

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 1 March 2012

Lead Officers: Head of Highways & Infrastructure/Head of Planning, Regeneration & Regulatory Services

Report Author: Principal Regeneration and Investment Strategy Officer

Title: Etape Cymru Cycling Event

1. What is the report about?

To scrutinise the arrangements and the communication strategy for the 2011 event, the benefits realised by local communities/losses suffered by local businesses as a result of the 2011 event

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To consider a review by the Principal Regeneration & Investment Strategy Officer which provides details of the arrangements for the 2011 Etape Cymru event and the impact that it had on the local community, and asks for the Committee's observations to assist in improving planning and communication strategies for any similar future event.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee considers the report and provides observations on the improved procedures which are to be put in place for major closed road events such as Etape Cymru, including their communication strategies, to ensure that local communities realise maximum benefits and suffer the least amount of disruption/losses from such events.

4. Report details.

Denbighshire County Council was approached by K-Extreme, a cycling event organiser, and Wrexham County Borough Council, in relation to a 'closed road' cycling event taking place on Sunday 9 October 2011. The route started in Wrexham and 65 miles of its route ran through Denbighshire, showcasing the county's superb cycling country. The target audience for the event was a relatively untapped market. Using Welsh Government's methodology for assessing major events, the economic impact of this event on the Wrexham/Llangollen area was estimated to be worth £47,540 with just over 1000 participants, which is reasonable for an inaugural event.

Indirectly, further economic impact was gained, and may continue to be gained, from the regional and national media coverage generated by this event.

The Safety Advisory Group (joint Emergency Services/Highways/Police) is happy to endorse another event of the same nature taking same or similar route providing issues relating to traffic management and marshalling are addressed, as per the de-brief. An event management plan should be produced by the new organisers highlighting the plan for consultation, communications and traffic management with regular liaison with Wrexham and Denbighshire County Council officers and the wider Safety Advisory Group throughout.

Looking ahead - a request has been made to Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council from new organisers for Etape Cymru 2012 to be held in the same area on Sunday 9 September. Organisers have had one meeting with Highways, Regeneration and Cycling Centre of Excellence Project Manager, to review the 2011 event and they have taken on board the recommendations of the Safety Advisory Group. The first draft of a communications plan for Etape Cymru 2012 is attached (appendix 1) for observations.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Denbighshire is a quality destination for cycling, which as yet is fairly undiscovered, and has a great opportunity to benefit economically from the growth seen in the activity tourism sector. Regeneration is one of the council's corporate priorities.

Significant parts of Denbighshire have recently been designated the North Wales Cycling Centre of Excellence, with the aim of *creating an area acknowledged nationally as an outstanding all year round destination for road and off-road cycling and outdoor activity for all in outstanding and contrasting scenery.*

The Cycling Centre of Excellence project is part of Visit Wales' vision to create exemplar tourism areas through a significant investment programme, funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Denbighshire County Council is the lead partner for the North Wales Cycling Centre of Excellence project, which is an innovative public/private sector partnership across Conwy and Denbighshire.

Denbighshire County Council is also committed to the principles of Destination Management, driven by the Tourism Strategy for North Wales, in which its Action Plan includes the development of major events and outdoor attractions and activity.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There was no financial contribution to the event from Denbighshire County Council.

Staff time provided by Highways, Regeneration and Cycling Centre of Excellence project to support the event planning by the organisers. Note: the DCC led Cycling Centre of Excellence project budget (European and other sources) funded costs of information letters to residents and businesses, just as it has supported other recent cycling events in the same way.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

Consultation relating to the road closures were carried out by the event organiser directly, with guidance from DCC officers:

- Letters were sent out to households and businesses in the affected areas on 3 May 2011 and responses were duly received by K-Extreme, and subsequently addressed.
- Public Notices placed in the Wrexham Leader and Denbighshire Free Press
- Letters sent out by the organiser on 9 May to town and community councils and county councillors along the route – some by e-mail, some by post
- Press releases issued to local media
- Llantysilio Community clerk made contact on 18 July to say they had not received any consultation opportunity. The letter was re-sent, and the time period was then extended to allow for comments to be put forward. As a consequence of the extended consultation period a meeting was held between the organiser and Llantysilio CC Chair and clerk, Cllr Rhys Hughes and a local business; also in attendance were two DCC officers.
- Within DCC – there was consultation and engagement with the following departments: Highways, Public Transport, Public Protection, Health & Safety, Countryside, Cycling Centre of Excellence Project, Regeneration & Tourism, Chief Executive, Corporate Communications Legal team and the Lead Members for Regeneration and Highways.
- North Wales Police and other emergency services have been fully involved, and a joint Wrexham/Denbighshire Safety Advisory Group has met to oversee traffic, transport and pedestrian management procedures for this event
- Event organiser met with businesses in advance to try to engage them in the event. Local businesses along the stretches of road which were

being temporarily closed, were also advertised on the event web-site and in a local press advertisement.

As a result of feedback from consultation:

- several options for the route have been considered, with alternative routes being put in place where necessary.
- discussions with the Passenger Transport team resulted in slight diversion of the routes for buses, which ensures no disruption to the timetable
- The clerk of Llantysilio Community Council called a meeting with the event organiser at which concerns of local businesses and residents were addressed. Assurances were given that warning signs about the road closure times would be put out about a fortnight before the event and letters reminding residents and businesses of the road closures, along with indication of times would also be sent about a fortnight prior to the event.
- Carrog Community Hall actively engaged with the event by offering toilet and refreshment facilities and encouraging spectators. Very positive feedback has been received since the event.
- Llandegla and Bryneglwys residents used the event to act as a fundraiser for the 2013 National Eisteddfod by selling refreshments to spectators
- The Ponderosa Café, on the Horseshoe Pass was used as a location for the media launch, and whilst we understand that parts of the business was negatively impacted on the day, the café appeared to be busier than they would have otherwise been on a wet Sunday in October.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The Council made no financial contribution to this event.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Reputation risk, from dissatisfied residents and businesses that were affected by temporary road closures on 9 October 2011. The risk will be managed by reminding residents and businesses about the finalised road closure plans to allow alternative travel plans to be made if necessary.

10. Power to make the Decision

Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (for the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of a local authority area)

Article 6 of the Council's Constitution

Contact Officer:

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Communication timeline for Etape Cymru 2012

February

- Participate to finalise route

March

- Confirm route and map (timings included)
- Participate to contact all parishes and community councils, end of month to advise on event and closures (assisted by Wrexham and Denbighshire with correct contact list)
- Participate to contact all businesses and churches affected by road closures

April

- Participate to follow up with community councils as required
- Notices to be placed in local press to advise people of event taking place (assisted by council contacts/press department)
- Draft residents letter to be sent to all houses on route (TBC)
- Participate to place information posters at key locations on the route

May

- Participate to follow up with all businesses and residents who have concerns
- Participate to contact all agencies who may be affected by closures (carers, doctors on call, nursing homes etc)

June

- Ongoing communication with relevant parties

July

- Ongoing communication with relevant parties

August

- Advanced warning signage to be placed around route by JT&M (2 weeks prior to event date)

September

- Advanced warning signage as above
- Cone placed on all driveways on route with notice to advise residents of closure (night of 8th Sept) TBC
- Diversion plans and signage put into place (morning of event)
- 9th Sept - Closures enforced (7am onwards)