

Minister for Sport Nigel Huddleston speech for UK House Legacy Day, Commonwealth Games 2022

Thank you. I'm absolutely delighted to be here today, at UK House, to join you all, on Legacy Day, to reflect on, not just what has been a truly fantastic Games, but on the array of future opportunities it presents to the region and the rest of the country.

We've seen 10 incredible days of sport, cultural and business events, and it's amazing to see the West Midlands front and centre on the world stage, something that will hopefully continue for a long time to come.

Firstly, I wanted to offer my thanks to everyone involved in staging this incredible event and in working so hard to ensure it leaves behind a lasting legacy. Putting on the Games and harnessing the myriad benefits it can bring to the region and the UK has been a true partnership.

It is only through collective effort that the Games has been the success that it has. My thanks to each and every one of you who has engaged in the event and the opportunities it has brought about. And a particular thanks to Andy for the vital role that he personally played in helping to secure this fantastic event.

And let me say that this collective effort has resulted in what truly has been a Games of amazing achievements.

The fastest Games ever delivered, four and a half years rather than the standard seven.

An ambition to be the most sustainable Games yet, and first to strive to be carbon neutral.

The most inclusive Games ever, with the largest ever integrated parasport programme and for the first time, more women's medal events than men's.

But, beyond the event itself, I also want to reflect on the vast array of legacy opportunities that have been created, and that will continue to be created long after the closing ceremony has concluded.

As a government, we've been resolutely focused on ensuring that Birmingham 2022 leaves a lasting legacy for the host city and region, and the whole of the UK.

£778 million of public money has been invested to deliver the Games itself. This core £778 million, as well as providing for an amazing legacy itself, has enabled a further £85 million of additional funding to be unlocked from a wide range of organisations.

The legacy of the Games ranges far and wide, with the 'Games for Everyone' vision embedded from the start.

The Games has supported communities to access its opportunities and benefits, with equality, diversity and inclusion embedded in everything that partners have done.

There has been significant new infrastructure with a new aquatics centre at Sandwell and the redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium that local communities will be able to benefit from, long after the Games is over. Plus the regeneration of Perry Barr has created 1,400 new homes.

In addition, the Legacy programme for the Games has delivered:

A £10 million Jobs and Skills Academy that's made sure local residents have the skills they need to capitalise on the opportunities driven by the Games.

More than £35 million invested by Sport England in delivering a physical activity and wellbeing legacy, supporting those who are least active to engage with sport and physical activity.

A youth and schools engagement programme, ensuring that we're engaging children and young people across the country in the story and excitement of the Games and the Commonwealth.

A 6 month free-to-access Cultural Programme across the West Midlands, supported by £12 million investment from Arts Council England, the Heritage Fund and Spirit of 2012, as well as other partners.

Ambitious sustainability commitments including, as I've already mentioned, an ambition to be the most sustainable Games yet and the 'first ever carbon neutral Games'.

And on top of this, £350 million worth of procurement opportunities, the majority of which were secured right here by firms from the West Midlands.

And of course, the £24 million investment that we, along with the Combined Authority, have made into the Business and Tourism Programme.

Here, at UK House, over the last 11 days, we've seen the power of this investment, bringing together business leaders from across the world, showcasing the West Midlands, as a place to live, work, visit and do business.

This programme is a vital part of harnessing the positive profile generated by the Games to boost the global reputation of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the UK as a leading destination for tourism, trade and investment.

In partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority, the West Midlands Growth Company, the Department for International Trade and Visit Britain, as well as sponsors in our audience today, we've seen it deliver some incredible in opportunities.

The opportunity to connect with Commonwealth nations and territories and other key global markets.

The opportunity to re-establish a resilient and sustainable tourism sector in the West Midlands and, more widely, to contribute to the recovery of UK tourism as we emerge from Covid-19.

And the opportunity to demonstrate to the world that the West Midlands and the UK are innovative, dynamic and investor-friendly.

But this is far from the end for the Business and Tourism programme, in fact it's only just the beginning. Building on the profile and momentum of these fantastic past two weeks we've rightly set ourselves some lofty ambitions. By 2027 we're aiming to:

- Generate more than £700 million of investment, including more than £370 million in the West Midlands
- Attract 39,000 new visitors, including 12,000 to the West Midlands
- Create 1,000 new jobs, with up to 600 of these based in the West Midlands

The drive and commitment of the Mayor and colleagues at the Combined Authority, West Midlands Growth Company, the Department for International Trade and Visit Britain has been a crucial part of ensuring the success of the programme. My thanks to them for all that they have contributed over many months and years.

In many ways, the Business and Tourism Programme, as a partnership between national, regional and local government and with the private sector, represents devolution in action. Working together, as more than the sum of our parts, to achieve extraordinary things and level up our places.

And on behalf of the Government, I look forward to working with the West Midlands as we explore opportunities to build on the success of the Games.

The Games have been a fantastic experience and we've achieved so much.

But as I've always said, this is about much more than the event itself. It's about capitalising on the momentum of the Games to unlock the enduring benefits it can bring for the West Midlands region and its communities, and the UK as a whole.

I look forward to seeing the fruits of our collective efforts materialise over many months and years to come. Thank you.