

# ECONOMIC IMPACT AND PLACE MARKETING EVALUATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the effects on Sheffield of hosting the World Snooker Championship. The event has been staged in the city since 1977 and has always been thought to be beneficial. The evaluation undertaken on behalf of Sheffield City Council by SIRC, estimated the economic impact attributable to visitors to Sheffield who were attending the snooker and also the place marketing effects associated with the BBC television coverage of the event. The research employed the UK Sport methodology (designed by SIRC) for evaluating the economic impact of sports events and a standard sponsorship industry technique for analysing the television coverage. Results from 1,767 interviews with people in attendance, revealed that visitors to Sheffield specifically for the World Snooker were responsible for almost £2.3m of additional expenditure in the local economy over the 17 days of the event. In addition, the television exposure from almost 100 hours of coverage would have cost more than £3.2m to purchase in the commercial market place. Sheffield has adopted a strategy to attract sports events in order to help regenerate the city, hence it is interesting to note that an annual event that it has not had to bid for, is more significant in economic impact and public profile terms, than all but two events it has bid successfully for and any other event currently on the Sheffield sporting calendar. Consequently, complacency is cautioned against and recommendations are made relative to cultivating the event in order to maximise the benefits to the city. Finally, reference is made to how governing bodies of sport e.g. World Professional Billiards & Snooker Association (WPBSA) might exploit evaluations (such as this) to maximise the commercial value of their event, by using the potential benefits as an incentive to invite competitive tenders from other cities interested in hosting an event.

## KEYWORDS

Event Evaluation, Economic Impact

## INTRODUCTION

The Crucible Theatre Sheffield has been the host venue for the World Snooker Championship since 1977. During this period it has generally been accepted that the event is something which is positive for Sheffield. However, until 2002 no research had been conducted on the event to quantify how much it might be worth to the city. The purpose of this research was to establish a reliable and valid estimate of the value of the 2002 World Snooker Championship to the city of Sheffield. This report documents the research carried out in order to

place a value on the economic impact of the event. Moreover, it also examines indirect benefits associated with the value attributable to UK terrestrial television coverage over the 17 days of the event and the associated place marketing effects for Sheffield from such coverage. Having identified the potential benefits of hosting the event, reference is made to how such information may be used by the hosts (city of Sheffield) and the organisers (World Snooker).

### Economic Impact

Economic impact is defined as the net change in the local economy which can be directly attributable to the staging of a particular event (see Turco & Kelsey, 1992). It focuses on the spending in the local economy of people from outside the local economy (visitors) such as players, the media, spectators and the event organisers. The method used to derive the economic impact of the event is the UK sport approved methodology devised by Sirc (see UK sport, 1999a). Sirc have used the methodology on more than 25 occasions in the last eight years for a variety of national agencies, governing bodies and local authorities. The methodology has been used as a value for money appraisal of events that the UK has bid to stage using public money (mainly through the world class events programme), and economic impact is now seen as one of the parameters upon which the success of an event can be measured (see UK sport, 2004). Furthermore, the methodology employed to gauge economic impact is equally applicable to events that have been staged in the same place on an annual basis for a number of years, such as the world snooker.

The current vogue for economic impact type research developed from a growing body of knowledge surrounding the impacts of events. Arguably the financial success of the 1984 LA Olympics (which made a surplus of £215m) was the catalyst for such research (Gratton, *et al.*, 2000), as people began to realise that local economies could benefit as a direct result of hosting an event and Ritchie (1984) suggested that the economic impact of events would become a major area of tourism policy. Subsequently, burns, *et al.* (1986) attempted to develop a methodology in order to measure the economic impact of events. In assessing the impacts of the Adelaide Grand Prix, they recognised that economic impact should represent the additional expenditure flowing into an economy as a direct result of staging an event, while discounting the expenditure of local people (which would have been spent anyway) and developed some of the key expenditure categories employed by the robust UK sport methodology,

refined by Sirc and used in this research. The methodology proffered by burns, *et al.* (1986) was improved further in the 1990s (see for example, Burgan & Mules, 1992; Crompton, 1995; Mules & Faulkner, 1996), and by the end of the decade there was an element of consensus which resulted in the publication of guidelines on how to undertake meaningful economic impact studies of events. The guidelines produced by Sirc for UK sport (UK sport, 1999a) were developed to provide a standardised methodology to assess the economic impact of major sports events in the UK.

The catalyst for this was some work undertaken by Dobson, *et al.* (1997), which examined the economic impact of the Euro'96 Football Championship and found that 280,000 visitors generated an economic impact of £120m which was new money to the UK. In addition, domestic football fans travelling to grounds elsewhere in the UK generated a further £75m in the local (city) economies of the grounds hosting the games. Such significant impacts were exceptional as the event was third only in size to the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup. Nonetheless, UK Sport recognised the potential benefits that even smaller events could have, and commissioned economic impact studies at 6 events in 1997 (see UK Sport, 1999b; Gratton, *et al.*, 2000) which ultimately resulted in the publication of the guidelines (UK Sport, 1999a). The findings from the original 6 events and the model guidelines developed by SIRC on behalf of UK Sport have led some local authorities in the UK to develop strategies around major sports events, in order to bring the associated benefits to their local economies. As an example, Sheffield has used events as a catalyst for economic regeneration, since it hosted the World Student Games in 1991 and in response to the demise of the steel industry.

Furthermore, UK Sport's *Major Events Steering Group* now attempts to secure high profile World Class events for the UK, and is expected by Government to monitor the associated benefits (e.g. economic impact) of such events (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2001). The British Government now sees the staging of major events

as a means to achieve wider policy objectives (e.g. enthusing young people, social inclusion and urban regeneration) and tends to only back bids where there is a clear benefit to the UK in bidding for, and if successful, ultimately staging an event.

Crompton (1995 & 1999) refers to the misapplication and erroneous use of multipliers in economic impact calculations; consequently, in the interests of prudence and for consistency and ease of comparison across a variety of events, the methodology employed by SIRC does not use multipliers. Instead it reports additional expenditure in the host economy based on detailed and transparent audit trails. Such audit trails are the basis for *Measuring Success 2* (UK Sport, 2004) which compares 16 sports events that have been examined since 1997. Such a comparison acknowledges that some events which appear to be major in terms of their sporting outcome are not necessarily so in economic impact terms (see Gratton, *et al.*, 2000). The event subject to scrutiny herein, is quite clearly major in terms of its outcome in the annual snooker calendar, but how major is its impact upon the Sheffield economy?

Details of the information required to calculate economic impact can be found in the Methodology section, however, prior to this, other intangible benefits of hosting events are considered.

### Other Potential Benefits

In line with their comments about the economic impact of events, Burns *et al.* (1986) proffered the importance of researching social or intangible effects before reaching any judgement on how successful an event has been. One of the major focuses of such research has examined how events impact upon the awareness and image perceptions of the host area; something that might be deemed a perceived promotional effect. Ritchie & Smith (1991) assessed this effect empirically and found a significant increase in awareness of Calgary in foreign countries after the 1988 Winter Olympics. Oldenboom (2004) arrived at a similar finding when examining the social and promotional impact of the Euro 2000 Football Championship on the image of the Netherlands abroad.

The increased awareness or promotional effects as perceived by the population consistently rank the highest among a variety of intangible benefits (see for example, Carlsen, *et al.*, 2001; Delamere, 2001; Fredline, *et al.*, 2003; Oldenboom, 2004). Alternatives to awareness might include primary research among those attending an event or watching on television, in order to assess (for example) the likelihood of a person visiting a host economy (in future) as a result of experiences associated with their consumption of an event (in person or through television). Even with self reporting which indicates that a person is likely to return in the future; without any longitudinal research such claims would be difficult to substantiate.

Notwithstanding the previous comments, there appears to be a general consensus that increased public profile (awareness) and associated place marketing effects are potential benefits for those hosting events. Indeed, public profile is one of the prioritisation criteria used by UK Sport when deciding whether to use National Lottery funding to support an event (Shibli & Gratton, 1999). Therefore, not surprisingly recent evaluations undertaken for UK Sport have investigated the public profile of events using primary research and television monitoring, see for example, *European Short Course Swimming, Sheffield* (Shibli & Gratton, 1999); *World Amateur Boxing, Belfast* (SIRC, 2001) and *World Half Marathon, Bristol* (SIRC, 2002a). The idea of raising the public profile of an area through sporting events has been embraced in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Events Company is attempting to re-image the country in part through the staging of sports events, which show the Province in a positive light following 38 years of violent conflict known as the Troubles. The general consensus among visitors from around the world has been of a beautiful country that people would consider returning to on holiday (see SIRC, 2002b & 2003c).

While clearly it is more difficult to ask people watching on television whether they are likely to visit an area in the future, it is possible to put a notional value on the coverage which gives some indication of the extent of the profile achieved.

This measure is based on methods employed in the sponsorship industry and the value is derived from the cost per thousand viewers of a 30 second commercial for the equivalent amount of exposure. Hence, the value of place marketing effects derived from television coverage is dependent upon the amount of coverage received and the size of the audience. Therefore, as a fundamental part of valuing place marketing effects, television audience data must be monitored. All of the television data featured in this report was acquired from the official source i.e. the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB).

## METHODOLOGY

### Economic Impact

The current investigation utilises the methodology and model developed by SIRC for analysing the economic impact of major sports events, to produce an accurate estimate of the additional expenditure made in Sheffield (economic impact) as a result of staging the 2002 World Snooker Championship. For a comprehensive account of the methodology employed in economic impact studies such as this, see the publication "Major Events Blueprint: The Economics - A Guide" which was prepared by SIRC on behalf of UK Sport (UK Sport 1999a). Alternatively, see Gratton, *et al.* (2000) or Coleman (2003). In short, the methodology employed to calculate the direct economic impact (additional expenditure) associated with a sports event can be summarised in ten stages (See UK Sport, 2004).

- Quantify the proportion of respondents who live in the host city and those who are from elsewhere;
- Group respondents by their role in the event, e.g. spectators, competitors, media, officials etc;

- Establish basic characteristics of visitors e.g. where they live and composition of the party;
- Determine the catchment area according to local, regional, national or international respondents;
- Quantify the number of visitors staying overnight in the host city and the proportion of these making use of commercial accommodation;
- Quantify how many nights those using commercial accommodation will stay in the host city and what this accommodation is costing per night;
- Quantify for those staying overnight (commercially or otherwise) and day visitors, the daily spend in the host city on six standard expenditure categories;
- Quantify what people have budgeted to spend in the host city and for how many people such expenditure is for;
- Establish the proportion of people whose main reason for being in the host city is the event;
- Determine if any spectators are combining their visit to an event with a holiday in order to estimate any wider economic impacts.

A total of 1,727 members of the public and 40 media personnel were surveyed using the standard self completion questionnaire. Desk research on event documentation such as hotel booking schedules was used to derive the economic impact attributable to players, their entourages and event officials. Face to face and telephone interviews were conducted to clarify the desk research and to identify the expenditure patterns of sponsors and contractors. Table 1 illustrates at a glance the methods employed to collect the data necessary to derive the economic impact of the 2002 World Snooker Championship.

TABLE 1: DATA ACQUISITION METHODS

| Group                | Questionnaires | Interviews | Desk Research |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| Players & Entourages | ✗              | ✓          | ✓             |
| Officials            | ✗              | ✓          | ✓             |
| Media                | ✓              | ✓          | ✗             |
| Spectators           | ✓              | ✗          | ✓             |
| Sponsors             | ✗              | ✓          | ✓             |
| Contractors          | ✗              | ✓          | ✓             |

An overview of the economic impact on Sheffield of the World Snooker Championship can be found at the beginning of the results' section and to reiterate, this figure is based on the additional expenditure of visitors to Sheffield as a direct result of hosting the World Snooker Championship.

### UK Television Coverage

This section now concentrates on the methodology employed to develop the appraisal of the economic impact of the 2002 World Snooker by examining the public profile of the event achieved via UK terrestrial television coverage. This has been done by evaluating the place marketing and media effects associated with the event on the basis that to date both have been largely under-researched.

The methodology detailed herein, has developed from the research undertaken in to the public profile of the 1998 European Short Course Swimming (see Shibli & Gratton, 1999).

Place marketing effects can occur when a host city receives direct or indirect media coverage resulting from its association with an event. Direct coverage might be a feature such as a behind the scenes tour of the Crucible Theatre, whilst indirect coverage might occur when facilities in Sheffield appear as background to a feature involving an interview with a snooker player. For this research, place marketing was confined to monitoring of verbal mentions of Sheffield and the Crucible Theatre on BBC1 and BBC2 as well as monitoring the content and duration of 'postcards' featured in the televised coverage of the event. In the United Kingdom the figures were supplied by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB). The source of the data serves two important and complementary purposes. Firstly, BARB confirms independently that the broadcasts actually took place. Secondly, having confirmed that broadcasts actually took place, it is then possible to deduce that the viewing figures, market share and other performance indicators actually relate to the event in question.

The method used by BARB to arrive at audience figures is the largest piece of ongoing research of its type in the world. A total of 12,000 people in

4,500 homes across the UK have been recruited to report on their viewing habits. Each household is provided with an electronic device which relays to BARB the programmes people in a given house are watching. The statistics derived from this representative sample of the UK public are then aggregated upwards for the population as a whole.

The logic underpinning place marketing at televised events is that it represents a potentially cost effective way for organisers and host cities to obtain value for a 'brand' (e.g. Sheffield) via their association with the event. There is a generally accepted methodology in the sponsorship industry for measuring the amount of exposure a 'brand' receives during an event and then converting this into a cash equivalent.

The basics of this system are detailed below.

- The amount of television coverage obtained by the event is established e.g. in this case 99 hours and 58 minutes on the BBC.
- Within this coverage, the amount of time that the logos or messages of the sponsors are clearly visible or audible is measured (using specially trained staff and software).
- The volume of exposure obtained is converted to the cash equivalent of how much that exposure would cost to buy in the form of a 30 second television advertisement. At the time of the Championship, the cost of reaching 1,000 people via a 30 second television advertisement was £7.77. Therefore to reach 1 million people the cost would have been £7.77 x 1,000 = £7,770. In the case of verbal mentions the cost was £2.53 per 1,000 viewers. Therefore a verbal mention of Sheffield or the Crucible to an audience of 1 million viewers would be worth £2,530 in terms of how much that exposure would cost to buy commercially.

### Glossary of Terms

In order to understand fully the television data presented herein, it is worth clarifying some of the terminology used. This is consistent with that employed by Shibli & Gratton (1999).

### Audience and Average Audience

The number of people watching a programme at a given time. For any given programme the number of viewers will fluctuate because of behaviour such as channel "surfing" during commercial breaks and people watching only part of a programme.

Thus every programme will have a minimum audience, a maximum audience and an average audience. It is common practice for the results of media evaluations such as this to be based on the average audience. As an example of what is meant by average audience, during the opening session of the snooker on Saturday 20th April 2002, the live coverage on BBC2 had an average audience of 788,900 viewers.

### Percentage Share

The proportion of people watching a given programme expressed as a percentage of the total number of people watching television at that time. Thus, if 788,900 people were watching the opening session at 12pm on Saturday 20th April and the percentage share for snooker was 11.7%, then at this time approximately 6,743,000 people in total were watching television in the UK (i.e. 788,900 / 11.7%).

### Television Rating (TVR)

The TVR of a programme is the key performance indicator of the size of an audience for any given programme. TVR is expressed as the percentage of all the people in a country with access to a television actually watching the programme or programme segment in question.

In the case of the UK, there are approximately 60m people with access to a television. Thus if a programme has an audience of 788,900 then it would achieve a TVR of 1.3% i.e.  $((0.7889/60) \times 100)$ . That is to say, on average 1.3% of the UK population watched the programme.

### Postcard

A 'postcard' is a relatively short feature within a programme that is incidental to the main theme of the programme and which has an element of human or place interest. An obvious example for this event was six-time world snooker champion Steve Davis

starting the 2002 Sheffield Marathon. This feature included images of the Don Valley Stadium and had the potential to reinforce Sheffield's image as a National City of Sport. The key point about postcards featured in the coverage of the snooker is that they were potentially positive ways of achieving place marketing effects. This research monitored the number of 'postcards' featured throughout the coverage of the snooker and their duration.

## RESULTS

### Economic Impact

In economic terms, major sports events can be sub divided into four categories as follows;

**Type A:** Irregular one-off, major international spectator events generating significant economic activity and media interest (for example, the Olympic Games, the Football World Cup or the European Football Championship).

**Type B:** Major spectator events generating significant economic activity, media interest and part of an annual domestic cycle of sports events (for example, FA Cup Final, Six Nations Rugby Union Internationals, Test Match Cricket, Open Golf and Wimbledon).

**Type C:** Irregular one-off, major international spectator / competitor events generating limited economic impact (for example, European Junior Boxing Championships, European Junior Swimming Championships, World Badminton Championships and IAAF Grand Prix athletics events).

**Type D:** Major competitor events generating limited economic activity and part of an annual cycle of sports events (for example, national championships in most sports). Gratton, *et al.*, 2000, p.26)

Using the above definitions as a guide, the World Snooker Championship fits most comfortably into the Type B category because:

- It generates over 40,000 admissions and therefore significant economic impact;
- It receives almost 100 hours of terrestrial television coverage;

- It also receives considerable attention in other media such as national newspapers, teletext and the Internet;
- It is part of an annual domestic cycle of events having been staged at the Crucible Theatre for more than a quarter of a century.

For the purpose of this report, economic impact is defined as the net change in Sheffield's economy as a result of hosting the 2002 World Snooker Championship. Using this definition, the research revealed an economic impact of £2.26m on Sheffield as outlined in Table 2.

The principal driver of the additional expenditure was spectators, who contributed £1.5m or 67% of the total impact. The media also made a significant contribution to the local economy. The largest single area of expenditure was on accommodation £0.9m (40% of the total) with the event generating almost 18,000 commercial bed-nights in the city, followed by spending on food & drink in Sheffield £0.6m (27% of the total economic impact).

A net change in the local economy of £2.26m confirms that in economic impact terms, the World Snooker Championship is the most lucrative event in the city's sporting calendar. In recent years, only one-off events such as Euro '96 (£5m) and the VIth FINA

World Masters' Swimming Championships in 1996 (£3.6m) have achieved greater economic impacts. The event would appear to be worth retaining in Sheffield, not least because the £2.3m of additional expenditure has been acquired at little cost to the city. To this end recommendations regarding the event's future management are summarised in the conclusion following the media analysis section.

#### Audience Size and Market Share in the UK

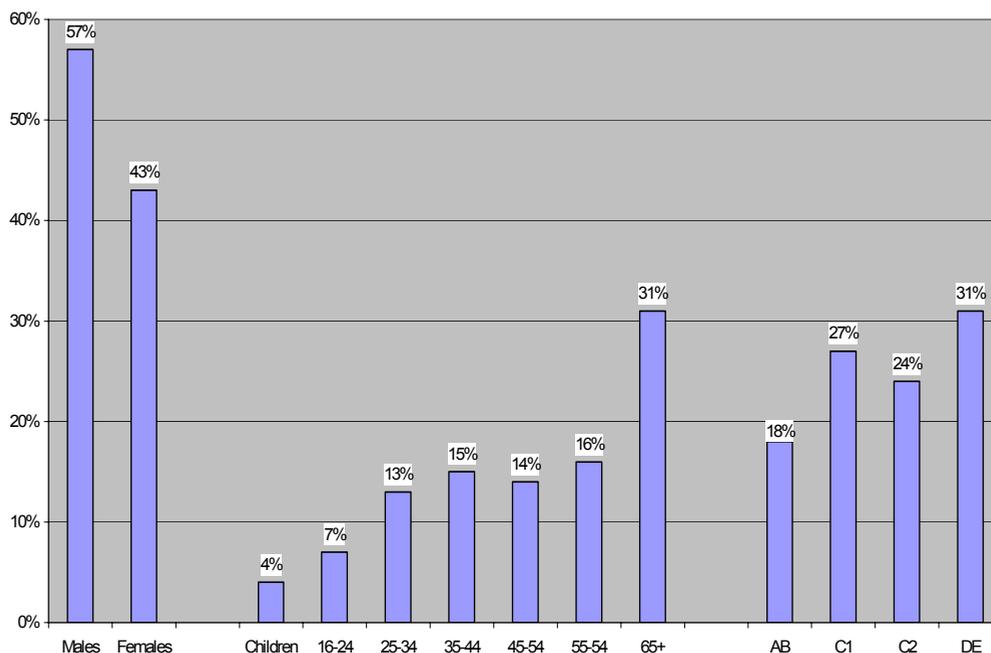
In addition to the direct benefits of the event's economic impact, indirect benefits such as place marketing effects occur as a result of Sheffield and its facilities being mentioned or being seen on television. The event was televised on 17 consecutive days and 60 separate broadcasts, equating to a confirmed 99 hours and 58 minutes of coverage on BBC1 and BBC2. The cumulative audience in the UK was 95m viewers and an estimated 18m different people (or 30% of the UK population) watched at least some of the snooker coverage. The percentage market share varied from 5.5% to 27.2%, and the more important TVR from 0.63% of the UK population for a highlights' programme on day two of the championship to 8.2% for the decisive last session of the final. Analysis of the TVR also revealed that viewer interest in the event increased as the event progressed.

TABLE 2: ECONOMIC IMPACT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE 2002 WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP

| Category                     | Amount £s        | Percentage of Total Impact | Commercial Bed-Nights |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Players & Entourages         | 82,639           | 4%                         | 731                   |
| Officials                    | 68,751           | 3%                         | 666                   |
| Sponsors / VIPs              | 87,615           | 4%                         | 531                   |
| Media                        | 283,990          | 13%                        | 3,390                 |
| Spectators                   | 1,544,323        | 67%                        | 12,468                |
| Contractors                  | 17,997           | 1%                         | 183                   |
| <b>Sub Total</b>             | <b>2,085,315</b> | <b>92%</b>                 | <b>17,969</b>         |
| Organisational Spend         | 174,777          | 8%                         |                       |
| <b>Total Economic Impact</b> | <b>2,260,092</b> | <b>100%</b>                |                       |

## GRAPH 1: TELEVISION AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

2002 World Snooker Championship Final - TV Audience Demographics (6th May 2002)



In addition to the overall amount of coverage and audience sizes, the research also compiled some limited data on the demographics of the viewing audience. The 8.8m audience for the last two sessions of the final on 6th May 2002 was sub-analysed to obtain an indication of the demographic make up of those watching the event. The results are shown in Graph 1.

This indicates that the viewers on the final day were most likely to be male (57%), aged 55 or over (57%) and from socio-economic groups C2DE (55%). These are important considerations for assessing the effectiveness of place marketing effects. That is, who are the people being exposed to the images and verbal mentions of Sheffield?

### Place Marketing Effects

During the near 100 hours of coverage 'The Crucible' (or 'Crucible Theatre') was mentioned 493 times and 'Sheffield' was mentioned 123 times. The commercial cost of purchasing this exposure would have been £2,197,724 and £525,329 respectively; a total of over £2.7m. However, although the cost of verbal mentions would have been £2.7m to buy commercially, it does not necessarily follow that the value of this exposure was actually worth £2.7m. That is to say, there is no guarantee that exposure by association is necessarily effective. A few practical examples can help to illustrate this point.

1. If the Crucible Theatre had almost £2.2m to spend, it is highly unlikely that the management would choose to spend it on receiving indirect promotion via an association with a snooker tournament. Thus there is no guarantee that the opportunity cost of such an outlay would ever favour investing in a snooker event. By contrast, Embassy, which is banned from advertising on television, would probably consider an investment of £2.7m on 616 verbal mentions on BBC television to be money well spent. Thus the true worth of brand exposure is contingent upon the nature and context of the recipient.
2. Marketing is only effective if it is targeted at the correct market. Analysis of the box office records for the 2002 World Snooker Championship cross-referenced with the Crucible's performing arts database revealed an audience overlap of less than 8%. That is, the audience for snooker whether it is live, or on television (see Graph 1 above) is very different to that for the performing arts. It is highly unlikely that snooker enthusiasts will become converts to, or advocates for, the performing arts simply by virtue of the Crucible Theatre's association with the World Snooker Championship. Thus brand exposure of the Crucible Theatre with a snooker audience is a marketing mismatch and therefore unlikely to be effective, regardless of how much the brand exposure might have cost commercially. Notwithstanding the previous comment, Sheffield City Council might argue that the potential place marketing benefits from the snooker are aimed at tourism in Sheffield as a whole, rather than the performing arts specifically.
3. Most of the verbal mentions of "Sheffield" or the "Crucible Theatre" were incidental and occurred in contexts such as:

"and now over to Hazel Irvine at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield for the second round match between ..." or;

"Shaun Murphy in his first World Championship at the Crucible ...".

Thus although the words "Sheffield" and "Crucible" were mentioned many times on air, the context in which they were used makes it likely that the only message being reinforced was the association between the event and the venue. It would be difficult to argue that such mentions contribute towards positive images such as Sheffield as a place in which to invest, relocate, visit or to take a holiday.

In short there should be a clear distinction between the 'cost' of exposure and the 'worth' of such exposure and indiscriminate use of such media evaluation data should be avoided.

In addition to the indirect marketing of the Crucible Theatre specifically, and Sheffield generally, through verbal mentions, there was the additional possibility of place marketing effects occurring through the use of 'postcards' (see Glossary of Terms above) during the near 100 hours of television coverage. 2002 was the first year that Sheffield City Council had been involved with the promotion of the event and its brief was to contribute to the promotion of Sheffield as a visitor destination. In total 44 postcards totalling 78 minutes and 53 seconds of coverage were featured throughout the 17 days of the event equating to 1.23% of the total televised coverage. Such features were dedicated to human and place interest stories, which included images of Sheffield's facilities and attractions. The commercial cost of purchasing this exposure would have been £488,593 of which 79% was attributable to the Crucible and 21% to other Sheffield attractions.

Again caution should be exercised when interpreting this data, as it is unlikely that the coverage of the Crucible in particular will have a direct effect on increasing attendances at theatre performances. However, although by association it may promote Sheffield; in future the Council should seek to transfer some of the value from mentions of the theatre to mentions of the city. The total commercial cost of the place marketing effects would have been £3.2m.

To maximise the value of such effects, Sheffield City Council was advised to work more closely with the event broadcasters to ensure that future coverage of Sheffield and its facilities is managed so as to be more direct than indirect.

### Visitors' Perceptions of Sheffield

In addition to using the questionnaire as the primary method to determine the economic impact of the 2002 World Snooker Championship, additional questions were included to gauge respondents' perceptions of Sheffield. To contextualise the results it is also worth putting the nature of the respondents into context. The age and gender profile of respondents is illustrated in Graph 2.

The information in Graph 2 indicates that live snooker attendees were most likely to be male (78%) and aged under 35 (53%). This profile is highly consistent with the age and gender profile of people who play snooker (see Fox & Rickards, 2004) and is radically different from those who watch snooker on television (see Graph 1 above).

The key point of note being that, the opinions of the live snooker audience were not representative of all visitors to Sheffield and should not be generalised as such. The findings simply reflect the views of those who answered the questionnaire and are representative only of the 9,235 different spectators who attended the event.

Respondents were asked to name three things with which they associated Sheffield, using a 'top of head' (i.e. unprompted) approach. The most common responses are shown in Table 3. This indicates that the most common associations with Sheffield were snooker, steel and cutlery and football. That Sheffield should be associated with snooker in almost 75% of all cases is not surprising as respondents were in the city to watch the snooker and were therefore highly sensitised to it. It is quite likely that if the same question was asked at a different time of year to different types of visitors, then snooker might not be the most common association with the city.

GRAPH 2: PROFILE OF SNOOKER ATTEN DERS AT 2002 WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP

#### Gender & Age Profile of Live Snooker Attenders

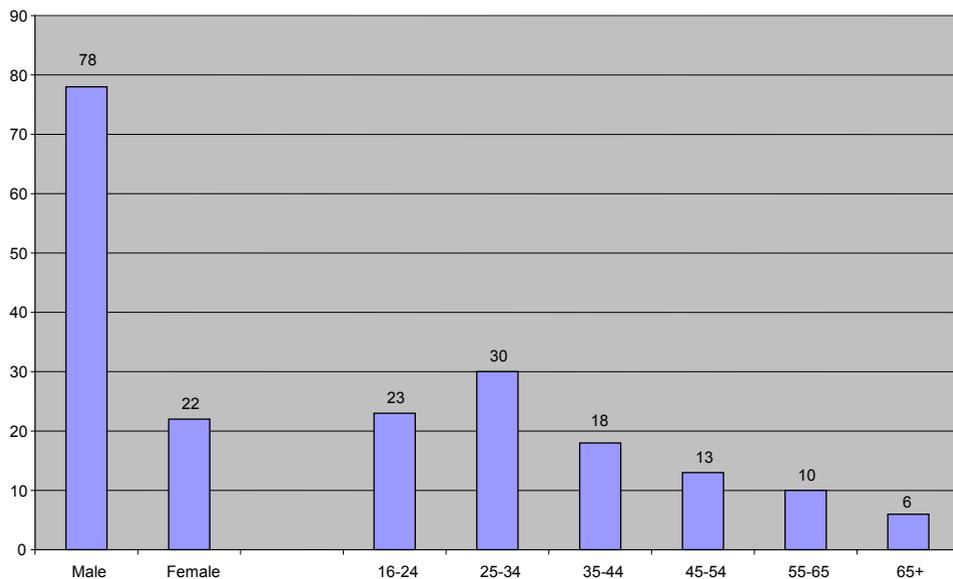


TABLE 3: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SHEFFIELD

| Feature of Sheffield     | Sheffield % | Elsewhere % | Elsewhere Index* |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Full Monty / Stripping   | 5.6         | 9.0         | 161              |
| Crucible                 | 12.7        | 17.3        | 136              |
| Shopping                 | 3.8         | 4.8         | 126              |
| Meadowhall               | 12.4        | 14.0        | 113              |
| Snooker                  | 69.6        | 76.3        | 110              |
| Football                 | 22.5        | 24.5        | 109              |
| Trams                    | 3.5         | 3.8         | 109              |
| Steel & Cutlery          | 68.6        | 63.3        | 92               |
| Beer / Brewing           | 4.1         | 2.6         | 63               |
| Universities             | 16.5        | 8.0         | 48               |
| Pubs / Clubs / Nightlife | 8.6         | 4.0         | 47               |
| Countryside / Peaks      | 5.6         | 1.4         | 25               |

Elsewhere Index\* Snooker 110 =  $((76.3 / 69.6) \times 100)$

Dark cells = "hot" i.e. visitors more likely to cite this feature of Sheffield than local residents

Light cells = "cold" i.e. visitors less likely to cite this feature of Sheffield than local residents

An interesting finding from this analysis was that in relative terms, Sheffield residents had different perceptions of the city compared with visitors from outside. Local people were more likely to cite aspects of Sheffield's traditions e.g. steel and cutlery, beer and brewing and the countryside than visitors were. By contrast, visitors were more likely to cite aspects of Sheffield's new economy e.g. Meadowhall and shopping, snooker, and the 'Full Monty' film than residents were. Such a simple piece of information provides an interesting perspective on how Sheffield is perceived from the outside. Moreover, the range of responses helps to illustrate the need for a coherent message when attempting to raise the profile of an area and the need for such coherence should be immediately apparent to Sheffield, given the prominence of the 'Full Monty' and stripping among the perceptions of visitors. However, it is worth reiterating that these were the views of live snooker attenders and not the population as a whole.

The findings relating to people's perceptions of Sheffield could form the basis of measuring the city's success in re-imagining itself, albeit with the minority of visitors who come to Sheffield to watch snooker. If initiatives to associate Sheffield more with desirable features and less with undesirable features are successful, then it would be reasonable to expect changes in people's perceptions of the city over time.

It should be noted at this point that Sheffield has no agreed identity that politicians, officers, and staff from relevant agencies wish to project. If a strategic approach is to be taken towards place marketing via association with major sports events, then it is essential that a consistent and coherent image of the city is agreed and is used to drive the images that policy makers wish to see promoted. Should the image of the city be left to chance or the whim of television producers, then the subsequent place marketing effects are likely to lack a coherent message.

Perceptions of Sheffield were generally positive with 82% of visitors rating it at least a 'good' place to visit, with only 4% less than satisfied. Whilst these figures are useful in their own right to support Sheffield's aim of marketing itself as a visitor destination, they also form the basis against which customer satisfaction ratings can be benchmarked at other events in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

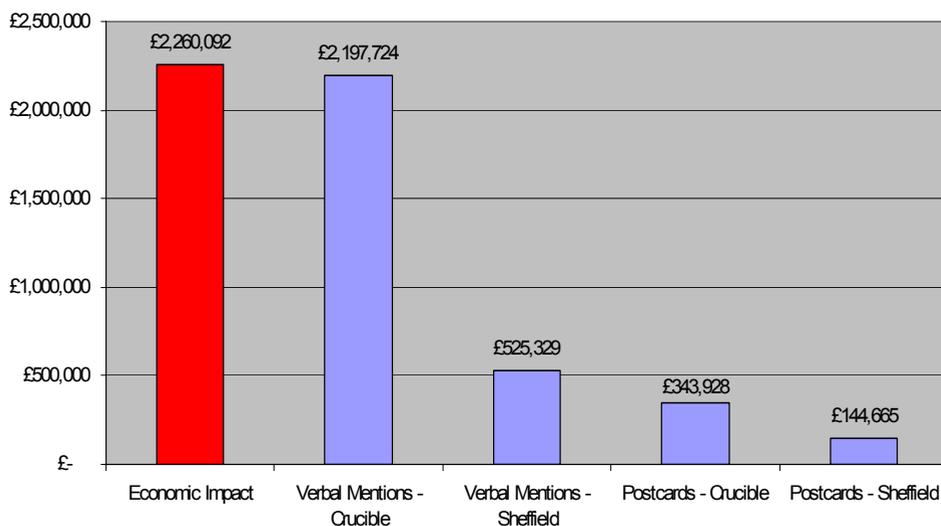
Prior to this research it was generally accepted that the snooker was good for the city, but its benefits had not been quantified. Having conducted a programme of research before, during and after the event it was possible to provide an informed evaluation of the event to Sheffield, using industry recognised techniques underpinned by transparent audit trails of how figures had been derived. A summary of the total value of the economic impact and the place marketing effects attributable to the

event is shown Graph 3.

The sum total of the economic impact and place marketing benefits accruing for Sheffield as a result of hosting the 2002 World Snooker Championship was £5.47m (i.e. the total of the five bars in Graph 4). This figure should be treated with caution and should not be used as a glib "soundbite". The economic impact figure of £2.26m (red bar in graph) is a measure of the net change in the local economy that is directly attributable to the event and which can be measured in cash terms. In contrast, the place marketing effects of £3.21m are notional figures based on what the same level of exposure would cost to buy commercially i.e. in the form of advertisements. It is beyond the scope of this research to say how much the place marketing effects actually benefit the city in practice i.e. how effective they are; this would require longitudinal research involving a variety of agencies with an interest in tourism in the city.

GRAPH 3: BENEFITS OF HOSTING THE 2002 WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP

### Summary Of Benefits Of Hosting 2002 World Snooker Championship



Notwithstanding the previous comment, this paper has demonstrated the benefits of hosting the World Snooker Championship, which should be retained in the city; not least because such benefits have been achieved at virtually no cost to the Council unlike other events where the promoters have to pay. As such the strategic goal for Sheffield City Council (and for host areas generally), should be to maximise the potential benefits of hosting the event by pursuing the policies outlined below.

1. Encouraging more people from outside the host area to attend the event and thereby reduce the local ("deadweight") percentage of total admissions, because economic impact is driven primarily by spectators from outside the local economy (see UK Sport, 2004).
2. Encouraging more spectators to stay overnight in the host area whilst attending the event.
3. Promoting facilities and attractions away from the event to encourage all visitors to increase their dwell time and hence their local expenditure. Moreover, "postcards" could be developed more strategically in order to showcase some of the other attractions (see 5 below).
4. Work closely with promoters and organisers to ensure that the maximum amount of organisational expenditure is made with local suppliers.
5. Collaborate with the event organisers and broadcasters to "control" place marketing initiatives such as televised "postcards" to ensure that the host region and its facilities are more central and less incidental to such place and human interest features. One vital aspect of place marketing to be controlled is a consistent approach to the type of image that host economies wish to portray.

### **Implications for Event Managers**

The findings outlined herein serve to emphasise the importance of event managers taking an holistic view of the potential benefits associated with staging a major sports event such as the World Snooker Championship. Managers need to be aware of the many dimensions that combine to create a successful event, particularly if they are working within the context of an overall events strategy. Such an holistic view might include taking a more pivotal role in the marketing and media management associated with an event.

In so doing the event manager would be better able to influence the potential place marketing effects that might be derived from any television coverage of an event, in order to meet the requirements of a local tourism strategy. Providing training by way of an overview of the findings from events such as the World Snooker Championship, would provide the event manager with the tangible evidence to feel confident in embracing this new approach to how they manage their events in the future.

### **Implications for the City and for Tourism**

The major points worthy of note involve ensuring the maximum number of visitors from outside the local economy attend the event, in most instances via spectator admissions. In addition, such people should be encouraged to stay overnight in commercial accommodation in order to increase their dwell time and hence expenditure in the local economy. Apart from the clear financial benefits to a local economy via the economic impact, local authorities considering adopting event led tourism strategies (as Sheffield has) should ensure that they have the infrastructure in place to manage such strategies in order to maximise the potential benefits. Sheffield City Council has been successful because it has a unit devoted to attracting events. Within this unit, personnel are employed to liaise with an event's key stakeholders in order to ensure that their event runs smoothly and the city is portrayed in a positive light.

### Implications for Future Research

Having detailed the significance of media monitoring and the place marketing benefits associated with the staging of a major sports event, it is worth reiterating that to date (apart from Ritchie & Smith, 1991 and Oldenboom, 2004), there has been little research examining how effective place marketing benefits actually are. In order to address this, future research should take a longitudinal approach examining the local tourism industry. The most cost effective way of undertaking this would be to sell the idea to key stakeholders such as the local authority, and local tourist information office in order to evaluate the visitor numbers and spend in the local economy over (for example) a 5 year period.

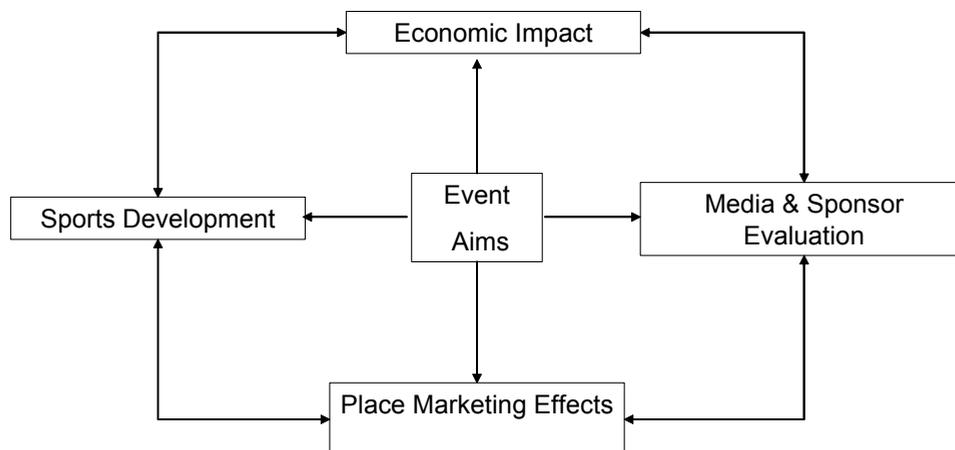
The evaluations referred to above form part of the 'balanced scorecard' approach to monitoring the benefits associated with sports events. This term has been borrowed from management accounting by Shibli (2002) to provide, a value for money appraisal framework when using public finances, a more accurate feel for the property rights associated with an event and (an element not included in this analysis) any sports development effects that might occur as a result of an event being staged. This approach was used

successfully by Shibli (2002) to evaluate the World Amateur Boxing Championships staged in Belfast in June 2001. Figure 1 provides a pictorial representation of this holistic technique for the evaluation of sports events, and hence the basis for future investigations.

The current investigation has focussed almost exclusively on the positive effects associated with hosting the World Snooker Championship. Previous research has argued that events can have negative effects in terms of 'displacement' or 'crowding out' (see Crompton, 1995 & 1999; Preuss, 2000; Kasimati, 2004; Oldenboom, 2004), whereby people who would normally use hotels and restaurants are unable to because of the influx of visitors to the host community.

Whilst such effects may indeed be worthy of further investigation much of this research has examined hallmark events (such as the Olympic Games). Moreover, in the case of the World Snooker Championship, one might reasonably argue that such effects are less significant, given that the event has been held in the same venue at virtually the same time of year (mid April to early May) for more than a quarter of a century.

FIGURE 1: THE 'BALANCED SCORECARD' APPROACH TO EVENT EVALUATION



Allied to this, any lost revenues for theatre productions are partly offset by a facility fee paid by World Snooker for using the Crucible. This apparent longevity and success in hosting the championship could create its own problems should the day ever arrive when the event moves away from Sheffield; a point considered in the final section of this paper.

### **Practical Applications of the Research for Sheffield**

Despite adopting its event strategy to help to regenerate the city by attracting major events, it took until 2002 for Sheffield City Council and the Major Sports Events Unit to recognise the World Snooker Championship as its 'blue ribbon' event. Since the research at the 2002 Championship, the Major Sports Event Unit has taken on board many of the recommendations outlined herein, such that they continue to work closely with broadcasters to maximise the exposure of the Sheffield 'brand'. Moreover, the City Council now appreciates the value of the championship, and recognises that there is no other annual event in its calendar which can match the snooker in terms of the economic impact or the profile created for Sheffield.

Notwithstanding the previous comments, there is no room for complacency, and Sheffield should do all it can to develop the 'jewel' in its event crown.

At this point in time (December 2004), the city of Sheffield is in danger of becoming a victim of its own success.

The WPBSA (the governing body of snooker), has become aware of the potential economic and public profile benefits of staging the event and is using these as an incentive to encourage other cities to bid to host the event for a 5 year period from 2006. The WPBSA want to maximise the commercial value of the event, and rather than having to pay a fee for the hire of a venue, it is seeking proposals from interested parties who will pay for the privilege of hosting the 79 year old event and who are capable of growing the sport, possibly by using an increased capacity arena (The Crucible seats only 970) and creating a home and academy for the sport. Realising that commercially it would be a major mistake to lose the event, Sheffield has responded to the challenge posed by 5 other cities interested in staging the event with some exciting proposals. Apart from its 28 years of experience hosting the championship, Sheffield has a competitive advantage over other cities, because, by virtue of the research undertaken by SIRC in 2002 it is in possession of the data necessary to be able to determine what represents value for money relative to securing the property rights of the event. At the time of writing the choice for 2006 onwards lies between Sheffield and Liverpool.

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