

MEMORANDUM

SPORTING EVENTS BILL

Background

1. This memorandum has been laid before the Assembly by the Minister for the Economy under Standing Order 42A(2). The Sporting Events Bill was introduced in the House of Lords on 14th May 2026, as a Lords Starter Bill. The latest version of the Bill can be found at:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/66353/documents/8259>

Summary of the Bill and its policy objectives

2. The purpose of this Bill is to allow governments to meet legislative commitments required to bid to host future major sporting events. It will assist when bidding for future global sporting tournaments, showing that the regions are event ready.
3. At its core, the bill creates a framework which enables a common set of legislative provisions (“the framework provisions”) to be applied to qualifying major sporting events through secondary legislation.
4. The Bill includes provisions for the following areas:
 - Ticket touting;
 - Advertising;
 - Trading;
 - Unauthorised association;
 - Enforcement;
 - Financial Assistance; and
 - Transport and Traffic Management (England only).

Provisions which deal with a Devolution Matter

5. Some of the provisions of the Bill may fall under the legislative competence of the Assembly, as they potentially deal with devolved matters.
6. The Bill establishes a framework for regulating ticket touting, advertising and trading in connection with major sporting events. These areas do not fall within excepted or reserved matters under Schedules 2 and 3 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and are therefore within the legislative competence of the Assembly.
7. The Bill provides at Clause 2 (2) (a) and (b) that
“(2) The Secretary of State may by regulations apply either or both of the following parts of the sporting events framework to a sporting event—
(a) the unauthorised association provisions;
(b) the transport provisions.”

The issue of transport will apply to England only.

Reasons for making the Provisions

8. The Bill sets out provisions relating to specific departmental powers in clauses 1–13, 18–24, 25, and 26–30, together with Schedules 1–3, Schedule 5 (paragraphs 1 and 3 only), and Schedule 6.

Reasons for utilising the Bill rather than an Act of the Assembly

9. The Bill would allow for Major Events to be hosted across several regions using the same framework and legislation provisions. Due to the scale of such Major Events, it is likely that hosting involvement would require/be part of a joint region bid ensuring that provisions across all regions are aligned.

Reasons for not seeking consent of the Assembly

10. The Bill was introduced into Westminster on 14th May 2026 by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Consequently, there was insufficient time to complete full assessment of the Bill and Legislative Consent Motion process at this point in time, in accordance with the guidance.

Consultation

11. Officials in DCMS engaged major event organisers during the development of the policy . To support the policy development process, DCMS had targeted engagement with local authorities, National Trading Standards and the Competition and Markets Authority to learn lessons from the implementation of the previous legislation. DCMS engaged major recurring sporting event organisers to assess demand and held a final roundtable with governing bodies and event owners.
12. The scope of the DCMS consultation included organisers of major global events whose activities would extend to Northern Ireland if hosting a major event. The scale of the type of event that falls within this Bill would mean that it would be hosted by a global organisation, rather than a local one. Further consultation targeted exclusively at Northern Ireland based organisers was not undertaken.

Human Rights and Equality

13. DCMS has undertaken an analysis of the compatibility of the legislation with the European Convention on Human Rights. DCMS will make a statement outlining the position on compatibility in due course, but in summary, they consider that Articles 6, 7, 8, 10 and Article 1 Protocol 1 are engaged, and that the provisions of the Bill are compatible with those articles.

Financial Implications

14. According to the DCMS Impact Assessment the Sporting Events Bill is expected to save regions “estimated efficiency savings of £5 million over 10 years, or approximately £0.5 million per year”.
15. The Bill does not in itself impose any direct costs or restrictions on businesses or households. Instead, it establishes the legal framework under which such measures could be introduced.

Summary of Regulatory Impact

16. This is expected to result in minimal compliance and administrative costs for businesses. By establishing a standing legislative framework for major sporting events, the approach reduces legislative complexity, avoids duplication of processes, and lowers familiarisation costs across government, regulators and industry stakeholders. Rather than requiring bespoke primary legislation for each event, government will be able to apply relevant provisions through regulations, enabling a more efficient and proportionate response to specific required and international commitments.

17. In the longer term, the Bill is expected to reduce administrative burdens by creating a predictable and consistent regulatory environment for event organisers, sponsors, local authorities, and businesses operating near event venues. Clear statutory conditions will ensure that the powers are applied only to high-profile global sporting events where they are necessary. This stability reduces compliance risks associated with unclear or fragmented legal frameworks.

Engagement to date with the Committee for Economy

18. The Economy Committee has not been engaged to date, as the Bill has only recently been introduced. A briefing will be provided in due course.

Conclusion

19. The Minister for the Economy will consider the content of the Bill along with Executive Ministers who have responsibility for provisions within the Bill.

20. The purpose of this Memorandum is to ensure that all members of the Assembly are aware of the Bill and its content.

Department for the Economy

26 May 2026