



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

World Police and Fire Games 2013:  
Progress

21 June 2012

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

### World Police and Fire Games 2013: Progress

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
Mr David Hilditch  
Mr Michael McGimpsey  
Mrs Karen McKeivitt  
Mr Cathal Ó hOisín  
Mr Robin Swann

**Witnesses:**

Mr Peter Craig	2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd
Mr Alistair McGowan	2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd
Mr John Tully	2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd

**The Chairperson:** I welcome you all to the Committee this afternoon. John, would you like to introduce your colleagues and then make an opening statement? Members will follow up with some questions.

**Mr John Tully (2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd):** Certainly. I would like to introduce Peter Craig, who is the vice-chair of the board for the World Police and Fire Games 2013. I am the chief executive of the board of the limited company, and I am joined by Alistair McGowan, who is one of the directors.

I will make a short presentation, which I believe you have copies of. By way of recap, the World Police and Fire Games take place every other year for serving and retired members of the services. It is about promoting sport and fraternity in the police and firefighting communities. By athlete numbers, it is the third largest sporting event in the world. To give it some sense of scale: it is three times the size of the Commonwealth Games in respect of competitor numbers.

In Belfast, the games will run from 1 August 2013 until 10 August 2013, but there will be some ice hockey events taking place before that. We estimate that in the region of 10,000 athletes and about 15,000 friends and family will visit Northern Ireland over that period. Athletes will represent over 70 countries, and there will be about 65 sporting events over approximately 40 different locations in the greater Belfast area and beyond. A key component of the games is our use of volunteers. About 3,500 volunteers will be recruited to help us to deliver the friendliest World Police and Fire Games ever.

I will move on to the aims and objectives, which are outlined on the next page of our submission. Our first objective is to have the friendliest and most successful World Police and Fire Games ever. It is about delivering economic benefits to Belfast and Northern Ireland, making a positive contribution to

the social and economic cohesion within Northern Ireland and enhancing Northern Ireland as a destination of choice for events of this type going forward.

To give you an indication of the costs and the benefits of the games: we have an approved business case, which is a total cost of £13.8 million. The return on that investment is an injection of over £21 million into the Northern Ireland economy. Clearly, the 25,000 visitors that I talked about will boost many of the different sectors across Northern Ireland, including hotels, restaurants and bars. We are hoping that there will be long-term repeat business for those establishments, and we are working very hard to make sure that there is a strong legacy from the games and identifying Northern Ireland as having a strong reputation in this area.

In respect of our current status and priorities, we have a limited company, which is one of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's (DCAL) arm's-length bodies. That is in place, and we have all the governance processes and so forth well established in that company. So, the focus now is very much on the delivery of the games. We have a very strong programme management regime in place, and we are focusing in on the venues for the sports and the recruitment of the volunteers. We are also pushing very hard around the marketing and communications for the games. Indeed, we got some very positive coverage on ITV last night. We are focusing very hard on raising sponsorship, which is a key component of our business case, and on the practical things around procurement and the contracts that we need to put in place to run the games.

Some of the work streams really focus on the legacy of the games to make sure that there is a long-term greater good for Northern Ireland coming out of the World Police and Fire Games. Clearly, a key component of that is around the tourism element.

There are key challenges for the games. Undoubtedly, we are in a difficult economic climate. We are looking at making sure that we get the right numbers of athletes to attend the games. We are hoping that they bring friends and families with them so that there is a strong tourism element to their attendance at the games. Clearly, it is challenging to get sponsorship in today's environment, but there is a very strong focus across all those elements to make sure that we have a robust plan in place.

Awareness of the games will increase as we get closer to 1 August next year, and there are a number of key stages in the media and PR campaign that will be linked to opening for volunteers and the registration process for athletes. We are working very hard around volunteer recruitment. We have strong linkages with PSNI around the security for the games, and there are accommodation challenges that we are very focused on at the moment. We want to ensure that athletes can avail themselves of high-quality accommodation during their stay in Northern Ireland.

That concludes my presentation, and I am happy to take any comments or questions.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much. The business case has been approved for £13.8 million. Will you give us a breakdown of where you anticipate that money coming from?

**Mr Tully:** The business case is made up of £9.9 million in cash and £3.9 million in benefit received in kind from various sponsoring organisations. That includes PSNI, Belfast City Council, Sport NI, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

**The Chairperson:** Is the £9.9 million coming directly from DCAL?

**Mr Tully:** That will come through a profiled grant from DCAL, the majority of which comes in the next financial year.

**The Chairperson:** You spoke of sponsorship. Is that included in that £9.9 million?

**Mr Tully:** It is indeed. The income that we are targeting through sponsorship is a combination of benefit received in kind and cash sponsorship; so, the split there is about £1 million of benefit received in kind and over £400,000 in cash sponsorship.

**The Chairperson:** How successful have you been to date in getting sponsors for the event?

**Mr Tully:** It has been hard work. We are hoping to achieve a number of targets over the next number of months. It is a challenge, undoubtedly, but there are specific conversations with potential sponsors that we hope will reach a conclusion quite soon.

**The Chairperson:** Do you have a key sponsor at the moment?

**Mr Tully:** We are in the final stages, we hope, of negotiations with a number of key sponsors.

**The Chairperson:** Have you built a contingency fund into the £13.8 million?

**Mr Tully:** There is an element of contingency. We are working with DCAL to ensure that we can carry moneys forward through the financial years so that we have a contingency fund in place to manage scenarios and risk.

**The Chairperson:** Clearly, there are risks associated with the project.

**Mr Tully:** Yes, there are.

**The Chairperson:** Are you content that your governance model is robust?

**Mr Tully:** Yes. I will give you some indication of the robustness of that process. The board met about three weeks ago to review the corporate risk, and we have updated the entire corporate risk register and have all the mitigation plans in place against each of those risks. We also have a running operational risk register that we update weekly. We really focus on the key risks that I described to you today to make sure that we are taking every action possible.

Peter, you may wish to comment on how satisfied you are with the risk management from a board perspective.

**Mr Peter Craig (2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd):** Clearly, we are very aware of the risks. If we do not get the athletes, we do not get the visitors to Northern Ireland plc. The board focuses on that on a fairly regular basis. At the last board meeting, we spent a considerable time looking at the various options — from the worst-case option right through to the most optimistic. We have realistic time frames and milestones in place so that, if option 1, which is what we anticipate, fails to materialise by a particular date, we have plans and mitigation processes in place to scale back the games, because clearly, we can only provide what we are able to afford. So, I can give the Committee an assurance that the board, having dealt with the company's team, is aware of that and monitors and measures it very regularly. As far as I am concerned, Northern Ireland cannot fail; I am sure you feel the same. This has to be successful. If we do not get the numbers we are anticipating, we will clearly have to scale down the event. However, that is not something that we want to do.

It has been the board's and the company's position from day one not to limit the number of athletes, because that in itself would be a negative process from the start. We are anticipating full attendance. The indications so far are good. The federation was here recently, and it went away extremely satisfied about where the company, the board and Northern Ireland are in respect of the preparation for the games. It is a forever moving target. We do not know what is round the corner. From the board's point of view, I can give an assurance, on behalf of company members, that it is being monitored. If that looks to be at risk at any stage, it will be flagged up and mitigation and risk processes will be put in place.

**The Chairperson:** Obviously, 2012 is a big year for Northern Ireland. A lot of money has been invested in marketing Northern Ireland as the place to be, which should be helpful for what you are trying to do in encouraging people to come here. Again, 2013 is a big year, and there is competition with the UK City of Culture. What are you doing to link the two events?

**Mr Tully:** Rather than competing with the City of Culture, I see it as working for the greater good of NI 2013. I met my counterpart from the Culture Company, and we have a strong understanding of the need to achieve one another's timescales. We will make sure that those registering for the World Police and Fire Games are signposted in the direction of the City of Culture, so that there is wider benefit for Northern Ireland in respect of the tourist trade. So, we are looking at that.

We have already discussed some common themes and challenges with the Culture Company in respect of transport and accommodation, for example. That dialogue is well established. Alistair and I attended one of the NI 2012 meetings quite recently, and we were assured that there will be continued momentum into 2013 that will support the City of Culture and the World Police and Fire Games through wider involvement from the Tourist Board, etc.

**The Chairperson:** I know that Mr Ó hOisín will welcome the movement of tourists towards Londonderry during that time. Obviously, there are areas that could benefit even though they have not been fortunate enough to host an event. What is being done to ensure that other council areas are involved in this?

**Mr Tully:** One of the key things for Northern Ireland, in a broader sense, will be accommodation. The sheer scale of numbers that we are anticipating at the games means that we need to look beyond greater Belfast for accommodation. We are working very closely with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau to find accommodation for athletes across a range of locations. I see Northern Ireland, in a broader sense, really benefiting from that.

**The Chairperson:** Part of the success of London 2012 will obviously be engagement and its legacy. I was struck by how many people came out to see the torch around Northern Ireland. That was part of building momentum in advance of the games. What do you plan to do to try to capture the imagination of people in Northern Ireland and to help them understand that a massive event is taking place on their doorstep? Alongside that is the Cultural Olympiad, which all members have been involved in as well.

**Mr Tully:** I will let Alistair speak to that, because he is responsible for marketing and communications.

**Mr Alistair McGowan (2013 World Police and Fire Games Ltd):** I take your point about councils. The NI Tourist Board (NITB) has put together a task force to look at all councils areas in order to give them an opportunity to put up what they want. There are opportunities for people to travel the length and breadth of the country. In fact, Tourism Ireland has been involved. So, people will eventually go across the border as well.

As regards warming up the market, we have JPR on board, which is our marketing and PR company. We are engaging, but it is starting slowly. We thought that it would be best to do it after the Olympics, because everything is swamped at the moment. We will start on 1 August, which is a year out, and gradually build up the momentum. We have a well developed schools engagement programme to get kids involved. We are going to have a mini torch run around the time of the launch of the games. It is going to be much smaller than what has happened before, but, again, it will give the community the opportunity to get involved. So, there is a rolling programme that has already started to drip stuff out but, after the Olympics, when people are interested, we will start to recruit our volunteers. We will then ramp it up through numerous PR events to get people involved. I can leave you the details, if you wish.

**The Chairperson:** That would be useful to have, thank you.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** Thanks for you plug for Derry, Chair, and the north-west.

I listened to you presentation, and you touched on the need to bring on board sponsorship, but when is the final cut-off point for your final decision on the formulation, make-up and size of the games?

**Mr Tully:** Our work with the previous hosts of the games indicates that there is a fairly predictable profile of when people register for the games, and that tends to be later rather than sooner. Quite a lot of people tend to register late in the process. We are tracking different scenarios based on the different volumes of athletes. As Peter said, we are trying to scale the cost of the games to match the numbers that we anticipate. So, the process is ongoing month on month and week on week to track the numbers registering. Again, working from the experience of past venues such as Vancouver, we will be able to track that against a baseline plan and, hopefully, be able to measure the likely numbers further down the line. That will allow us to adjust our plans accordingly.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** I take it that most of the invitations to tender for contracts are out or will go out shortly. What guarantees are there that that will, as much as possible, be done on target and on a local basis, with social clauses written in?

**Mr Tully:** Yes; absolutely, and we are very focused on the social clauses in the procurement process. We are at the stage of having invited expressions of interest for towards the end of May to make the market aware that we will be going to tender for specific equipment and services. That process has been completed. We had a very positive market response, including from many of Northern Ireland's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Helpfully, Belfast City Council hosted a briefing session for prospective organisations, and that event was attended very positively by local representatives of SMEs and so forth. So, we are very focused on that. We see opportunities for local businesses to be part of the overall delivery of the games as being part of the legacy.

**Mr Hilditch:** I do not want to revisit the sponsorship issue, which I think is a question for the Department and not you guys. It is a competitive world out there, but so much is happening in 2013, including for the existing sports in Northern Ireland, which depend very much on sponsorship from a shrinking pot. It will be interesting to see what is available locally after all these big events get their sponsorship, but, as I said, it is a competitive world.

Are our sports venues fit for purpose? With the games just over 12 months away, is further investment required on that front or are we sitting pretty well at this stage?

**Mr Tully:** We are in an excellent place when it comes to venues. The federation came across and inspected them. We are working closely with the governing bodies of all the sports involved to make sure that all the venues meet the minimum standards for the games. Some work that is under way at a number of locations to get them up to the required standard is well ahead of schedule. We have surpassed all expectations for Northern Ireland being a really good venue for sporting events of this type. The federation officials were very positive in their visit, not just about the overall readiness of our company to deliver the games but the quality of the sporting venues. So, in that respect, we are in a really positive place.

**Mr P Craig:** From the board's point of view, it has been useful, because we have been engaging with the sporting governing bodies. We are not going into competition; we are working with them. That has really helped us make sure that we are getting the right venue, to the right standard, to deliver a highly professional experience for the sportspeople who come across. We are in a good place.

**Mrs McKevitt:** Thanks very much. It is good seeing you again, Peter. I was at the announcement, John, of the preferred venues, when you took up your post. That is something I have a great interest in. It is great to see that it is going to be delivered here.

Have you any plans to use Emergency Eddie in your marketing from 1 August, one year out? You talked about engaging with schools. I would also like to see engagement with programmes that are already in place; maybe a PSNI or Fire Service programme. One programme comes to mind: the Pointer Project running in Newry and Mourne at the minute. That initiative was set up by the neighbourhood policing team to engage with the youth and take them off the streets. They are quite keen to deliver on being volunteers. I have spoken to them about that, and it is something that I would like to see happen. Maybe the board could take that forward. There are 135 young adults in that programme willing to volunteer. We do not want to miss that opportunity.

On accommodation, I know your anticipation of visitor numbers to the region. Again, I would not want anybody to forget about the Newry area, which is only so far down the road. There was talk, at one time, about taking in cruise ships. I am not sure whether that is still on the cards, but it is something that I would not be keen on. I want to see the service providers being provided for. You talk about legacy and what is left behind, and the return of that repeat business. It is very important that service providers get to see what is out there already among our current service providers. What work are you doing with the NITB and local councils, particularly those that have secured a preferred venue, as Newry and Mourne District Council has? What are you doing to encourage councils to sell the brand of the World Police and Fire Games? In my opinion, that cannot happen next year. It has to happen from now. I am keen to hear what is going on in the marketing end.

**Mr Tully:** I will talk a bit about accommodation, and Alistair will maybe pick up on the local council work.

The concept of the cruise ship was explored at one point. That is looking less and less likely as an option, from an economic perspective. There is also recognition of the point that you made: for this to have a legacy, we want local businesses to benefit from the accommodation. We have the services of

the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, which is working on the accommodation. We are very much focused on extending the capacity of accommodation and moving well beyond the greater Belfast area. We have the strong support of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in generating that new capacity. I assure you that every possible location for accommodation will be explored as part of that plan. That is very high up my list of things we need to make sure that we get right, because of the legacy that that will leave. Being able to host games on this scale, and having the ability to do that again at some point in the future using the local accommodation, would be a fantastic legacy to leave behind. We are very firmly focused on that as part of our plan.

Alistair, do you want to talk about the local council work?

**Mr McGowan:** I will just deal with Emergency Eddie first. Eddie goes out and about all over the place. If you check the website, you will see he has been to loads of school, out and about. He is going to another level now; he is looking for a wife. That is the next stage.

**The Chairperson:** Any volunteers? *[Laughter.]*

**Mr McGowan:** Eddie looks a bit like a police officer, so, Edwina, or whatever she will be called, will look more like a firefighter. People love all that stuff on Facebook.

I will get back to serious bit about making sure that the whole country gets the opportunity. Alan Clarke, Kathryn and Ross in NITB have set up a working group to give all councils the opportunity to say what they can do during the games, should it be a festival, a visitor attraction or whatever. That engagement will start to take place on a regional basis, and we will probably do three or four regional visits and invite them to come and tell us what they can do. All athletes will then know what is available, and independent people who want to hire a car and travel about can do that. More importantly, we will appoint a ground handler who will put together tours, and people from Australia or wherever can go on a day trip to Bushmills and so on. That work is moving ahead fairly quickly. We focused initially on games delivery to make sure that all the main building blocks were in place, and this is now the cream on the top. That is moving ahead at a pace, and Alan Clarke had his senior management team in for a day to scope all that out.

**Mrs McKevitt:** What is being done to make those in the services aware that the games are happening here? I visited chiefs of police in Milwaukee, New York and Pittsburgh, and very few of them knew about the games in Ireland. What is the marketing to encourage them and to let them know that it is taking place?

**Mr McGowan:** We have a database of 25,000 people, which includes competitors from the two previous games, and, on a monthly basis, we fire out information to them about how things are developing. People know about the North American market fairly well, and the guy in Milwaukee maybe did not know as much. We will have an international conference just before the games to attract the heads of service from around the world. They turn up and support the games. In the autumn, we will start to advertise that through the services, Peter's organisation, the police, and so on. One of our big target markets is GB, because there is no big penetration into the market for the World Police and Fire Games in GB. We have plans to have a presence at the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and with chief fire officers to highlight that. The trick is trying to do it at the right time. If you do it too soon, the senior officers retire — I am not looking at anyone in particular — and you then have to rebuild. We have a plan to that from autumn onwards.

**Mr P Craig:** You mentioned service involvement. I can give you the assurance that when I am out and about — I have been lucky enough to travel quite a bit recently — anywhere I have been they know about the games, and anywhere I go and they do not know about the games, I can assure you that, by the time I leave, they know about the games. That is being replicated in PSNI, Prison Service and through the federation. A big network out there is rolling Belfast 2013 as a venue. Alistair can give you the details of the numbers of teams that have already given an indication of where they want to be.

You asked about councils. It is a two-way street, and you and I have talked about that before. There are opportunities for the councils, once they become aware, to penetrate the market to see what is there, where the visitors are coming from and decide how to engage. Our communications and marketing strategy will roll that out. We are not in competition with anybody. We are quite clear that we want the community in Northern Ireland and businesses in Northern Ireland to benefit from it,

because that is where it is being held. It is a two-way street. We are working as hard as we can, but we would appreciate anything that any councillors can do to assist us.

**Mrs McKeivitt:** I met the delegation that was over viewing the preferred venues and spoke with them over a coffee, and they were very impressed with what is on offer. It is up to us all to sell the brand and make the best of it. I wish you the best of luck with that.

**Mr Swann:** Thanks, gentlemen, for your presentation. A sum of £500 million from Olympics 2012 was released back into lottery budget funding. Did you make any bids for it?

**Mr Tully:** Not that I am aware of.

**Mr P Craig:** To be realistic about it: the Olympics is the big player.

**Mr Swann:** There was £500 million of lottery funding assigned to the Olympics that was handed back.

**Mr Tully:** I was not aware of that.

**Mr Swann:** Looking at DCAL's corporate plan for 2011-15 and the targets that were set for the World Police and Fire Games to be achieved by 31 March this year, we can see one was to establish the company. I assume you already have done.

**Mr Tully:** Yes.

**Mr Swann:** The majority of your policies were to be finalised. Were those challenging targets for you?

**Mr P Craig:** Speak to them, and I will tell you the board's perspective.

**Mr McGowan:** The company had only been set up, so putting all the policies together from scratch was a big task. However, they were all signed off on. You have seen them, John.

**Mr Tully:** This is my fourth week as chief executive, having come in following David Ferguson's retirement. Having looked at the condition of the limited company, I can say we are in a really good place. The company has well established all of the governance and all of the policies and procedures are in really excellent order. Clearly, it would have been helpful if that had happened sooner, but we are where we are, and the focus now is on getting the delivery plan in place and making sure that we hit all the aims and objectives for the games.

**Mr Swann:** On the issue of preferred venues, the Ballymena venue for your shooting facilities was an excellent choice. There is a press release.

**The Chairperson:** John, you mentioned 3,500 volunteers. Obviously, volunteering is important to the fabric of Northern Ireland and is a really good opportunity for the public to have an informal engagement with the police and Fire Service in areas where there might not have been particularly good relations in the past.

You are involved with Volunteer Now. When will the recruitment start? Obviously, we are getting to the stage where there is a very tight window. What are the issues involved with that, such as security clearances, uniforms and that type of thing?

**Mr Tully:** The application process for volunteers opens in September, and there will be a specific launch around that date. Volunteer Now is an integral part of our team, and we have members of its staff sharing offices with my team. The volunteers will be the face of the games when the visitors arrive, so it is important to get the quality of the volunteers absolutely right, because the first impression that athletes and friends and families get and the whole tone will be set by those volunteers. So, a lot of emphasis has been placed on what the roles are, what training they need and how we deliver that on a just-in-time fashion so that we do not get any fade in people's knowledge.

We have uniforms for the volunteers being provided by one of our sponsors. There is a significant amount of effort being put into getting the required numbers of volunteers, and we are working very



closely with the PSNI on what the security clearances or background checks will entail for people who are part of that volunteer programme.

**Mr Craig:** From the board's perspective, we are quite clear: from the moment somebody steps off a plane, train or boat into Northern Ireland, they will be met by somebody who points them in the right direction and gets them where they need to be. When those people arrive there, they will then be ushered through the registration process and the accommodation process in a professional and friendly manner.

When I stepped off the plane in New York, it was a case of being in a big city and nobody knowing where to go. We want Northern Ireland's games to be the friendliest, so we want our volunteers to be focused to make sure that the athletes and the visitors have a real positive experience. The big win for us is the visitors being here, but the really big win will be getting them to come back again. That is why we are emphasising the importance of the quality and quantity of the volunteers to make sure that we have right people in the right place to deliver a quality experience.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon. No doubt we will be in touch again. Thank you very much.

**Mr Tully:** Thank you all very much.