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# EXPLORING THE STRATEGIC APPLICATION OF GAMEPLAN FOR THE MEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2021 IN DONCASTER

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The following report introduces the research project undertaken and the different components and learning of the Gameplan process. As a result, insight has been gathered to further improve the tool to maximise social impact and community benefit, surrounding sporting events.



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## INTRODUCTION

Since 2018 Doncaster Council and Leeds Beckett University have worked in partnership to examine how the hosting of major sporting events can be leveraged for the benefit of localised contexts and social needs. Too often, the social impacts of major events are assumed as implicit or taken for granted, or wrapped up in (overly positive) legacy statements. Our body of research rejects such assumptions and demonstrates that the generation and sustainability of positive social change requires the identification of strategic objectives, combined with carefully planned resourcing, investment and evaluation. Throughout the delivery and research partnership, case study events have included transient events, such as the Tour de Yorkshire and UCI Road World Championships and a stadium-based England vs. Ireland, Six Nations Championship match. The research and its case studies have been varied, but the focus has always been on social impact and wellbeing, physical activity engagement, behaviour change and co-creating local opportunities. The following link will direct you to the learning from the previous research projects: <https://getdoncastermoving.org/major-events>.



These research collaborations have culminated in a wealth of learning that has evolved into the comprehensive, forthcoming Gameplan handbook 2022. Gameplan collates the good practice and learning to date from Doncaster and additional organisations and National Governing Bodies of sport, and presents these in a 'how to' guide for maximising the social impact of major events. Importantly, the research has been iterative, with learning gained from one event being tested and evaluated in subsequent events. This is a unique aspect of Gameplan knowledge as, due to the often transient nature of major events, event evaluation studies are not revisited to assess whether recommendations for development actually improve future events. Gameplan combines the established events planning cycle with a behaviour change framework called 'Gamification'. Our Gameplan model (see Figure 1) has helped to shape the work in Doncaster.

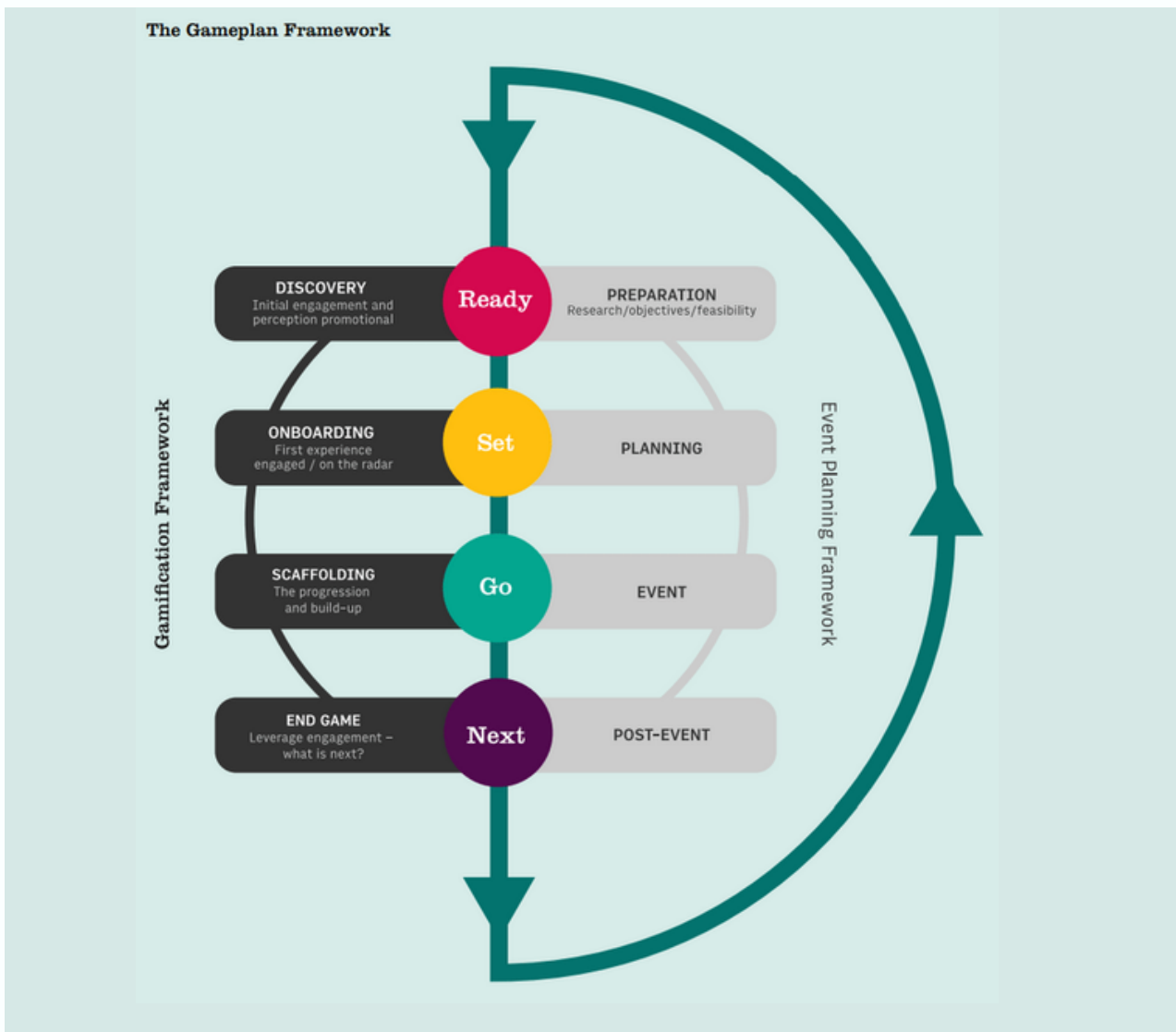


Figure 1: The Gameplan Framework Model

Gameplan is a four-step process (Ready, Set, Go, Next), containing 25 actionable 'tactics' that provide 'helpful how's' for implementing this different approach. Having developed Gameplan, the next research question for the partnership to address was how best to communicate and apply Gameplan as a strategic framework. Having tried and tested knowledge represents only part of the solution; it is further necessary to understand how Gameplan can be applied flexibly and effectively to account for the multitude of event contexts and stakeholders. Following the momentum and insight gathered from previous Doncaster-based events, Doncaster was awarded the opportunity to host three matches of the men's Rugby League World Cup (RLWC) in autumn 2021 (subsequently postponed until autumn 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Each of these matches took place at the Eco-Power stadium.

The fixtures included:

- France vs. Greece (Monday 17th October, 19:30)
- Samoa vs. Greece (Sunday 23rd October, 17:00)
- Papua New Guinea vs. Wales (Monday 31st October, 19:30)

The RLWC presented an ideal opportunity to utilise Gameplan as a complete strategic framework, with the purpose of testing and learning how Gameplan knowledge can be most effectively communicated and embedded within the event planning process.

This report provides insight into how Gameplan, as a strategic framework, has helped inform and guide the RLWC 2021 event planning process in relation to the development of social interventions through the support and involvement of rugby clubs and other community groups in Doncaster. It should be noted that this piece of research did not attempt to evaluate the strategic implementation of all 25 tactics contained within Gameplan (see Figure 2). Instead, it focuses on understanding how the Gameplan resource and approach was integrated with existing processes used by Doncaster Council, and how specific tactics could be used to maximise the social impact of club and community group interventions associated with the RLWC and, therefore, in the future events.

Specifically, this work has involved monthly co-creation and knowledge transfer sessions scheduled from January 2022 until October 2022. These sessions involved two members of the Leeds Beckett research team (Jennifer Rawson and Dr Neil Ormerod) and two members of the Doncaster Council team (Darren Simpson, Leisure Service Contract and Event Officer, and Dean Wiffen, Community Sport & Physical Activity Development Officer). A small team was preferable for these sessions to promote discussion and allow time for everyone involved to contribute fully.

As Gameplan represents both the familiar, having evolved from a melting pot of social impact and physical activity interventions pioneered by the Doncaster team, and subsequently co-created through the research partnership, the knowledge transfer sessions were designed to be a two-way channel to enable, on the one hand, a more intimate understanding of how social and physical activity interventions are implemented by Doncaster Council, and on the other, an opportunity for greater understanding of the research findings and their application. As such, the sessions adopted an organic approach, which initially focused on discussing the overall Gameplan framework, followed by a co-creative process of translation that mapped the Gameplan tactics and terminology to previous, current and future event planning activities being conducted by Doncaster Council as part of its RLWC delivery. The final part of the mentoring approach involved one-to-one interviews with Dean and Darren from the Doncaster Council Team to further explore their experience of the mentoring sessions. These were conducted by Dr Thomas Fletcher from the Leeds Beckett Research team. This approach was chosen to add a layer of independent review as Dr Fletcher was not involved in the mentoring sessions and therefore, could explore the issues independently of the mentoring team.



Figure 2: The Gameplan Tactics



## GAMEPLAN KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND MENTORING APPROACH

Piloting the Gameplan approach for the RLWC 2021 provided an opportunity to deepen the research collaboration through co-creative knowledge transfer and mentoring sessions with the Doncaster team. Although the partnership had worked closely on previous research projects and facilitated community involvement, this was the first time the collective findings from all these studies had been used to influence the design of social impact interventions for a new event. As highlighted above, the partnership knew Gameplan contained important learning that had been shown to enhance social and physical activity interventions as part of big events. However, knowing how to implement that knowledge consistently across different events and stakeholders remained a persistent challenge. After all, knowledge is useless without the means to apply it effectively. Our knowledge transfer and mentoring sessions aimed to address this key research question.

The process involved communicating 'chunked' information from the Gameplan handbook. Chunking refers to the strategy of breaking down information into bite-sized pieces so the brain can more easily digest new information. Regular meetings were set up between January 2022 and October 2022. The first stage of the knowledge transfer process involved the Leeds Beckett team providing an overview of the Gameplan framework. This was important as our Gameplan handbook had been developed over a 12-month period and had not yet been published in its final form when the sessions commenced. It should be noted that whilst colleagues from the Doncaster Council event delivery team were familiar with many aspects of Gameplan from their involvement in previous research projects, the Gameplan handbook collates and packages broader knowledge that was unfamiliar to the team. Once everyone was familiar with the Gameplan handbook overview, a co-creative process of translation was undertaken that mapped Gameplan tactics and terminology to previous, current and future event planning activities being conducted by the Council as part of its RLWC delivery. This ensured that both the research and event delivery teams had a tacit understanding of how the various elements of Gameplan knowledge and event delivery overlapped and complemented one another.

Once these important foundations had been established, Gameplan tactics were identified to support the development of specific interventions. It should also be noted that whilst the sessions focused on specific interventions, the initial evaluation considered the whole Gameplan framework and all 25 tactics.



To maximise social benefit, the four stages of Gameplan (Ready, Set, Go, Next) should be incorporated consistently. Having an overview of different activities mapped against the tactics helps users to visualise what to focus on and identify gaps in delivery. For example, the ‘Recruiting and Incentivising Volunteers’ tactic was addressed by another Council team as part of the RLWC event delivery, therefore the tactic was not a focus for the knowledge transfer team. Mapping activities in this way was invaluable for identifying gaps in delivering event activities and the Gameplan framework. In short, the exercise was not focused on evaluating every process and tactic, rather it was about establishing the extent of alignment between Gameplan and the existing event planning process, and identifying specific areas and practices where social impact activities could be strengthened. In this regard, Gameplan should not be thought of as a random pick-and-mix approach, but instead, as a flexible selective process that retains the important elements of planning, delivery and evaluation.



***Gameplan should not be thought of as a random pick-and-mix approach, but instead, as a flexible selective process that retains the important elements of planning, delivery and evaluation.***

Prior to commencing the knowledge transfer meetings, broader discussions with the Doncaster Council team around applying Gameplan (as a complete process) to the RWLC raised concerns around perceived complexity and information overload. Such concerns are understandable as the knowledge transfer sessions were completely new and required active engagement in the research process. These concerns were addressed during the initial sessions, where suggestions were sought for resources or approaches that would aid communication and understanding. An important consideration and exploration of the knowledge transfer sessions was the potential wider-usage of the Gameplan handbook to support new stakeholders to adopt the approach. One example was the request by the Doncaster team for a one-page visual overview of Gameplan. This visual “quick-start” guide was used as a conversation starter in January 2022 to highlight current plans, and bounce ideas for improvement, identify gaps and align RLWC plans to the Gameplan process. It should be noted that, in addition to the Gameplan handbook, a poster was also under development at this time. The poster was intended to be a short and sharp visual representation of the Gameplan process. Useful in its own right, the poster is designed to accompany the handbook. For the knowledge transfer sessions that are the focus of this report, the “quick-start” guide was intentionally aligned to the specific requests of the Doncaster team (see *Figure 3*). Additionally, *Figure 4* is another requested resource of the Medium and Long-term Monitoring and Evaluation Tactic.



# GAMEPLAN: A GUIDE TO MAXIMISING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF BIG EVENTS



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Figure 3. Quick-start Guide

# GAMEPLAN: A GUIDE TO MAXIMISING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF BIG EVENTS

READY

**5** SPICED, SMART and Storied Social Impact Indicators

CHEAT SHEET

Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan to understand social impacts must first identify the **social impact objectives** – the 'why' that underpins the event.

Thinking about monitoring and evaluation at the start provides the opportunity to collect baseline data, a valuable asset for informing the sustainable development of event portfolios and social impact interventions. Short, medium and long-term monitoring should be considered.

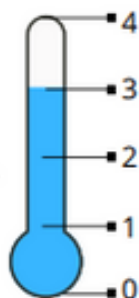
## What could be used?

### Impact Indicators

Indicator measures should focus on community benefits and quantify progress towards social impact objectives.

Indicators can be as simple as recording the number of attendees or hours volunteered, or more complex, such as using multiple scale questions to measure community relationships (see example on the right, 0 = Not at All, 2 = Some, 4 = A Lot)

Scores can be transformed into a visual barometer to enable the findings to be easily understood and compared against scores of different communities.



The "Cycling Event" made me feel part of a community.

*"I joined a community group to prepare bunting to celebrate the race. I met new local people and the kids were going on bike rides with our neighbours - which they don't normally do."*

### Stories

To understand why change has (or may not have) occurred, stories can capture personal event experiences.

For some contexts, event stories alone may be the most powerful way of understanding event insight.

Stories can be captured creatively in many ways such as interviews, social media video and posts, visitor books, poems and visual or performance art pieces.

Combining indicator measures and event stories helps the community and individual experiences to be understood.

### Think SPICED to develop objectives and indicator measures collaboratively

<b>Subjective</b>	Involve local people in the development of objectives and indicator measures.
<b>Participatory</b>	Get the right people to agree on the social impact objectives.
<b>Interpreted &amp; Communicable</b>	Ensure objectives and indicator measures are understood from the start.
<b>Cross-Checked &amp; Compared</b>	Follow a consistent approach that is informed and reviewed. Indicator measures can then be compared before, during and after each event, and repeated in the future.
<b>Empowering</b>	Use the process to signal the possibilities for change and help introduce new ways of working to improve event outcomes.
<b>Diverse</b>	Involve as many people and groups as possible in the process. Monitoring and evaluation should reflect different forms of involvement and acknowledge community characteristics.

### Think SMART when reviewing objectives and indicator measures

<b>Specific</b>	Is the objective or indicator measure sufficiently detailed to measure the impact?
<b>Measurable</b>	Can you use indicator measures, event stories or both?
<b>Achievable</b>	Has the delivery been designed using the EAST framework of (Easy, Accessible, Social and Timely action)?
<b>Relevant</b>	Does the objective benefit the community?
<b>Time-bound</b>	Can the indicator be used in the short, medium and long-term?



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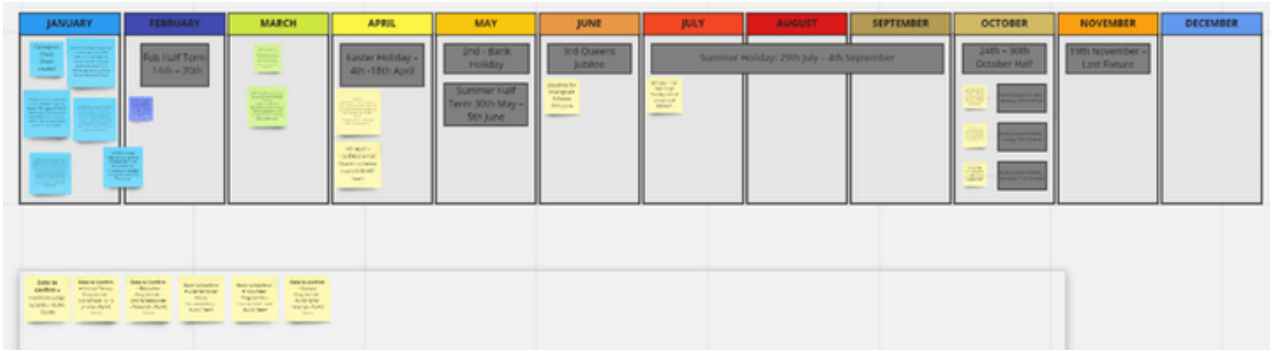


Doncaster Council

Figure 4: Medium and Long-term Monitoring and Evaluation Tactic



Another example of co-created knowledge transfer to help facilitate learning was the suggestion by the Doncaster Team to use Miro Board, an online Whiteboard tool. This was used to record upcoming key dates, notes and actions to support the incorporation of Gameplan knowledge into their event planning activities. The Doncaster Council event-delivery team are familiar with the software and thought that it would be useful to help capture the moving parts of the overall timeline and process. This tool was used consistently throughout the knowledge transfer sessions as an aide-mémoire. The screenshot below (*Figure 5*) highlights how Miro-board was used during the sessions.



*Figure 5: Miroboard Tool Screenshot*

The agenda for each knowledge transfer session was deliberately designed to be flexible and developmental. Early meetings focused on understanding the alignment between Gameplan and Doncaster Council’s event planning processes. As the sessions developed, the agenda evolved to focus on understanding and supporting the intended RLWC social impact activities. This enabled knowledge from Gameplan to be incorporated at the point of inflection, i.e., the planning stage where it is most beneficial for the development of social impact interventions. As discussed, while Gameplan has been designed to be flexible and independently applied to specific local contexts, it does require adherence to the **Ready, Set, Go, Next** strategic structure to maximise social impact.



*While Gameplan has been designed to be flexible and independently applied to specific local contexts, it does require adherence to the Ready, Set, Go, Next strategic structure to maximise social impact.*



As such, the knowledge transfer sessions provided a 'fixed space' to focus on the event ahead and to be used as a soundboard for ideas, concerns and reflections on what was currently working well, while identifying gaps in knowledge and areas for development. Importantly, the sessions were resourced appropriately, removing the team members from their regular roles, and providing time for reflection away from busy schedules. During discussions around the RLWC social impact activities, the Leeds Beckett University team referred to the insight of past research to generate different options and considerations. While each meeting varied, the sessions were recorded and actionable points were determined for the next meeting. The actionable points were not prescriptive, but rather a group agreement on the next steps to incorporate Gameplan knowledge into the RLWC event plans. Actions for Doncaster colleagues included reflective activities, such as adding notes to the Miro Board, alongside specific RLWC-related activities, such as reviewing the Microgrants application process, taking on board feedback and evaluation from previous schemes, drafting up an introduction email to the RLWC Clubs or finding key dates from other stakeholders to coordinate event marketing and stakeholder communication. Actions for Leeds Beckett colleagues included completing meeting and reflection notes, creating new resources to assist the knowledge transfer process, mapping out the progress so far, and highlighting further considerations.

Knowledge transfer was also discussed for filtering messages from Doncaster Council to other local stakeholders, such as local rugby league Clubs. The Doncaster Council team wanted to have the knowledge, resources and examples to be able to support and 'nudge' clubs to optimise the funding opportunities available while aligning their planned interventions to the Gameplan approach. The communication messaging was developed and reframed with the intention to make engagement with Clubs accessible and easy to action.



## LESSONS LEARNED: APPLICATION OF GAMEPLAN

The mentoring sessions were analysed to identify emerging themes surrounding lessons learned so far about the application of the Gameplan approach to RLWC associated interventions. Three key themes were identified:

**1) Adaptability**

**2) Alignment**

**3) Mapping**

### **1) Adaptability: Gameplan is adaptable but the Ready, Set, Go, Next processes need to be understood.**

Visually, Gameplan is a four-step strategic process with relevant tactics within each step. Although the blue-sky thinking of Gameplan is for all the steps and tactics to be implemented within an event cycle, the reality is each organisation will be at different levels of knowledge, experience, funding and capacity. Furthermore, each event context and community is different, so intervention approaches need to be tailored. As such, Gameplan represents a toolbox of knowledge, where the right tool for the job can be selected.

The Gameplan process has been developed considering flexibility. A major benefit of the Gameplan approach is its adaptability, in that tactics can be tailored to different events and stakeholder contexts. In this regard, Gameplan is not prescriptive, but in order to maximise its effectiveness and sustainability, it does require consistency in application.

For example, an event organiser may wish to implement a tactic found in the “Go” section of Gameplan. Selecting tactics in this way to meet the needs of events is as easy as locating the relevant tactic within the Gameplan handbook. However, each tactic should be implemented according to the Ready, Set, Go, Next process elements of that tactic. This makes sense because there is no point in implementing a tactic without proper planning or evaluation to improve planning for the next event. Therefore, the point of inflection for maximising effectiveness is the planning stage regardless of the selected tactic. For example, an organiser may want to implement the “Next” tactic of “Recycle Resources”. In order to ensure this tactic has the maximum effectiveness of supporting the delivery of an environmentally friendly event, it is recommended that it is linked with associated tactics in the Ready, Set and Go steps as explained below:



***The point of inflection for maximising effectiveness is the planning stage regardless of the selected tactic.***



**Example:**

**(i) Ready** - Collaboration Kick-Off. Discussions during the Collaboration Kick-Off meetings should identify the need and objectives to be more environmentally conscious. This helps strengthen the collective responsibility of stakeholders to abide by this in their event responsibilities.

**(ii) Set** - Community Engagement Planning Hand. Following the Collaboration Kick-Off, it is important to ensure that stakeholders involved in the community engagement plan apply environmentally conscious thinking. For example, this may involve ensuring that the environmental impact of event purchases are considered e.g. single-use plastics or ensuring that waste recycling is incorporated within the event delivery plan.

**(iii) Go** - What's On. After underpinning the event planning process with environmentally conscious considerations, it is also important to maintain this during the event day. For example, when designing communication materials such as event programmes, the inclusion of positive environmental messages can be beneficial alongside things such as icons to denote where recycling stations can be found on the venue map.

**(iv) Next** - Recycle Resources. Once the event is over, it's time to tidy up. Even with careful, environmentally conscious pre-planning, it is likely there will remain resources within the event area that require recycling or reusing. Briefing event volunteers and organisers to recycle any leftover materials from the event (if possible) and to put aside any resources that could be reused for future events such as bunting can help further minimise the environmental impact footprint of the event.

This flexibility is a key strength of the Gameplan approach as it enables users to identify tactics of interest that could be introduced to improve, complement or bridge gaps in existing practice. Combining tactics to curate a Gameplan journey also enables users to tailor the Gameplan approach to their individual events and social impact objectives.



***Combining tactics to curate a Gameplan journey also enables users to tailor the Gameplan approach to their individual events and social impact objectives.***



For new users of Gameplan, it is recommended that the overall process is first understood at a holistic level. Once that understanding is embedded, a more granular, tactic-by-tactic approach may be adopted. This enables the user to explore each step and its associated tactics, allowing reflection and discussion of what already exists within their event planning processes. Despite Gameplan being developed with Doncaster Council, this approach was also used to generate new ideas during knowledge transfer sessions. Reviewing previous systems and processes highlighted new opportunities to test and learn new approaches to build on current good practices. This highlights the time and depth of knowledge transfer required to embed Gameplan learning within the event planning process. This may seem onerous, but it should be considered as part of a process of continual improvement where learning from one event is applied to the next - referred to in Gameplan as 'handing over the baton'. Gameplan emphasises these good practices due to its inherent focus on embedding sustainability within every tactic. A key benefit of this approach is that Gameplan can be incorporated into the development of an event portfolio strategy that places social impact and community needs at the heart of all big events.

## **2) Alignment: Gameplan objectives help align stakeholder activity to maximise social impact.**

Collaboration is an inherent part of event delivery, so a logical extension of utilising Gameplan knowledge is to consider how it can be incorporated into collaborative activities. This requires event organisers to take a holistic approach and recognise that the actions of others can affect (positively or negatively) the success of collective social impact ambitions and interventions. An optimum solution is to identify how collaborative activity can be powerfully leveraged to maximise the effectiveness of Gameplan interventions. Having a dedicated team to develop and refine how selected tactics will be implemented across the four steps is important in this regard and helps share the responsibility for generating positive social impact. Working together with partner organisations to deliver the event's social impact objectives creates opportunities to positively influence new ways of working to achieve better (i.e., bigger, more sustained) impacts for communities and strengthen future collaborations.

Large-scale events are highly complex and rely on effective communication between stakeholders. Gameplan strengthens collaborative activity as the tactics encourage users to look beyond the boundary of immediate event delivery to maximise community benefits. One example of where Gameplan



knowledge strengthened communication and improved the planning of RWLC was identified during the knowledge transfer sessions. The Doncaster team linked up with the Social Impact Director of the Rugby League World Cup to gain a broader insight into their workstreams, opportunities and timelines. From this one conversation, information was shared regarding key milestone dates, such as promotional communications highlighting “200 days to go”, trophy date parades, volunteer programmes, and further activities available, such as a Mental Fitness and Education programme. This collaboration also helped signpost funding pots that may be of interest to Doncaster rugby league Clubs.



***Understanding a timeline of stakeholders’ work and key milestones can open doors to new opportunities and leverage existing plans.***

Speaking with wider partners also helps realise the ‘bigger picture’ of complementary momentum surrounding the event. Collaboration is strengthened the more times this is repeated, especially where a portfolio approach is taken to event delivery. Actions as a result of the conversation with the RLWC led to the Council ‘piggy-backing’ on communications around the RLWC milestone days. Additionally, the Mental Fitness and Education programme was further explored regarding its sustainability and potential impact for upskilling local communities beyond the RLWC event. During the conversation, questions were asked about how place and event could be more closely aligned – for example, through the availability of branded bunting and social media logos to keep messaging consistent, as well as discussing whether opportunities provided by the RLWC could align with Doncaster community groups, education library including creative writing, heritage classes, digital skills and documentary licensing. These benefits highlight the value of the strategic Gameplan approach in fostering more effective collaboration and communication between stakeholders.

Reimagining and redesigning how stakeholders work with you can positively impact the outcomes of actions. In this context, redesign refers to setting boundaries and expectations of core principles, such as a focus on sustainability. For example, Doncaster has previously taken the opportunity to create criteria to nudge their Microgrant scheme applicants to align with Doncaster’s way of working. This might include being more environmentally conscious and/or prioritising local businesses and facilities. Being environmentally conscious may refer to the careful consideration of materials used i.e., avoiding single-use plastics, or having a plan to re-use the equipment.





Furthermore, it was noted during the knowledge transfer sessions that community groups that had previously applied for Microgrants were quick to apply again, demonstrating agency in proactively wanting to engage in the next event. It should also be noted that the rapid uptake by previous applicants was also matched by interest from new applicants, highlighting how the scheme continues to strengthen relationships between Doncaster Council and community groups. These examples also highlight how Gameplan knowledge can indirectly influence positive behaviour change beyond the event itself. Repeated engagement in events, as part of a portfolio approach, will hopefully further embed positive behaviours and generate additional community benefits over time.

For the RLWC, Microgrant criteria were also tailored to the objective of engaging Doncaster rugby league clubs. In this example, the rugby clubs were unfamiliar with the Microgrant scheme, but the Doncaster Council team could draw on knowledge from previous Microgrant schemes to tailor their communication approach. An important benefit from the iterative development of the Microgrant scheme is that Doncaster Council now has a wealth of experience, and a repository of Microgrant resources, that can be adapted to new events. Whilst this has required sustained resourcing and investment throughout the portfolio of events hosted in Doncaster, efficiencies are now being realised in terms of time and resource savings, meaning that the scheme can be rolled out quickly to new events using a tried and tested formula. This evolution and refinement of Gameplan knowledge also represent a shift from tacit to codified knowledge which brings associated organisational learning benefits. This is because knowledge is transferred and retained collectively, instead of being owned by key individuals who may leave or move roles within an organisation.

### **3) Mapping: Gameplan is effective when mapped to existing processes, systems and networks.**

Gameplan is a flexible, selective process built around the important elements of planning, delivery and evaluation. For event organisers, mapping current practices against Gameplan is a good starting point to identify areas to focus on. The Doncaster team has pedigree in this space, having worked on leveraging events for social impact over the last six years. Therefore, there are already pre-established systems, routines and networks built for the RLWC 2021. From the outset, the READY stage of Gameplan progressed very quickly due to the work already having strong foundations in place around a range of tactics, for example, 'Asset Mapping' (tactic 3), 'Event Decentring' (tactic 2), and 'Earmarking people for social impact funding' (tactic 6).



***For event organisers, mapping current practices against Gameplan is a good starting point to identify areas to focus on.***

The SET stage required greater investment in time and resources, even despite the previous year's developments of processes, systems and networks. The SET stage tactics of 'Microgrants' (tactic 13) and 'Co-Create Physical Activity Opportunities' (tactic 8) involve careful planning and consideration to frame messages and guide individuals and groups through developing ideas. The SET stage 'does what it says on the tin' in ensuring groups and activities are set up with conscious thoughts of how this will engage and impact the communities during ("Go") and after the event ("Next"). On reflection, this stage is a crucial time for Doncaster Council in the run-up to the event in order to get people on board and ensure ideas are developed and maximise the funding opportunities and community impact.

Revisiting existing practices mapped against Gameplan can stimulate different ways of thinking to improve on previous ways of doing things. One example of this is how the Doncaster team further innovated the Microgrant scheme from previous years by adding an online application option to boost accessibility. The team also created a GoogleForm document to improve the collation of feedback from recipients after the event. Previously, recipients would receive an email with feedback questions which, based on feedback, were considered to be onerous to complete. The change to a GoogleForm document reduced the time burden of collating responses from multiple emails, as the GoogleForm collects the data in one place for analysis. Efforts were also made to improve the 'personal touch' of the Microgrant scheme. The use of a 'personal touch' approach to communication has been shown, through previous events, to enhance community engagement. As part of this approach, the team created email templates which could be personalised to build a rapport with individuals and groups over the years. The development of these resources evidences how the Gameplan approach supports the development of a streamlined knowledge-led approach to developing and implementing social impact interventions through big events. This is another example of how investment and consistent application of the Gameplan approach produces downstream efficiencies in event planning, delivery and evaluation.

During the knowledge transfer sessions, it was also revealed that the Doncaster team had been able to successfully re-engage with community groups that had taken part in previous events about new opportunities associated with the RLWC. Importantly, this engagement was found to be sustained, irrespective of the group's perceived interests.



For the RLWC 2021, the Microgrants scheme of £2,000 received 17 applications, 15 of which were funded. Unlike previous years, as a result of previous feedback regarding suggestions for improving accessibility, the Microgrants could be applied for via an online form as well as email (both received good uptake). As the RLWC 2021 was not a linear event i.e., the event is stadium based and does not pass through multiple communities, this has the potential to reduce the geographical connection to the event. Therefore, in the lead-up to the event, there was uncertainty around 'who' would apply. Overall, the Microgrants attracted diverse and non-traditional groups for a rugby event, including a drama group, Uniform groups, a drugs and alcohol organisation and a recycling group. The Doncaster Council team have learned that the Microgrants are used differently for different events. For example, for the UCI Cycling Event and Tour de Yorkshire, there were 36 applicants and more uptake of the Microgrants for window dressing for when the events (and TV) passed by. This opportunity attracted many local businesses and organisations for self-promotion reasons. For the RLWC 2021, the event is separated from many localities, however, the Microgrants offered an opportunity to build a connection to the event through Microgrant-funded activities.

This important finding underlines the following benefits of Doncaster's approach to Gameplan. Firstly, that positive engagement with Doncaster Council through well-designed social impact interventions leads to repeat engagement. Secondly, big events create opportunities for involvement from a broad spectrum of community groups. This appears to be strengthened when community groups have participated in previous events. It also demonstrates that it is unwise to predict which groups will be interested in certain events. The emphasis should instead be on working with all groups to align their interests with the event. In Doncaster, the team has compiled a list of community groups and retained their contact details (with permission) for future communications, encouraging sustained engagement for upcoming events. More specifically, for the RLWC, the Doncaster team personally emailed previous Microgrant applicants highlighting the upcoming opportunity for funding. This has resulted in returning applicants who are engaging in the RLWC in a variety of ways.

In addition, the social network of communities is important to engage with. Utilising existing networks to spread messages and promote opportunities can make future event planning more seamless. When mapping community engagement against the Gameplan framework, highlighting key contacts within networks against specific tactics provides clear pathways for communication channels.



### **Summary of Key Themes**

The three key themes of adaptability, alignment and mapping highlight key learning from the Gameplan knowledge transfer sessions in relation to the RLWC. The original plans for piloting Gameplan informed social impact interventions with local Rugby League Clubs would have enabled further investigation of these themes. Unfortunately, no local rugby league clubs took up the opportunity for club Microgrant funding. However, a silver lining has since emerged following Dean's contact with a local women's rugby league player with a passion to promote the women's game alongside the men's RLWC 2021. Plans are currently developing, but this emerging new direction expresses how Gameplan can be used flexibly to retain the benefits of adaptability, alignment and mapping, even when plans change.



# REFLECTIONS: LBU MENTORING TEAM

## Background

Leeds Beckett University has worked in partnership with Doncaster Council for a number of years. However, much of this work has been conducted from an evaluative perspective where the team has presented research findings which have then been translated into recommended actions. Consequently, the team has not previously been directly involved in the process of action implementation. This represents a knowledge gap in understanding how Doncaster Council, as an organisation and team of people, implements and assimilates research knowledge. The mentoring sessions provided an important opportunity to examine this hidden link between knowledge production and knowledge transfer and implementation. Dr Neil Ormerod and Jennifer Rawson were the regular contact points for the Doncaster team regarding the Gameplan knowledge transfer sessions.

## Approach to reflection

To provide structure to reflections of the Gameplan mentoring process, multiple levels of reflection were undertaken to capture different layers of the process and thinking. Firstly, meeting notes were written up after conversations and key dates/activities were mapped onto Miro Board with the Doncaster Team. Secondly, Neil and Jennifer had a debrief following the meetings with the Doncaster team to discuss further any points and allow open space to digest the meeting content. These team reflections were collated online and shared with the Doncaster team. Thirdly, a reflective practice template was developed and completed after each meeting and considered the following aspects: surprises, what works well, key challenges and adaptations to content (i.e., considerations for transferring knowledge to new and different audiences).

The terminology of Gameplan received careful consideration in the planning and creation of the handbook. A consideration for working with Doncaster, and new organisations, is that most organisations will use different or interchangeable terms in their event planning process. As a result, there is not universal language that can be used. Instead, there is added value in adapting/developing additional resources to translate Gameplan knowledge into different contexts. In addition, the importance of making a conscious effort to frame and communicate the language of the tactics effectively to different audiences should not be overlooked. This helps align communication messages with the strategic goals of the organisation.



## Introducing Kairos

As part of the mentoring sessions, the research team introduced the Doncaster team to a new planning tool called `Kairos`. Kairos refers to time, timeline and timeliness. The first step in incorporating Kairos into the mentoring sessions was to map key upcoming dates (such as school holidays, RLWC 2021 promotion events, and the dates of Doncaster's three host matches) to assess how these aspects would affect and influence stakeholder engagement. This action identified how stakeholder engagement will develop at different time points. Figure 6 provides an overview of the Kairos approach. The model identifies different stakeholders, the timeline of the event and the time before (T-) and after (T+) the event to ensure relevant actions of stakeholders are identified from the beginning supporting sustainable impacts. As a tool for event and social impact planning, Kairos helps identify timely and effective points for stakeholder engagement, helping to identify when to bring them on board at the right moment.

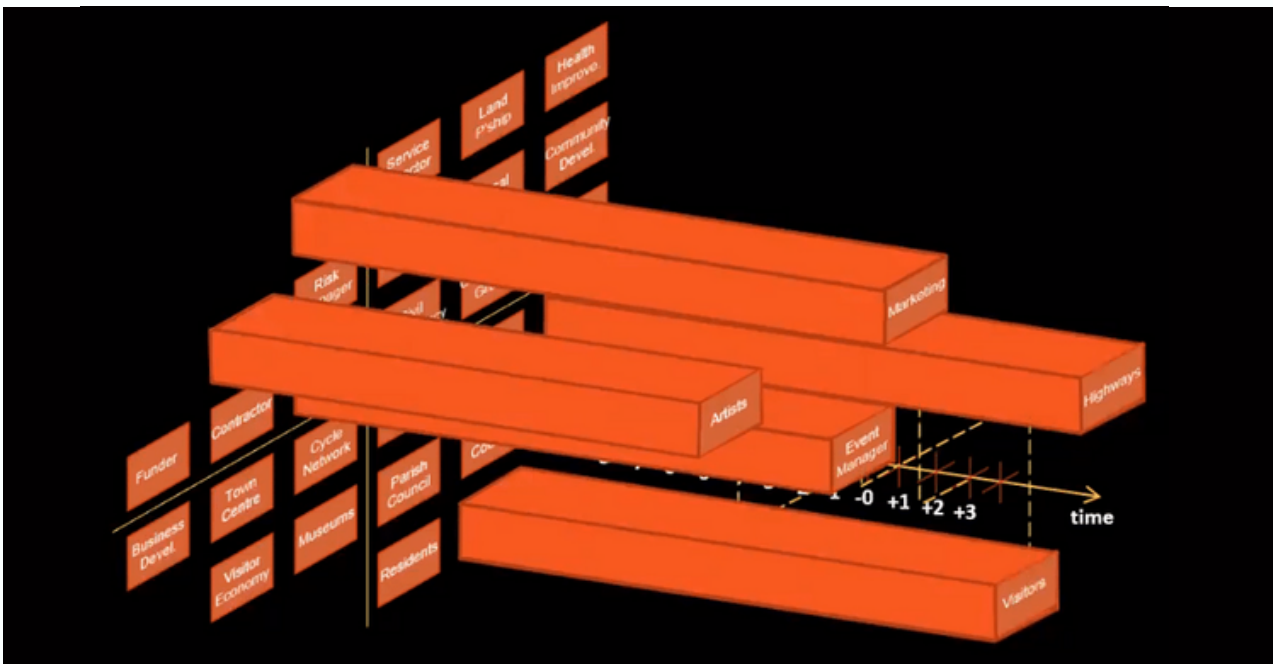


Figure 6: Kairos Concept Illustrated (Graphic from presentation led by Kevin Wallace, 2021, The University of Technology Sydney)



### **Challenges for Gameplan dissemination beyond Doncaster**

A key challenge iterated throughout the Gameplan mentoring sessions was “how would the knowledge transfer process differ for ‘newbies’ with no prior experience and knowledge of this approach?”. While Gameplan drew on insights from a range of organisations, to date, the Gameplan process has not been exposed to stakeholders outside of the Doncaster team. Drawing on the evidence from the mentoring sessions, the application of a flexible test-and-learn approach is likely to be most beneficial for adapting Gameplan to new contexts. The importance of tactic linkages was also highlighted during the mentoring sessions and additional resource development of tactic ‘honeycombs’ - i.e., grouping tactics - may help support user understanding of connected tactics within the 4-step process (Ready, Set, Go, Next).



# REFLECTIONS: DONCASTER COUNCIL TEAM

## Background

As previously discussed, the mentoring sessions provided an important opportunity to examine the hidden link between knowledge production and knowledge transfer and implementation. Although the LBU and Doncaster teams had worked closely for a number of years, the mentoring sessions provided a new opportunity to better understand the event delivery process and how research recommendations are put into practice. Importantly, it was observed that the Doncaster Council team felt comfortable with the Gameplan mentoring process, commenting after the first meeting that *“the working relationship between LBU and DMBC is strong and comfortable due to numerous years of working together previously”*. This enabled the sessions to follow a relaxed, but structured format that was iterative and linked to the delivery of planned RLWC interventions.

## Introducing the mentoring process

The mentoring process provided a new opportunity for enhancing the collaborative relationship between LBU and Doncaster council, but as the approach had not been tried before by the teams, it also created some understandable anxiety about what was involved and how it would work. At the outset, it was clear that the Doncaster Team were worried about the perceived complexity of the full Gameplan process and terminology. In particular, the team were concerned that the language of Gameplan may alienate some of the target audience. These concerns were noted by the LBU team and helped direct the knowledge transfer sessions. It should be remembered that these sessions were new to both teams and therefore, a flexible approach was required to develop the sessions. Furthermore, the Doncaster Team had not been involved in the production of the Gameplan handbook, although they had been integral partners in the research work that underpins Gameplan. During the initial sessions, each concern was discussed and addressed by exploring suggestions for resources, or approaches that would aid communication and understanding. The initial sessions also focused on working through the Gameplan stages step-by-step so that everyone was familiar with the process and linkages to RLWC actions could be identified. Additional resources such as tactic overviews and ‘cheat sheets’ (such as Figure 3 and Figure 4) were created to help support understanding. This was particularly important as the Gameplan handbook had not yet been published and therefore, the Doncaster team had not had prior sight of it in its final form. It is likely that the draft, Google Document version available at the time exacerbated concerns raised by the Doncaster team as it contained only the tactic text and not any of the supporting illustrations and guidance which serve to help communicate the Gameplan process in an accessible way.





An additional consideration associated with communicating the terminology of Gameplan is that the handbook deliberately follows its own process language which does not necessarily match that used by specific organisations articulating the same ideas and processes. For example, Gameplan uses terms like 'Sludge' as opposed to more common phrases like 'barriers' to delineate unhelpful processes and environments which slow down progress. During the development of Gameplan, terminology was given careful consideration as it was recognised that the identification and use of a universal language was unrealistic. The mentoring sessions, therefore, provided an important learning opportunity to understand the requirements for supporting the translation and embedding of Gameplan within organisational structures which have their own unique contexts and process languages. Through the mentoring sessions, it was found that there is added value in adapting/developing additional resources to complement the Gameplan handbook. In particular, additional visual resources and verbal explanations were found to be helpful. This prompted discussion around the potential value of developing short, illustrated video summaries of each tactic. This suggestion was noted for further exploration by the LBU team as it was felt that it could form a more comprehensive package for communicating Gameplan as an approach.

During the interviews, it was also suggested by the Doncaster Team that cascade mentoring could be a valuable approach for communicating Gameplan. This format would involve LBU supporting the Doncaster team, and in turn, Doncaster mentoring other event delivery teams. This approach has the advantage that it is a peer-to-peer learning format which helps validate the technique for similar audiences. However, the experience from the LBU mentoring sessions has shown that even when working with established partners, who are broadly familiar with specific processes, considerable time and resources are required to deliver the knowledge transfer sessions. As stated already, because the final version of the Gameplan handbook was not available at the time of the mentoring sessions, the Doncaster Team were only familiar with some of the content, processes and tactics. If the Doncaster team are to act as mentors themselves, additional work would be needed to ensure they are confident to articulate the Gameplan approach in full. Moreover, for new organisations, unfamiliar with Gameplan, the workload associated with communicating the approach will inevitably be multiplied.



It should also be noted that it has not yet been possible to work through a new intervention using the Gameplan approach in full due to unforeseen difficulties in recruiting clubs as part of the RLWC. Despite these limitations, cascade mentoring does add considerable credibility for communicating the advantages of new ways of working and therefore, should form part of any future approach to communicating Gameplan. Such an approach could be combined with tactic videos / illustrations and the published Gameplan handbook as part of a comprehensive training resource. These are all aspects that will need further research and consideration, but the mentoring sessions have been instrumental in highlighting key issues around future Gameplan dissemination.

### **Benefits of the mentoring approach**

The research interviews and mentoring session notes revealed that the mentoring sessions had provided valuable time for reflection for both the LBU and Doncaster Council Teams. For the Doncaster Team, the process of actively discussing and reflecting on the intervention plans with the LBU team helped evaluate and develop new approaches (derived from Gameplan learning) such as reviewing the Microgrants application process, taking on board feedback and evaluation from previous schemes, drafting up an introduction email for the RLWC Clubs or finding key dates from other stakeholders to coordinate event marketing and stakeholder communication. This finding highlights the value of collaboration and allocating time to knowledge transfer activities. However, it is acknowledged that the mentoring sessions were limited in their ability to specifically focus on the application of the complete Gameplan process within a test intervention as part of the RLWC. It is recommended that this strand of work is retained and tested at a future event as we believe that it would elicit valuable lessons on how the complete process can be communicated and applied to a specific context.

### **Challenges and limitations of the mentoring approach**

Several internal and external challenges and limitations were identified during the mentoring sessions. As has already been discussed, the sessions prompted some initial anxiety relating to the focus and operation of the sessions, which was understandable given that the team had not previously worked together in this way. This initial anxiety quickly dissipated once the sessions started and initial concerns were addressed. The unavailability of the published Gameplan handbook also exacerbated these concerns and required the development of additional resources to support the sessions. Had the handbook been available



it is likely that the sessions could have advanced more quickly and fewer additional resources would have been required. If this activity were to be replicated, the availability of the full Gameplan handbook will inevitably be beneficial.

Concerns around the language and terminology of Gameplan were also expressed, highlighting the challenges in communicating the Gameplan process, even among those who are broadly familiar with it. As such, this is an important finding for the future development of Gameplan. Suggestions from the mentoring sessions indicate that explanatory videos or animations may help bridge the gap in communication, enabling organisations to translate and embed Gameplan knowledge. As highlighted above, the challenge of separating Gameplan as a resource and process from the already familiar current practices from which Gameplan is partly derived was also highlighted. This nuance proved tricky to disentangle as Gameplan was initially perceived to simply be a formalised name for actions and processes that were already being used. Whilst this is partly true, the overfamiliarity of Gameplan knowledge from the previous studies led to misplaced assumptions that the handbook did not contain new knowledge and evolved processes. The unavailability of the illustrated handbook was regarded as an important limitation in addressing this issue. When considering the application of Gameplan outside of Doncaster, unfamiliarity rather than overfamiliarity will be of concern, but the lessons learnt from the mentoring sessions remain important for considering how best to communicate a comprehensive resource like Gameplan. It also reinforces the importance of communicating and embedding knowledge broadly within organisational processes. This approach helps avoid situations where only specific individuals hold important knowledge, risking disruption and knowledge loss if they were to leave the organisation. In this regard, the Gameplan handbook fulfils an important role for knowledge dissemination and retention for Doncaster Council.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge two external challenges which affected the operation and effectiveness of further Gameplan research and mentoring sessions. The first related to disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This led to the RLWC 2021 being postponed until 2022, resulting in the scaling back of planned social impact activities. If the original plans had been delivered, the opportunity to utilise Gameplan may have identified new learning and challenges. A further challenge related to the recruitment and engagement of local rugby league clubs for the purpose of trialling RLWC-related social impact interventions. This was one of the original aims of the Gameplan



research and mentoring sessions and was intended to evaluate the effectiveness of a complete Gameplan co-production approach to the design, delivery and sustainability of interventions led by the rugby league clubs. Although the clubs were offered grants to support interventions for social and community impact, none were able to take up this opportunity within the time available. This was extremely disappointing as it would have provided a focused test for Gameplan. However, the disruptive impact of Covid-19 and the consequent rescheduling of the RLWC could not be controlled. Based on engagement with previous work, it is highly likely that future engagement would be more successful.



# DONCASTER COUNCIL TEAM INTERVIEW INSIGHT

## Introduction

The final part of the mentoring and research evaluation involved one-to-one interviews with Dean and Darren from the Doncaster Council Team. These interviews were intended to further explore their experience of the mentoring sessions and the thematic findings regarding Gameplan implementation. To add a layer of independent review, Dr Thomas Fletcher, an experienced qualitative researcher from the Leeds Beckett Research team conducted the interviews as he had not been involved in the mentoring process. The interviews lasted around 40 minutes and examined the following broad areas:

- Their understanding of Gameplan - as both philosophy and resource;
- The value, if any, of adopting a Gameplan approach to event planning and delivery of their goals as a team;
- The extent Gameplan had been integrated into their thinking and practices;
- Whether the idea of Gameplan had been communicated with others in the council - and beyond - and any feedback;
- Their assessment of the mentoring sessions; both in terms of reinforcing their own understanding and in preparation for future knowledge exchange;
- The overall accessibility of the Gameplan handbook

## Interview themes

As the above sections emphasise, there were a number of factors that limited the anticipated impact of the mentoring sessions, namely, the rescheduling of the RLWC event, and challenges in recruiting local rugby clubs to trial the Gameplan approach with. However, there were also a series of benefits to the sessions. It should be re-emphasised that during conversations with Dean and Darren, it was clear how much they valued the opportunity to work with the Leeds Beckett team. At the time of the mentoring and follow up interviews, both were heavily involved in preparations for the RLWC and were evidently very busy. However, at no point did either express any frustration that their time would be better spent doing that work. Indeed, both acknowledged the benefits of the mentoring, both as a learning exercise, and opportunity for safe reflection.

During interviews, Dean and Darren were encouraged to be as honest and open as possible. Both embraced this opportunity and seemed comfortable talking about their work, Gameplan and the forthcoming RLWC. It was interesting that, from the outset, neither were able to articulate what a Gameplan approach meant, nor indeed, what the benefits of the Gameplan handbook might be. This is not to say that they do not see value in either,



more that they felt detached from the resource and its implications for their practice. This is perhaps unsurprising, as neither had been involved in the production of the handbook, other than as partners in the research and event interventions that underpin the knowledge contained within Gameplan. As has been highlighted throughout this report, the final version of Gameplan was not available at the time of interviews and neither Dean nor Darren had seen any mock ups of the text, combined with illustrations etc. As a result they were drawing on their recollections of a fairly draft, online version. Unsurprisingly then, they both expressed some anxiety about the accessibility of the handbook. Both referred to it as being 'long' and the language used as being 'academic'. Both felt that the handbook could be intimidating for community practitioners. It was clear therefore, that neither was actively using a version of the Gameplan handbook in their current work. When asked if they had shared the idea of Gameplan with colleagues – whether in the Council or beyond – both answered no. Indeed, they both expressed reticence over sharing a resource that they did not yet fully understand. Crucially, both were keen to be involved as mentors to others in the future, meaning they would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the resource and how to use it. From Dean and Darren's perspective, there was a feeling that they were "already doing Gameplan" on the basis that the idea for Gameplan was derived through a partnership with the Doncaster team. While this is partly true, the mentoring sessions provided an appropriate opportunity to renew and challenge this knowledge. Accordingly, for Dean and Darren, they considered Gameplan to be a series of tactics, as opposed to an overarching philosophy. There is some follow-up work necessary, therefore, to help demonstrate how Gameplan, not only complements existing practice but develops it further. Perhaps the most impactful insight was a recognition that they need to better monitor and evidence what they have been doing so that, if they were to leave the team/council, others would be able to replicate the work. Both Dean and Darren spoke about how much of what they do is "in my head". To facilitate greater collaboration, this knowledge and associated processes will need to be more accessible to others. Adopting a Gameplan approach will only ever be partly successful when only pockets of individuals adopt it. However, the collaborative mindset, emphasised throughout Gameplan, would recommend the necessity for entire organisations to buy into this philosophy. Therefore, going forward, it will be important for the Gameplan approach to be shared widely throughout Doncaster Council and its partners.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Summary Points:

For new users of Gameplan, it is recommended that the overall process is first understood followed by each tactic. This enables the user to explore each step and its tactics, allowing reflection and discussion of what already exists within their event planning processes.

Initial Gameplan knowledge transfer should focus on establishing the extent of alignment between Gameplan as a complete framework and the event planning process. This is important for identifying gaps and weaknesses where social impact activities could be targeted or strengthened.

Gameplan should not be thought of as a random pick and mix approach, but instead, as a flexible selective process that retains the important elements of planning, delivery and evaluation i.e. adherence to the Ready, Set, Go, Next strategic structure to maximise social impact.

Understanding a timeline of stakeholders' work and key milestones can open doors to new opportunities and leverage existing plans.

Curating a Gameplan journey enables event organisers to take ideas, examples and tools from the Gameplan guide and put a unique stamp on the approach.

It should be recognised that time and commitment are required to embed Gameplan learning within the event planning process. This may seem onerous but it should be considered as part of a process of continual improvement where learning from one event is applied to the next. Gameplan emphasises these good practices due to its inherent focus on embedding sustainability within every tactic. In this regard, Gameplan is optimised when combined with the development of an event portfolio approach that places social impact and community needs at the heart of big events.



Whilst implementing Gameplan does require a longer-term commitment to community engagement and achieving social impact objectives, combining Gameplan knowledge with an event portfolio approach leads to downstream efficiencies in social impact intervention delivery. This represents a return on investment for the implementation of a sustainable event-portfolio-led social impact strategy. For example, interventions such as Microgrants are now well-developed in Doncaster and can be rolled out quickly to new events or community activities using a tried and tested formula, saving time and resources. Just as an event portfolio leads to greater efficiencies in event delivery as experience increases, Gameplan can be used to maximise social impact whilst also generating efficiencies in social impact intervention delivery.

Repeated application of social impact interventions helps convert tacit knowledge into codified knowledge, bringing associated organisational learning benefits. This is because knowledge and resources become embedded in the event delivery processes of an organisation. Consequently, knowledge is retained collectively and communicated more broadly instead of being owned by key individuals who may leave or move roles within an organisation.

Positive engagement by community groups with Doncaster Council through well-designed social impact interventions leads to repeat engagement. For the RLWC, the Doncaster team were able to successfully re-engage with community groups that had taken part in previous events.

It was also found that community engagement transcends different event types and that this is strengthened by positive outcomes from engagement in previous events. It is therefore naive to think that only certain groups will be interested in certain event types. In this sense, engagement should focus on identifying how the group's interests can be aligned with the event and social impact objectives.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

The research identifies 3 key areas to develop support for the existing Gameplan approach.

### Resource and Tool Development

Our findings suggest that additional resources to support Gameplan will be needed and require development and these should be piloted (such as to support the understanding of “Kairos”). During the mentoring process with Doncaster Council, it was clear further supplementary materials were required to support knowledge transfer (for current and potential ‘new’ audiences). In order to distil the learning, suggestions of other resources and tools are advised; such as interactive resources for workshops, short summary videos of tactics and more template examples. Providing a variety of supporting materials will help inspire and support individuals, encouraging autonomy to make ideas their own. It is recommended that these tools are developed, piloted and evaluated using the ‘test and learn’ approach that has underpinned all the Gameplan research to date.

### Scaling Learning

Doncaster has key individuals within their team with a wealth of knowledge and experience of the Gameplan approach. However, an ongoing priority should be to better understand how this existing asset (of individuals’ knowledge and experience) can be scaled, both within Doncaster and their wider team (vertical scaling), and outside of Doncaster in areas where sporting events are planned (horizontal scaling). This work will also need to identify clear target audiences and be tailored through flexible processes. Mentoring support will likely require consultations, workshops, and the development of organisation-specific resources, to support the introduction and application of Gameplan.

### Dissemination Planning

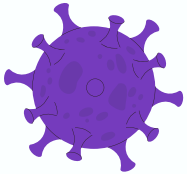
Gameplan is underpinned by years of research surrounding sporting events, testing ideas and making improvements based on learning. While Gameplan is a milestone step in condensing the learning into a practical resource, there is a need to share and raise awareness of the learning so far. Creating a dissemination plan will shape who to target, how they can be engaged and what they will find useful to know, so messages can be framed accordingly.

***Like the tactics within Gameplan, the suggested recommendations for applying Gameplan are inevitably interlinked. Further application and evaluation of Gameplan will provide an opportunity to build on existing insight and add value to the user experience of Gameplan.***



## LIMITATIONS

While the research provides useful insight into the application of Gameplan and mentoring process, it should be acknowledged there were challenges experienced.



### **Impacts of Covid-19.**

Due to the RLWC2021 being postponed to 2022, the RLWC activities had to be scaled back due to the impacts of Covid-19. If original plans had been delivered, the opportunity to utilise Gameplan may have identified new learning and challenges.



### **Awaiting design development of the Gameplan document.**

The Doncaster Council team raised concerns over the accessibility and language of Gameplan. However, the final version (with full design) was unavailable during the mentoring sessions as it was still in development. Therefore, having a graphic and tangible copy of Gameplan may have facilitated their learning and actions more readily.



### **Lack of Interventions with Local Rugby League Clubs**

The original plans of the Gameplan research were due to monitor and assess the co-productive approach of intervention design, delivery and sustainability of interventions led by the Rugby League clubs. The Clubs were offered grants to support interventions for social and community impact, however, Clubs did not uptake this opportunity within time. If this opportunity was engaged with, Gameplan tactics would have been utilised more in-depth.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gameplan is a result of many years of practice and research, gaining insight into the social impact of sporting events. There have been various individuals that have contributed to this piece of research.

Doncaster Council has shown an outstanding commitment to testing and learning new ideas and practices to further build on its asset-based community development approach. Dean Wiffen, Darren Simpson and Andy Maddox have provided a consistent anchor to develop Gameplan. Thank you.

Within the Leeds Beckett University team the multidisciplinary expertise of Lucy McCombes, Dr. Thomas Fletcher, Dr. Neil Ormerod, Jennifer Rawson, Professor Jim McKenna, and Professor Emma Wood have supported different ways of thinking surrounding social impact, physical activity behaviour and event planning.