

## World Cup Puts UK Venue-led Regeneration in the Spotlight

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The 2026 FIFA World Cup has put the value of sport back in the spotlight at a time when UK clubs and venue operators are looking more closely at how stadiums and arenas can support local economies outside matchdays.

The World Cup, now under way across Canada, Mexico and the United States, is the largest FIFA World Cup to date, with 48 teams and 104 matches.

FIFA and the World Trade Organisation have estimated that the tournament could help drive up to \$40.9bn in global GDP, deliver \$8.28bn in social benefits and support nearly 824,000 full-time equivalent jobs globally.

In the UK, that wider economic value is increasingly being reflected in the way major venues are planned and used. Food and drink, hotels, public space, workspace and community facilities are being considered alongside stadiums and arenas, rather than separately from them.

Recent Barclays analysis of the 2024/25 Premier League and Barclays Women's Super League seasons estimated that top-flight football matchdays generated £2.3bn of consumer spending in local economies. Spending within 1km of stadiums rose by an average of 4.1% on matchdays compared with non-matchdays.

Ian York, a Planning Director at [Lichfields](#), said: "A stadium or arena already brings a significant number of people into one place. The question is how much of that activity benefits the surrounding area.

"Supporters and eventgoers often have time before and after a match or concert. If there are places

nearby to eat, drink, meet or stay, more of that spending can remain close to the venue.

“That is why clubs, investors and operators are looking more carefully at the area around the stadium or arena, as well as the venue itself.”

Tottenham Hotspur Stadium is one of the clearest UK examples, with the venue hosting NFL, concerts, rugby, boxing and other major events alongside football.

Wembley Park shows how a major stadium and arena can sit at the centre of a wider mixed-use neighbourhood, with homes, shops, restaurants, leisure uses and public space.

Fulham Pier at Craven Cottage has been designed to work as both a matchday stand and a riverside destination on non-matchdays, while Co-op Live in Manchester has reported more than £1.3bn in total turnover and around £785m in GVA to the UK economy since construction began in 2021.

The same approach is not limited to the largest clubs or biggest cities. Smaller stadium schemes, arena-led projects, waterfront destinations, training ground campuses and developments linked to sport, music and culture can also help bring people into an area outside major event days.

Ian added: “The more successful schemes tend to be those that start with how people are likely to use the place.

“That includes the match or event itself, but also what happens either side of it and whether there is a reason to come back when there is nothing on.

“It matters commercially, but it is also important for the local area. If the offer around the stadium or arena is right, nearby businesses have a much better chance of benefiting from the footfall that is already being generated.”

For further information,

visit <https://lichfields.uk/blog/2026/june/22/beyond-matchday-the-rise-of-the-uk-sports-and-entertainment-district>