



Report to: Cabinet, 17th January 2017

Report of: Councillor Jabba Riaz, Cabinet Member for Clean, Green and Leisure Services

Subject: WORCESTER 10K AND HALF MARATHON 2017-2021

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That Cabinet note the continued success of the of the Worcester 10k event;**
- 1.2 That Cabinet agree to support the event for a further five years from 2017, to include the addition of a half marathon and wheelchair event; and**
- 1.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Deputy Director, Cleaner and Greener Service Delivery, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Clean, Green and Leisure Services, for the completion of appropriate contracts or agreements with relevant event organisers and/or promoters.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The Worcester 10k is a mass participation closed road running event that showcases Worcester's city centre and the Riverside Park, attracting competitors and spectators from the local area and further afield. It also promotes participation in healthy activity, and participation by women in particular through attracting female elite runners and celebrities.
- 2.2 The event was first staged in 2014 by DS Media Ltd, an events company headed by former Olympian and broadcaster Steve Cram, which has a record of delivering similar events in the north east of England. The Council has supported the event through a financial sponsorship agreement which has been funded through New Homes Bonus allocation. A total sum of up to £145k was approved by Cabinet for the first three years of the event in 2014 , 2015 and 2016.
- 2.3 The first running of the event attracted over 1900 competitors and received widespread publicity before and after the race, supported by the participation of legendary athlete Paula Radcliffe and the success of local runner and winner Jenny Nesbitt.
- 2.4 Promotion of the event has focussed on the attractive location that Worcester provides, the exceptionally flat course (which facilitates fast times), and the participation of high profile athletes and celebrities. The 2016 event was well supported by local media, with BBC Hereford and Worcester contributing both intensive coverage and well known presenter and running enthusiast Elliot Webb. Other notable participants have included Olympic medallist Jo Pavey and BBC news reader and international triathlete Louise Minchin.
- 2.5 Participation in the event has grown to over 3100, an increase of over 60% on 2014.

2.6 In September 2016 Cabinet asked officers to enter into negotiations to secure the event for future years. These negotiations have not yet been concluded but in principle agreement has been reached as detailed at section 3 of this report.

3. Preferred Option

- 3.1 Officers are close to agreeing a 5 year agreement that would see financial support required from the Council start at a significantly lower level than previous years and taper over the period of the contract. Full details of the proposed financial commitment are in Appendix A to this report and subject to negotiation.
- 3.2 Officers will continue to support DS Media in securing additional commercial sponsorship which will, in addition to further growth in participant numbers, move to a position where financial support from the Council is not required.
- 3.3 The run bike run event has been popular with those participating but is somewhat of a niche event and the relatively small number of participants (c200) has meant that it is not financially viable to continue this element
- 3.4 For 2017 it is proposed that the event will consist of a 10k and a half marathon, both utilising the established route through the City centre and riverside. Timings of the start will ensure that the mass finishes of both events coincide in two lanes of runners passing under the Croft Road railway arches. As in previous years, children's races will be held before the senior events.
- 3.5 The half marathon event has the potential to attract many more participants, as runners will travel from further afield for a half marathon than for a 10k and some will include overnight stays. This will provide the potential to utilise the full capacity that Worcester can provide for such an event.
- 3.6 The 10k route will be fully wheelchair accessible and discussions are underway with a high profile wheelchair athlete regarding their participation in 2017.
- 3.7 Other features of future events will include a greater focus on drawing competitors and spectators into the city centre, potentially utilising areas of the Crowngate estate and Angel Place.
- 3.8 Whilst not likely to be achievable in 2017, discussions have included the potential for events on the Saturday (the main event will be on a Sunday morning) to provide a weekend long offer to attract visitors. Angel Place, Cathedral Square and other pedestrianised areas of the City Centre provide ideal locations for pop up events which could include short course races, exercise equipment, and healthy eating mobile catering.
- 3.9 Subject to the approval of Cabinet, officers will conclude negotiations and enter into an agreement as outlined in this report. In order to optimise the promotion and marketing of the event, an official launch date of 31st January is currently proposed, so negotiations will be concluded by this point.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Without financial support from the Council the event is not financially viable at this stage in its development and therefore if funding is not allocated the event will be discontinued. It is therefore recommended that financial support is provided.

4.2 Allocating a larger sum (up to £50k p.a.) to the event would secure the current size of the event without the need for external sponsorship to be found. Given the direction of travel in terms of the size and profile of the event it is considered that sponsorship will be available and therefore allocating a larger sum than that proposed is not recommended.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

Funding is available from within the Council's New Homes Bonus allocation for City Plan Priorities.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

The content of this report relates to a contract that has not yet been concluded and therefore the figures in Appendix A are considered confidential until the contract has been concluded.

5.3 Risk Implications

The principal risk to the Council would be reputational should the event not be a success. The track record of DS Media with regard to the Worcester 10k and other events nationally mitigates this risk. Further mitigation will be provided by the terms of the contract.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The proposals within this report directly support the City Plan Theme 3 - A healthy and Active City

- Worcester achieving a growing reputation for sporting excellence - building on the excellent reputation it already has for disabled sports
- Using our green space effectively, including our parks
- Using the City's major sporting facilities and its grassroots leisure centres and sports grounds in an inclusive, creative and dynamic way

They also support wider City Plan objectives of attracting visitors and supporting the local economy including those set out in the 5 year Tourism Strategy.

5.5 Equality Implications

A flat and accessible route for the 10k ensures that the event is attractive to wheelchair users.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

No significant implications arise from the content of this report.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

No significant implications arise from the content of this report.

Ward(s): All Wards
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Background Papers: None