

Sporting Events Bill

Lead department	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Summary of proposal	This proposal is to introduce a new legislative framework to support the hosting of major sporting events.
Submission type	Impact Assessment – 24 March 2026
Legislation type	Primary legislation
RPC reference	RPC-DCMS-26149-IA(1)
Date of issue	8 May 2026

RPC opinion

Rating	RPC opinion
Fit for purpose	A sufficient assessment of the rationale for intervention has been provided based on a more flexible legislative approach and protecting rights holders; however this could be strengthened with more evidence from other jurisdictions. The assessment includes a suitable qualitative evaluation of the long-list of options. The small and micro business assessment is sufficient, but would benefit from more detail on potential mitigations considered. The assessment includes a qualitative justification for the preferred way forward, but would benefit from being clearer about how it presents impacts relative to the counterfactual. The regulatory scorecard and monitoring and evaluation plan are satisfactory.

RPC summary

Category	Quality	RPC comments
Rationale	Green	The impact assessment outlines the problem under consideration and the argument for intervention, which is focused on the need to reduce the resource intensive process of introducing bespoke legislation and protecting rights holders. This could be improved by including more evidence from other jurisdictions.
Identification of options (including small and micro business assessment)	Green	The assessment considers a set of long-list options across a set of six areas for intervention, progressing two forward from each. The assessment considers alternative options to regulation, justifying why these were not carried forward. The small and micro business assessment provided is sufficient.
Justification for preferred way forward	Green	The assessment includes a qualitative justification for the preferred way forward. The assessment would benefit from being clearer about how it presents impacts relative to the counterfactual.
Regulatory scorecard	Satisfactory	The scorecard provides a satisfactory summary of expected impacts to overall welfare and to businesses. This could be improved by presenting impacts relative to the baseline more clearly.
Monitoring and evaluation	Satisfactory	The assessment includes a satisfactory monitoring and evaluation plan, with a clear timeframe, objectives and possible data sources. This could be improved by providing a stronger justification for not conducting a full post-implementation review.

Summary of proposal

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for regulations related to the delivery of major sporting events in the UK. Historically, hosting major events has necessitated the introduction of bespoke primary legislation, such as the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006, to deliver commercial protections for rights holders. The department is proposing to reduce this reliance on bespoke primary legislation by enabling the implementation of event-specific provisions through secondary legislation. The first instance of this would be to enable governments to meet their obligations for hosting the UEFA Men's European Football Championship 2028.

The Sporting Events Bill aims to address this issue by establishing a legislative framework that introduces prohibitions on the unauthorised sale of tickets and unauthorised advertising and trading in designated zones, transport powers to support event delivery, and a funding power to support bodies responsible for delivering events.

The department proposes four broad options in this impact assessment (IA), across a range of six areas of intervention.

- **Option 1** – Do nothing
- **Option 2** – Non-regulatory approach
- **Option 3 (Preferred)** – Permanent legislative framework
- **Option 4** - Bespoke primary legislation for each event

As a result of the assessment of the above options, the department has selected Option 3, establishing a permanent legislative framework as its preferred option.

Rationale

Problem under consideration

The assessment sets out the problem under consideration, indicating that the UK currently lacks a regulatory system that meets the needs of large international sports governing bodies, requiring a reactive and resource intensive process of introducing a bespoke set of regulations for each event. This creates uncertainty for rights holders, with the UK unable to offer the legal assurances during bidding processes, which could affect the UK's chances of successfully bidding for events in the future. The IA does well to set out the specific policy gaps that currently occur in the existing regulations.

The problem under consideration should have considered in more detail the issues with the reactive and resource intensive model of introducing bespoke regulations, as this is the key area that the proposed intervention is aiming to address. The assessment also could have considered the trade-off between the positives of

hosting major sporting events in the UK, and the negatives of having to introduce stringent regulations that go further than the UK's regular regulatory landscape in order for them to occur.

Argument for intervention

The rationale for government intervention is based on the lack of existing regulatory framework, the existence of multiple market failures and the need to reduce government spending on sporting events. The assessment cites examples of other jurisdictions to support this case.

The assessment discusses how sporting events generate both positive and negative externalities, with benefits arising from increased economic activity and international visibility, contrasted with traffic disruption and commercial exploitation by non-sponsors. The IA could expand its market failure argument to consider the potential for commercial exploitation in more detail, considering the mechanisms by which non-sponsors could benefit. The IA also considers the potential for a regulatory framework to provide clarity for organisers and sponsors, both improving the chances of the UK securing future bids and incentivising sponsors to invest, reducing the amount the government is required to spend on the events.

The IA also cites Australia and New Zealand as examples of other countries that have introduced similar legislative frameworks. The assessment should clarify if these are the only similar jurisdictions with such a framework, and if so should consider why most other jurisdictions that are competing with the UK do not have one. The lack of European example cited is especially relevant, given the IA's focus on EURO 2028.

Objectives and theory of change

The assessment sets out a single policy objective for each area of intervention. These are to establish a permanent legislative framework, criminalise unauthorised ticket resale, regulate advertising and trade activity, control association at events, empower traffic authorities and establish a power to enable to Secretary of State to provide financial assistance to events. The assessment does well to use the SMART objective framework to form its key objectives, however the IA should state the policy objectives and then link them to the framework, rather than only summarising using the SMART headings. The department could do more to separate its objectives from the policy itself, focusing on the desired outcomes of their intervention.

Identification of options (including small and micro business assessment)

Identification of the 'long-list' of options

The IA considers interventions across six areas: framework approach, ticketing, advertising and trading, unauthorised association, transport and funding power. Each of these areas have their own longlist, including a do-nothing option, a non-regulatory approach, a permanent regulatory framework and introducing bespoke

primary legislation for each event. This approach is fairly repetitive across each of the 6 areas, and so the department should have attempted to include more variation of options. Non-regulatory communication measures have not been considered for funding power.

The assessment could be improved by including detail on the process behind developing the long-list of options, such as how research and other evidence have been used to form these policies. The long-list of options could benefit from using the Green Book's Options Framework Filter (OFF), which could help present the long-list in greater detail whilst retaining a clear and concise structure.

Consideration of alternatives to regulation

The assessment has considered an alternative option to regulation in its long-list for each area, involving voluntary agreements, issuing guidance and public communications campaigns. These approaches do not therefore need legislation and provide flexibility, however would not be legally enforceable.

The assessment provides a sufficient justification for discounting this option between the long-list and the shortlist and therefore deciding to pursue regulatory change, arguing that the lack of enforceability would limit compliance. The IA also argues that this would not provide the legal certainty that event organisers require for these events. This is supported by the use of critical success factors (CSFs), with the assessment demonstrating that non-regulatory intervention only partially meets one CSF, proportionality. The assessment could be improved by providing greater depth on how the impact of using non-regulatory interventions could vary relative to the preferred option.

Justification for the short-listed options

Each long-list of options has been subject to an assessment against a set of CSFs, covering legal certainty, deliverability and proportionality, with some being subject to additional CSFs such as meeting international guidelines or repeatability. The department should justify not using the basic CSFs set out in the Green Book.

For each of the six areas, the permanent legislative framework and bespoke primary legislation options have been advanced to the shortlist, with non-regulatory approaches being discounted. The assessment then conducts a shortlist appraisal of the preferred legislative framework approach against the bespoke primary measures. This is because whilst the bespoke primary legislation approach is not a 'Do nothing' option, it is how the government currently approaches sporting events and would continue to do so if the preferred option was not pursued, as so serves as a counterfactual. This methodology is appropriate.

Small and micro business assessment

The assessment includes an adequate small and micro business assessment. As before, this has been broken down into the six areas of intervention. This is focused on the advertising and trading and transport measures, which have the most notable effect on small and micro businesses. For advertising and trading, the department

estimates that 258 street traders will be impacted by the restrictions, resulting in a loss of £0.1 million over the 10-year appraisal period. The IA does not propose exempting small and micro businesses due to the need to protect rights holders. This justification is sufficient.

The assessment does propose some mitigations, suggesting that some authorisations for advertising and trading activity that would otherwise be prohibited could be granted by a designated body, and that event organisers could provide 'alternative arrangements' for street traders. The IA would benefit from providing more detail on these potential mitigations.

The IA also briefly considers the impact on small and micro businesses as a result of the proposed transport measures. The assessment uses an academic study and evidence from previous events to suggest that small and micro businesses are the most vulnerable to the disruption caused by major sporting events. This means that the mitigations introduced by the proposed legislation should be most beneficial to these smaller businesses if disruption can be reduced.

Justification for preferred way forward

Appraisal of the shortlisted options

For the shortlist appraisal, each area for intervention has been subject to a separate options appraisal, comparing the 'bespoke primary legislation' option against the preferred 'permanent legislative framework'. As the government would introduce bespoke primary legislation without introducing the department's preferred measures, this serves as a counterfactual for the department's appraisal. The options have been assessed qualitatively, with a brief summary setting out why options have been preferred for each area, accompanied by a consideration of the relative costs and benefits.

The assessment uses a cost benefit analysis approach to demonstrate why a legislative framework is advantageous to bespoke legalisation. This has not been quantified, with the department instead describing costs and benefits qualitatively. The IA should do more to explain that the impacts described are only relative to doing nothing at all and would not occur relative to the department's counterfactual.

The key argument made in the IA across five of the areas is that a consistent legislative framework would deliver clear, enforceable protections for rights holders and regulatory certainty without increasing burdens too much by ensuring the measures are targeted to specific events. This is advantageous compared to bespoke regulation, as it would require less government time and resources going forward.

The IA could have considered the potential benefits of retaining a bespoke approach of reassuring non-sponsor businesses that the burden of the regulations would remain focussed on a narrow range of events. The department also could have used specific stakeholder feedback to support the selection of the preferred option.

Selection of the preferred option

Overall, the qualitative options appraisal of the proposed measures is appropriate to justify the selection of the preferred option. The assessment has sufficiently discussed the costs and benefits of introducing a new framework, both from the relative perspective of doing nothing and maintaining a bespoke legislative approach. The IA does well to consider the impact for each area in turn setting out why this has led to the selection of the preferred option in each case.

Regulatory scorecard

Part A

The department uses the scorecard to set out how it considers the policy to have a positive impact on total welfare, driven by the benefits of being able to host sporting events. This is based on socio-economic benefits generated by these events, reputational benefits and cost savings for the government.

Most costs and benefits have been described qualitatively, as the counterfactual used means that the impact of specific bill measures will not vary relative to the baseline. The IA does describe the ‘impact of bill measures’, including a net present social value (NPSV) of -£1.1 million (2025 prices, 2026 pv year), based on lost earnings for street traders. This analysis is indicative and based on an assumption of 3 events occurring. The department should make the treatment of impacts relative to the chosen baseline clearer on the scorecard.

The department has also monetised possible government savings separately from the NPSV figure, with an expected benefit of £5 million over 10 years. The assessment also includes a summary of the possible business impact, with a positive anticipated outcome based on increased protections for authorised businesses and the enhanced commercial environment created by sporting events.

The department should do more to clarify the ‘exceptional’ nature of the events the regulations apply to, to ensure business confidence the regulations will not be too wide ranging. The scorecard includes a brief summary of household impacts, with a small positive effect expected due to reducing unauthorised resale.

The department expects a neutral distribution impact, with the slight disadvantage to small street trading businesses being balanced by the gain for households. The discussion of distributional impacts could have gone further to consider the advantage given to larger businesses that partner major sporting events at the expense of smaller businesses.

Part B

The assessment usefully considers the potential impact on the business environment for each of the sub-measures, providing a summary in Part B of the scorecard. The scorecard discussed how the clarity of the regulatory framework will provide certainty

for businesses involved in sporting events, reducing risks and supporting investment decisions.

The assessment includes a brief summary of international considerations, with no direct impact on trade. The department considers the potential for increased business confidence for events partners, largely based overseas, will improve foreign investment in the UK.

Monitoring and evaluation

The assessment includes a satisfactory plan for monitoring and evaluation. The department sets out in the monitoring and evaluation section that it plans on conducting an evaluation of the proposal 12-18 months after the conclusion of Euro 2028 (in practice by the end of 2030). The department does not commit to conduct a post-implementation review (PIR) due to the time-limited nature of the proposals. This approach is reasonable, however the monitoring and evaluation plan could be more specific and commit to a time.

The assessment states that the main data used to evaluate the objectives will be from local authorities and the Competition and Markets Authority, mostly measuring compliance levels for each of the areas of intervention. This will be supplemented by stakeholder feedback from event organisers, local government and affected businesses. This could be linked more directly to the objectives the department is aiming to assess.

The assessment usefully includes a discussion of the potential unintended consequences of the proposed intervention and the potential effect of external factors, but could do more to explain how the department intends to respond to these issues. The assessment would also benefit from including a set of evaluation questions to be included in the review.

Regulatory Policy Committee

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