

# Facilitating success in sports stadia construction

Local Authority Building Control provides a unique service in the UK when it comes to the construction of sports stadia, writes Paul Overall, LABC's Chief Executive

By Paul Overall CBE  
LABC Chief Executive



**A**t first glance sports stadia might seem a strange theme for a quarterly magazine devoted to encouraging high standards in all types of construction.

But if you think about it they are not only at the glamorous end of the business, carrying out innovative and attractive designs, but they are also a type of building where local authorities are uniquely well placed to provide advice from the early stages of design

through to the first events being held there. Why do I say that? Because not only can local authorities provide a one stop shop for Planning and Building Control with all other regulatory services which might be involved, but they will also need to issue the necessary licences under Safety at Sports Ground legislation.

To be involved at every stage of design and construction can be of the highest value in issuing those licences. And Building Control

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staff in local authorities have years of experience in licensing stadia and overseeing events there.

This is, of course, an exciting time to be writing about stadia. The next five years leading up to the 2012 Olympics will be of critical importance, not just for UK athletics but also for our construction industry, which in the light of the Wembley experience hardly has an unblemished record. As a field official in athletics I look forward very much to 2012, but as one closely involved in encouraging high building standards I am equally optimistic that we shall see a splendid range of facilities arise.

And there are many successes on which to build. Colleagues in Manchester City Council Building Control who contributed greatly to the Commonwealth Games are already providing advice to those in London working on the Olympics.

And when you look at stadia in use in places like Huddersfield, Bolton, Coventry, Leicester, Wolverhampton and the new Emirates Stadium in London, you can see just what can be achieved.

Having misspent much of my youth on the terraces of Shrewsbury Town's Gay Meadow, I shall have mixed feelings when they move to a new stadium – although few will perhaps regret the passing of the days when play had to be suspended waiting for a man in a coracle to fish the football from the adjacent river Severn!

So let's look forward to the next five years. What more exciting time can there be to be working on such stadia or indeed more generally, to be in Local Authority Building Control – 2012 here we come!



Coventry City Council



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To discuss your project contact:

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