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PRIME MINISTER

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DCMS' PRIORITIES

You asked me to set out the key challenges for DCMS and how we propose to deliver against them.

The most significant in terms of scope, potential and profile is the 2012 Olympics. Both in its own right, and because of the catalyst it can be, it is one of the greatest opportunities we have to transform the lives of people in London and across the UK.

The first year of preparation has gone well: the bid company has been translated into the London Organising Committee; the Olympic Delivery Authority is up and running; and building work is already underway. The IOC assess that we are more advanced than any previous host city at this stage. But there is an enormous task ahead of us. The development of the Olympic park and the surrounding area will be the largest construction project in Europe and the biggest regeneration project this Government has undertaken – the equivalent of building two Terminal 5s in half the time.

My Department's role is to make sure the LOCOG and the ODA are able to get on with their jobs while monitoring their progress against agreed delivery plans and continuing to bear down on costs. If we are to remain on track it is vital that the ODA has an agreed budget and I'm able to take timely decisions on behalf of Government – previous experience shows that procrastination in projects like these leads to higher costs and the significant risk of delays. In this I am very well supported by MISC 25 under Jack Straw's Chairmanship.

We made a promise in Singapore to do more than simply host the Olympics. The best legacy we can hope for from 2012 is that it will inspire young people to choose sport. This is an uphill battle, when the prevailing trend is for less not more activity, but I think we are making progress. To succeed here we have to provide positive habit-forming experiences of sport in schools, attractive facilities for people to play sport in, coaches to inspire and motivate them and for the talented, a clear pathway so they can see their way from efforts now to medal success in the future.



I think we can be very proud of what we have done in schools and it's becoming recognised as a model by other countries. When we came into office, sport in school appeared to be in irreversible decline. Under-investment and failure to value sport had left some of our children with under an hour of PE or sport a week. We're on course this year to meet our PSA target of 75% of children enjoying at least 2 hours a week compared to around 25% in 2002. The two key motivational factors in persuading young people to take up sport are coaching and facilities. We've recruited competition managers to organise competitions within and between schools, and typically young people are being offered up to 14 different sports. By 2010 every child in every school will be doing 2 hours in school with the opportunity to do 3-4 hours outside of school hours. It is in this out of school time where the vital links are made with sports clubs and community groups that will sustain young people's interest once they have grown up and moved on.

We have invested an unprecedented amount of money into new sports facilities – over £2bn up to 2008 - but there is still more to do. The next push has to come with local authorities as over 60% of local authority facilities are over 40 years old. We need to help them to find ways to renew and refresh their facilities stock. We have tasked Sport England to set up an improvement unit to work with local authorities to achieve this. We have recruited 3000 community sport coaches to work with people in clubs and gyms. For the talented, we have learnt from other countries and are putting in place a world class talent development programme – from spotting children in schools, to TASS scholarships, and elite performance management that will help our athletes to be even more successful.

Continuing to increase participation and delivering more private sector investment into grassroots sport will require further reform of Sport England and I am currently considering how we can make the National Sports Foundation and Sport England work most effectively. We have to look at what is actually working on the ground to get more people active – the success of charity runs, the London Marathon, the Great North Run and Nike 10Ks. I will look at how we can use this kind of model to galvanise mass participation.

We have to be realistic in recognising that sport isn't always the answer for everyone and I am encouraged by our recent joint working with the Department of Health on the activity agenda. We must ensure that the strategy to get people active is adequately funded – it is as much of a life change as giving up smoking with just as clear health benefits.

The cultural Olympiad is an integral part of the Olympic Games for us. I want 2012 to have the same effect on culture as on sport: a renewed interest in participation, British institutions seen to be leading the world and a fillip to sponsorship and capital funding. Our objective over this Parliament is to continue to increase the number of people who enjoy the arts, and we have stretching targets to try to do this. I have started a period of further reform of the Arts Council so it can deliver better service to its clients. The benefits are well worth it. The step change in quality we've seen in some of our cultural institutions because of the substantial increase in arts funding has helped attract more private sponsorship from the likes of Unilever and Travelex and greater public interest in culture. Tate Modern is now the most popular modern art gallery in the world. Free museum entry has been a major driver in creating an environment where children experience culture and from an instrumental point of view it is an important aspect of developing their creativity.

Tourism is also significant to our broader preparations for the 2012 Games. We have a fantastic opportunity to showcase the UK to the world, and our challenge is to make the most of it. I have asked the Regional Development Agencies to work with VisitBritain and put together business plans to work out how they can maximise the potential benefits. They will report to me later in the year. The visitor economy underpins the prosperity and cohesion of communities up and down Britain and I want to see greater coherence and coordination of tourism support across the public sector partners to better support the industry.

Our heritage plays an important part in attracting visitors to the UK, but more than that its intrinsic value helps to shape and define our national identity contributing to community cohesion at home and public diplomacy abroad. In the coming year I am looking to maximise culture's impact on the UK's national self image, and its profile abroad. We will work with the FCO, British Council and cultural institutions to set out the roadmap for this work.

Looking beyond the Olympics, this is a critical moment to shape the communications ecology with the renewal of the BBC Charter, the setting of the level of the licence fee and the implementation of Digital Switchover (the largest government-led change since decimalisation). Behind each lie some big questions about the proper use and price of spectrum, and how we futureproof decisions so a healthy market can flourish alongside excellent public service broadcasting. It is a truism of media and technology to say that it develops quickly but at the moment the pace of change is truly staggering, and we need to work with industry on how they think consumer demand will evolve over the next ten years. Shaun Woodward is working closely with Margaret Hodge at DTI to make sure implementation of DSO progresses smoothly. The difficult aspect to manage is the handling – the technical switch is straightforward compared to our needing to make sure hearts and minds are with us.

Because of the digital revolution, provision of more robust Intellectual Property protection for music, film, and other content currently freely available via digital platforms is even more important. The long term success of our Creative Economy depends on getting the regulatory framework for this right. Once Andrew Gowers has reported in the Autumn, I will be working closely with Treasury on the best way to do this. To further support the Creative Economy, we have set up industry-led working groups to look at key productivity levers and how Government efforts could best be targeted. These groups have now reported and we will publish their reports in August. After a brief period of consultation we will decide how to take their recommendations forward.

We will continue to provide a direct point of contact and aftercare for victims of terrorist attack and major disasters. Our experience with the families and survivors of 7/7 has shown that there is more to be done in improving our response immediately after an attack and in the weeks and months following. We still need to do more to support those British people killed or injured by terrorist attacks overseas, and we will continue to work with families to plan suitable memorial events.

Tessa Jowell.

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