

**Cabinet**

**6 February 2019**

**Vélo of the North**



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## **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services**

**Councillor Ossie Johnson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture, Leisure and Rural Issues**

### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To inform Cabinet of an approach from CSM Sport & Entertainment to develop a mass participation cycling event in County Durham.
- 2 To seek approval to work with CSM and partner organisations to jointly deliver the event subject to all partner organisations reaching agreement on the safe and effective delivery of the event.

### **Executive summary**

- 3 The Council has been approached by CSM to host a large-scale major cycling event in the late summer of 2019. The event which will be branded Vélo of the North is a mass participation closed road cycle ride.
- 4 CSM aspire to attract up to 15,000 participants and bring in over 40,000 visitors to the county over the weekend of the event.
- 5 The event will allow for varied abilities by offering routes of 100 miles and 50 miles with the same start and finish points. There will also be a community family event which will be used to encourage residents to become more active through cycling.
- 6 Whilst an agreement will need to be reached with regards to the detail of the route, and this detail will impact upon the DCC financial contribution towards the event, a committed budget of £250,000 will be required before further work is undertaken.

- 7 Furthermore if the event is to have any chance of achieving the levels of participation it aspires to it will require a launch before the end of February 2019.

### **Recommendations**

- 8 Whilst there is still significant work to be undertaken in relation to developing a route that is safe and showcases the County :
- 9 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) Approve that the Corporate Director of Resources allocates a budget of £250,000 from general contingencies to deliver Vélo of the North.
  - (b) And that any required staffing resource is allocated to assist in the development and delivery of the event.

## **Background**

- 10 Festivals and events have an important role to play in delivering the corporate approach to culture-led regeneration and the service vision, as they help place and position County Durham positively.
- 11 The festivals and events programme also supports the delivery of key service outcomes by raising skills and aspirations, engaging more people in culture and sport, attracting investment and extending the engagement in community life and volunteering.
- 12 The DCC festivals and events programme has three elements, each helping to ensure that a balanced programme exists, whilst also exploring new opportunities. The three elements are as follows:
  - (a) The annual programme
  - (b) The investment and development programme
  - (c) Signature events
- 13 This proposal is to deliver a new signature event. This element enables the authority to deliver very large scale events, which normally have high risks and costs, and so need to demonstrate significant beneficial impact for County Durham.
- 14 CSM are a global operator in the sports and entertainment market delivering a number of brands including CSM Active, the section of the company which deliver the Vélo events.
- 15 The Vélo brand is a major new cycling concept built around a core proposition of 100 miles, closed road cycle rides, attracting 15,000 riders and supported by a diverse programme of events and activities all designed to involve the wider community.
- 16 To date, two Vélo events have been launched in the UK in Vélo Birmingham & Midlands and Vélo South (Event cancelled due to adverse weather conditions and rescheduled for 2019). The ambition is to roll out the Vélo concept across the UK hence the invitation for Durham County Council to become the official host and to support the creation of a new, North of England event that will feature a similar audience to the Birmingham & Midlands event of 15,624 entrants' of which over 12,000 completed.

## **Vélo of the North**

- 17 The initial proposal is to host the inaugural event on Sunday September 1st 2019. A unique feature of Vélo North will be the creation of a shorter 50-mile event designed to appeal to the less experienced cyclist

who hopefully will embrace the shorter distance and view it as the perfect 'stepping stone' to ultimately taking on the full distance in a later year.

- 18 The Council will secure a number of free places which will be allocated to groups and/or individuals that have been introduced to cycling via the various initiatives and programmes currently delivered across County Durham.
- 19 In order to encourage local residents already engaged in cycling as an activity a resident discount will be offered. CSM have proposed entry fees at
  - (a) 100 Mile: £75 general entry cost. £65 resident
  - (b) 50 Mile: £40 general entry cost. £30 resident
- 20 Plans are also being developed to host a community event either in advance of, or on the event weekend itself which would be fun, free and family focused to engage with the community and provide them with an opportunity to get involved in cycling.
- 21 Whilst reaching agreement on the route for the Vélo of the North will be significant in the success of the event, it is proposed that the event will either start and finish or pass through the two major settlements of Durham City and Bishop Auckland.
- 22 CSM estimate that the 15,000 participants would bring on average an additional 1.7 people to the event. Developing a total visitor audience of 40,000 of which 80% are anticipated to travel from outside the local area.
- 23 As the event also requires registration the day before the event it drives up the number of nights visitors stay which increases visitor spend in the County.

## **Main implications**

### *Financial*

- 24 CSM have indicated that similar events have cost local authorities in the region of £200,000 to stage. It would be prudent to set aside a maximum budget of £250,000 as routes which will pass through the two major towns and cities are likely to require higher levels of traffic management.
- 25 If approval is given to proceed with the development of this event the funding will be resourced from the general contingencies funds as with

other signature events. Other in-kind funding will need to be provided by the relevant service areas.

### *Community benefit*

- 26 The route will pass through a number of communities across County Durham and this will provide the opportunity to work with the various AAP's and community groups to promote cycling and physical activity along with health benefits to a wide range of residents. The event will also act as a focal point for promoting health messages.

### *Timeline*

- 27 If an event is to be hosted in 2019 there is a need to launch the event by the end of February. This will require a substantial work commitment from both parties in January and February in order to agree routes with all stakeholders and negotiate any contracts required via the procurement process.

### **Conclusion**

- 28 The staging of this event provides an opportunity to showcase the County to a new audience and demonstrates once again that the County and the Council have the capability and ambition to host large-scale major events.
- 29 The event, through a variety of mediums, has the ability to reach both the cycling population and the wider community and in doing so delivers significant socio-economic benefit to the region. The event aligns to that of Durham County Council's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan by creating opportunities to get people moving and encouraging an active healthy lifestyle.

### **Background papers**

- None

### **Other useful documents**

- None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The majority of the Council's involvement will relate to the exercise of its highways management powers to accommodate the event. Any procurement implications are dealt with in the paragraph at the end of this Appendix.

### **Finance**

The report sets out the need for a revenue investment which will be taken from the general contingencies fund.

### **Consultation**

Developing this event will require extensive consultation with affected communities and elected members.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Not from this report.

### **Human Rights**

Not from this report.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not from this report.

### **Staffing**

Not from this report.

### **Accommodation**

Not from this report.

### **Risk**

The delivery of any high level event along with significant road closures will require robust risk management.

### **Procurement**

If the Council is required to make payments to Vélo under the contract it will be necessary to be satisfied that their engagement is justified under procurement regulations. It is likely that this would be treated as a concession falling under the Concession Regulations 2016. It would be well below the

threshold and the likelihood is that direct award can be justified on the basis no other economic operator can deliver the Vélo event.