

Press Release

British Shooting Amazed at Illogical LOCOG/ODA Woolwich Decision for 2012 Shooting Venue

Introduction

British Shooting (BS), the joint voice of the Shooting Associations of Great Britain, has taken some time to consider the disappointing news that Bisley - against their advice - has not been chosen as the best option for the Olympic Shooting venue 2012.

In particular, it is clear to British Shooting that the statement from LOCOG and the ODA is, in our view, inaccurate.

Background

British Shooting supported Woolwich as an option when the Olympic bid was made on the understanding that the shooting events would take place at Bisley in 2012.

It is asserted that part of the reason the venue cannot change is that this would be in breach of contractual obligations made with the IOC. This is incorrect when you consider over 65% of the Athens venues were changed after the award of the Games. It also appears that the inability to change the shooting venue to Bisley does not apply to Barking, another suggested alternative, for some reason.

The recent KPMG report was originally commissioned post Beijing Olympics to consider the temporary venues on the basis of cost, feasibility and legacy. British Shooting is confident that in relation to Woolwich, Bisley is cheaper, offers the full facilities for the build-up test events, Olympics and Paralympics, is safer, more secure and offers near one hundred percent legacy - contrary to the unsupported assertions of LOCOG and the ODA.

Report Failings

Crucially, significant doubt surrounds the KPMG report. Key areas are blanked out on the basis that they are 'commercially sensitive'. In a meeting with the Olympic Minister it was put to her that, in relation to shooting, British Shooting was aware that an inaccurate figure of £60 million had been quoted from within ODA/LOCOG as the cost for building Bisley, exactly twice the figure estimated by our cost consultants. This £60m figure was not denied by her.

There are already a number of public concerns expressed through Parliament and the press about the aims and reliability of this report. Critically British Shooting have also been denied access to the details of the 70 page report that was submitted as justification for the decision to keep the shooting at Woolwich with Barking nominated as the back-up site. The lack of access to both the full KPMG report and the latest internal report from LOCOG/ODA means Bisley is unable to challenge their findings and that the report must be treated with some suspicion.

The LOCOG and ODA press release refers to a feasibility study that had been carried out on Bisley. This is simply not true. When we eventually got them to the table in December 2008 they stated that if we were able to answer some key questions then they would enter into a feasibility study - with them paying half - the total cost of the

study being some £200,000. The Shooting Associations agreed these terms. We answered all the questions asked of us in great detail making Bisley a strong contender in the bidding process - according to David Higgins of the ODA on 16th February 2009. The feasibility study never took place because the ODA never truly engaged with Bisley, which was possibly their intention from the outset.

A Level Playing Field?

To our surprise and concern we found that financial obligations to be imposed on BS would be different to any other sporting venue. Bisley was expected to contract to deliver the shooting venue at a defined cost, standard and time scales, taking all the risk if there was an over spend. In addition we were expected to pay for and speculate on the potential of getting the Games at a cost of £1.4 million.

Unsurprisingly, our partners in this venture, Sport England, South East England Development Agency and Surrey County Council were not willing to take the risk on this basis. It was a fundamentally different approach against the interests of our sport, for reasons unexplained and unsubstantiated.

The Detail

Cost

There are major inaccuracies in the LOCOG/ODA version of the costs.

- The Bisley cost consultants, who are no strangers to the issues having worked on other Olympic projects, have estimated that the cost for building the Olympic Shooting venue to correct scale at Bisley will cost £28-£30 million against a cost for Woolwich of £42 million.
- The issue of accommodation is a red herring in that the ODA and LOCOG are fully aware that appropriate facilities for athletes would be available at both Surrey University (Olympic Training venue) and Holloway College (2012 Olympic Village for rowing) both within 10-15 minutes of Bisley.

Operational Complexity

Claims made by LOCOG/ODA are simply incorrect, and they were given clear explanations by British Shooting.

- There are no issues over land ownership, and this has already been stated to LOCOG/ODA. The NRA would provide the land held under freehold or leasing agreements with the MoD, this was confirmed by the MOD representative who attended the meeting at Canary Wharf on 16th February. The Olympic Shooting venue would be a stand alone facility within its own security fence border on either side by Pirbright Army Training Camp and the National Shooting Centre on the other side both of which are secure areas in their own right.
- The argument that there are numerous clubs to consider yet again is a smoke and mirrors argument in that only four lease holders would be affected. These individuals have already been accommodated and subscribe fully with the plans proposed by the Shooting Associations.

- As for a lead client to deliver the project, that was always going to be British Shooting. However, discussions never reached that point because the ODA wished to create a completely different delivery model at Bisley with the Shooting Associations taking all the risk rather than sharing it wholly or partly with the ODA.

Time and Reputation Risks

LOCOG/ODA had already been made aware of the following facts.

- It is correct that to deliver at Bisley we would have to go through the same planning processes as any other project. The ODA are fully aware that we had negotiated understandings with Natural England, local authorities and SEEDA that meant our proposals were very deliverable if the ODA had engaged with them, which they had not.
- The ODA were also aware that we had an agreement with the MoD to extend our lease to include the required land on the proviso that it was for the Olympics.
- The delivery of the Olympic Venue in January 2012 was a specific requirement made by the ODA, not set on the basis of planning or build difficulties.

Conclusions

In recent times it has become increasingly obvious that shooting has been targeted for special attention. The evidence of this is as follows:

- Despite being offered detailed proposals by British Shooting over three years ago which would allow the British Olympic pistol team to train in the UK the Government having announced their agreement to allow this to happen, then put in place such onerous conditions that the team still has to train in Switzerland.
- The recent 75% cut in funding to the British Shooting Team using questionable justification.
- The low levels of funding allocated to the sport to increase participation under the Governments 'playground to podium' project, having produced the most compelling business case compared with other sports as acknowledged by Sport England.
- Finally the decision on not allowing the 2012 shooting to move to Bisley despite good evidence that the National Shooting Centre would provide the most cost effective, safe, secure and sustainable venue for the Games and for the future.

Legacy is at the heart of the Olympic ideal and has been stressed repeatedly by Lord Coe. It is entirely absent in any real terms from the approach by Government, ODA and LOCOG. We would expect by now to see unqualified support for our medal prospects at the London games with a legacy for future success.

British Shooting is very concerned at this stage that all the information given to LOCOG/ODA has been ignored. It has not been reflected in the decision making process and is inaccurately represented in the LOCOG/ODA press release.

British Shooting wish to make it crystal clear that they still wish to host the 2012 shooting at Bisley and are very willing to sit down in front of a Parliamentary Committee to put their case in full if required to do so.

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