Weymouth and Portland could take are summarised in Table 2.

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**Table 2**      **Strategies for Weymouth and Portland to optimise the tourism impacts of 2012**

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*Plan for the long-term*

Regional Development Agency driving development of former Navy Base HMS Osprey. Weymouth and Portland needs to decide where it intends to position itself. Present strategy is to appeal to all sectors of the market but they have the facilities to satisfy these demands with their present resources and infrastructure. Possibility of upgrading accommodation and extending tourism into shoulder seasons through the use of events.

*Optimise facility development and use of existing facilities*

Weymouth and Portland in conjunction with the WPSNA and the 2012 organising committee have recognised that oversupply of facilities could be detrimental in the long run. Other than the ongoing developments at the WPSNA and significance of the development of the relief road, the additional accommodation and catering requirements are all to be temporary arrangements for the duration of the Games. The additional facilities required at the WPSNA include further mooring, which will post the Games be sold off as a private marina. Actively market proximity to World Heritage Coastline, especially the Jurassic Coastline.

*Plan for sustained awareness and image-making efforts*

Combat negative publicity, as seen in the British Press and their criticisms of the London 2012 bid — Woodridge I, 2004, Daily Mail, May 22nd. Involve the press from the planning and feasibility stages right through to the after event summaries and looking to the future. Already the council are working closely with the 2012 team with press releases and in addition the council are keeping the residents up to date with developments via the local press, council website and the chamber of trade.

*Tourist facilitation*

Overcome resident objections which are mainly based around traffic congestion. The relief road issue will overcome most of this. Any evidence of Doxey's Index of Irritation must be handled by the organiser's in Weymouth and Portland and to consider the needs of

*Table 2 (cont.)*

the local population. Target marketing The opportunity presents itself for the council to develop 'top end' accommodation within it's the seafront property portfolio to satisfy the demands of more discerning visitors which may in turn present the opportunity to upgrade its other facilities to satisfy their demands.

The 'Towards 2015' tourism drive of South-West Tourism talks about quality over quantity and this initiative would satisfy this drive (Sadd, 2005).

*Combat displacement effects*

Get the locals involved as volunteers despite the fact that the events are taking place 160 miles away from the main Olympic site. Let them feel involved in what is taking place in their town. Residents must be persuaded that the event is so unique that they should forego their other trips. Council to manage the licensing of products and concessions to try and avoid temporary price inflations.

*Dispersal of benefits*

The very nature of the events taking place around the harbour will allow for management of the visitors. A park and ride scheme will help traffic control. The local emergency services already have their blueprint in place.

*Maximising tourism benefits*

Spread the events beyond the August/September key months and in the years leading up to 2012. Already the WPSNA are hosting world class sailing events and should encourage the community to support these events and help where possible. Hold more community events at the WPSNA where possible and invite the community to sail. This in turn will encourage more tourists to visit the area, especially those with an interest in watersports.

## **Future legacy of the WPNSA**

John Tweed, Director of Development at the WPNSA, believes that the centre will provide affordable, accessible and socially inclusive community facilities to allow local people to be introduced to sailing and water sports and to progress through all levels. The Royal Yachting Association charity, Sailability, is fully engaged to ensure leisure and competitive requirements for disabled people are accommodated in the new academy. Tweed further believes that the profile of not just Weymouth and Portland but the region as a whole will be enhanced through the building of the new centre irrespective of the 2012 bid's

success through the employment of 150 full-time equivalent jobs and the resulting £5.9 million increase in demand for local businesses.

The publicity being generated for the academy and the area through the bid process is helping to establish the centre and the area as a World Class sailing and water sports venue. The opportunity to focus worldwide television audiences on the area will be immense, especially within the UK because of the success of Team GB at the Athens Olympic Games. The media exposure opportunities are considerable, especially through major sailing events as identified earlier. Media coverage will be important to encourage the non-sailing community's interest and to overcome any objections to sailing becoming an elitist sport and in particular the WPNSA being for top class sailors. The council's PR representative already describes Weymouth and Portland as an 'eventful resort' thus emphasising the role events play within the Tourism profile of the town. Lord Coe has described the sailing facilities at the WPNSA at the "jewel in the crown" of the UK bid of which Weymouth and Portland are undoubtedly very proud. They plan to keep the momentum going by deciding where they want to be and believing in it.

## **Conclusion**

The opportunities arising from the hosting of events to 'regenerate', as per Butler's lifecycle, must not be assumed to be the universal remedy for areas in decline. A study of the work of Russell and Faulkner (1998) represents a better model for using events within resort regeneration. Whilst events, and even it can be argued the opportunity to bid for major events, can create awareness, raise community spirit and lead to infrastructure improvements, it is the joint co-operation and working together of a multi-agency partnership that will ensure that the event role within any regeneration strategy can be successful not just in the short term, but also in the medium and long term as well. This was one of the conclusions reached after the evaluation of the Tourism Development Action Plan (Agarwal, 1999 and 2002). It is hoped that lessons have been learnt from this and that the Olympics will act as a greater external catalyst to change and co-operation than the £300,000 three year TDAP funding.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council recognises its distinctiveness and should build upon the momentum of hosting major sailing



events to expand its tourism market to the “shoulder” months, thereby not relying solely upon its summer trade. The Olympic sailing events do not necessarily help with this because the races will be held between 27 July to 12 August for the Olympics and 29 August to 9 September 2012 for the Paralympics. The opportunities present themselves with the development of the sporting facilities at the WPNSA coupled with the natural facilities of the harbour and surrounding waters, thus satisfying the entrepreneurial ‘triggers’ referred to by Russell and Faulkner (1998). The community issues including the relief road developments if addressed satisfactorily would have overcome any local objections to the hosting of the Games and encourage community involvement in the regeneration of the town (NB this is now not likely to occur).

In terms of the resort restructuring literature (Agarwal, 2002; Morgan, 1994), Weymouth is diversifying its product portfolio from relying on the summer beach to special events and the Jurassic Coast. Agarwal (2002) however identifies that other resorts are also diversifying their attractions to include events, historic and maritime resources. What will give Weymouth and Portland their uniqueness and distinguish them from other resorts is by developing a specialisation in sailing events. This is something that is based on a natural resource and enhanced by built facilities like the WPNSA. No other resort is going to be able to copy this. Through the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events Weymouth will be on the world media stage and is competing globally for international sailing events. No other tourism development could achieve this potential step change. However, Weymouth and Portland are not London and will need to work together as a community with LOCOG to maximise the leverage potential that the Games can afford them and beyond.

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## Appendix

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### Generic Strategies for optimising the tourism impacts of mega-events

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#### *Plan for the long-term*

Specifically plan for pre and post event impacts as well as the event itself. Have a clear vision for the future and focus on the intended legacies of the event. Clear guidelines and responsibilities of organisers and reporting channels by planning the organisational and marketing evolution necessary to ensure long-term benefits for all.

#### *Optimise facility development and use of existing facilities*

The development of new facilities represents one of the largest costs and entails great risks of over-supply with limited use after the event. The use of cruise ships to supply temporary accommodation where feasible is a popular option as is turning accommodation facilities into low cost affordable housing or university accommodation as seen in Atlanta (Toohey and Veal, 2001)

#### *Plan for sustained awareness and image-making efforts*

Smith (1986, in Getz, 1991, p.253) notes, "it is the media, backed by word-of-mouth which generates and controls the hype". Getz (1991) also writes that although travel and sports writers have their own specialised readership, it is news reporters who have the largest audiences and therefore the biggest influence. In return the television distribution rights for the coverage of the Olympics will cost US\$800 million for the 2006 winter Games and US\$1700 million for the 2008 summer Games (Persson, 2002)

#### *Tourist facilitation*

Making the stay of the visitors as comfortable as possible. The ease of purchasing tickets must be considered on a global scale with the utmost precision to combat "black market" being sold at inflated prices. Similarly, the ease of entry for all nationals across international borders must be considered and the provision of

information in as many languages as possible. The host population must be willing and helpful to all visitors.

***Target marketing***

The possibility of attracting higher-yield, quality visitors must be considered as opposed to the mass market, large volumes. Residents however, should not be excluded

***Combat displacement effects***

In order to avoid visitors staying away through fear of overcrowding, price inflations, crime and terrorism, a concentrated programme of information and an image-making campaign must be initiated as soon as possible.

***Dispersal of benefits***

If possible spread the events over a large area to avoid congestion. However, depending on the event it may be more prudent to concentrate facilities to reduce costs and to make it a more pleasant experience for the visitor.

***Maximising tourism benefits***

Encourage visitors to stay longer by organising pre and post event celebrations. Use high quality souvenirs to encourage visitors to buy more items and use local suppliers to increase the multiplier effect. Include in the event planning entertainment opportunities, yet do not over-supply permanent facilities.

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Sources: Sadd (2004) adapted from Andersson et al. (1999)