

Shaun Dawson – Chief Executive, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority



Shaun was born in Newham and grew up in east London. He has a degree in ecology and a master's in recreational management – setting him perfectly up for his later work at the Authority.

A keen sportsman, Shaun represented Great Britain at karate between the ages of 18 and 25, winning a Bronze medal at the European Championships in 1983. He trained at local facilities but came to learn that, when operating at the highest level, the nearest fit-for-purpose facilities (a long way from the high quality facilities national level athletes would experience today) were far away. Shaun was a regular canoeist on the River Lea and played cricket to club level. He worked at Hackney and Waltham Forest Councils on sport and recreation briefs before joining Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) in 1997.

As Chief Executive of LVRPA, Shaun had been involved in London's bid for the 2005 World Athletics Championships and in the earliest iterations of what became London's 2012 Olympic bid.

Indeed, Shaun is the only person who has been integral to every stage of London's Olympic story: from the bid – he was one of the British delegation who travelled to Singapore for the announcement of the winning city – through design and build, the Games themselves and creating a long term sustainable legacy for three of the six Olympic venues.

From those early days he has led an organisation planned legacy in from the start and in doing so guaranteed the future of three world class London 2012 legacy venues; Lee Valley White Water Centre, Lee Valley VeloPark and Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre.

12 years on from the London Olympics, more than 14 million people have visited the three Lee Valley venues which have also hosted 35 major international competitions and deliver economic, social and sporting benefits every single day to local communities, visitors and athletes from across the region and national and international sports stars.

The centres run a range of visitor-centred programmes: sessions for community, club and school groups, for people trying sport for the first time and activities for people with disabilities – all balanced with commercial activity.

The three venues have joined a series of award-winning sports venues and open spaces in the 26 mile long, 10,000 acre Lee Valley Regional Park which runs from east London through to Hertfordshire and Essex and is a major sport and leisure destination, attracting nine million visits a year.

Shaun was a member of the UK Government's Rio 2016 Advisory Panel and spent time in Rio advising the City, State and Federal Governments on sporting legacy. He provided advice to Tokyo 2020 on venue design and legacy planning and visited Tokyo to advise City officials, Government Ministers and the various 2020 agencies.