

Lord Sebastian Coe: “Hosting 2022 Commonwealth Games is extraordinary opportunity for the West Midlands”

A British sporting icon says the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is an “extraordinary opportunity” for the whole region.

Lord Sebastian told business leaders from across Coventry and Warwickshire about the transformative impact a major national event can have, when he spoke at the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce’s BIG Business Thank You lunch.

Lord Coe, who is a multi-Olympic medallist and headed up the London Olympics in 2012, highlighted the major commercial and social benefits that the Games brought to London, and discussed how he believes the Commonwealth Games is set to bring a similar boost to Coventry, Warwickshire and the wider West Midlands.

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He said: "It's such an extraordinary opportunity to host an international event such as the Commonwealth Games, and not just for Birmingham but for the whole region."

“The potential legacy after the games is very exciting, but it will challenge a region in a way nothing has challenged it before.

“People should not underestimate the impact this area connecting with the Commonwealth Games will have.

“It will be a great vehicle for change and things will happen immediately afterwards – for example in London, the Olympic games were worth nearly £17 million in overseas trade in the year afterwards.

“Companies that had a successful involvement and partnership with the games were then able to go out and sell their services.

“I’m absolutely convinced this region will make the most of this opportunity that sits in front of you.”

Lord Coe lived in Warwickshire from the age of one, initially in Redditch, before moving to Alcester and then Stratford-upon-Avon.

He added: “This is an area that was quite important to me, my father ran a manufacturing business in the region. It was also where I achieved my first ever top three finish in a race, as part of a Warwickshire schools’ competition at the age of 10.”

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