

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 19 February, 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Councillor Huw Jones, Cabinet Lead Member for Tourism, Youth and Leisure
Jamie Groves,
Head of Communication, Marketing and & Leisure

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Title: Wiggle Etape Cymru 2013 cycling event

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The Etape Cymru closed road cycling event scheduled to take place in the county in September 2013.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 The Communities Scrutiny Committee (17 January) gave a qualified endorsement to the event to take place subject to some concerns being addressed and that Cabinet makes a decision on the proposed Road Closure Orders.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That Cabinet note the arrangement put in place to address the community scrutiny concerns, and that Cabinet agree the road closure and endorse the event taking place

4. Report details.

4.1 Etape Cymru is a major closed road cycling challenge that begins at Bangor on Dee in Wrexham County. The 92 mile race starts and finishes at the location, but soon enters Denbighshire, taking in stunning scenery around the Dee Valley, the Horseshoe Pass and the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.2 Organisers of the event have been delighted with the success of the event to date and were eager to return to the region for the third year in a row in 2013.

- 4.3 Event organisers say the region benefited economically from staging the event in 2012. The total estimated participant spend in the region over the weekend was £129,254.40.
- 4.4 Total estimated organiser spend in the region to deliver the event £115,000; 92% are inspired to return to the North Wales region for business, work or pleasure; 71% would return to Llandegla Mountain Biking Centre in Denbighshire; 59% stayed overnight in the region (27% 2-5 nights) and 43% bought friends/family along for support
- 4.5 The event itself is managed by Human Race, who are experienced in running several events of this nature across the UK. Whilst the Council is not directly involved in the planning, event organisers have stressed that the event would be unlikely to go ahead without the support of both Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils.
- 4.6 The main role for Denbighshire is around facilitating discussions around highways and safety issues.
- 4.7 The Council is aware that there have been some concerns around certain aspects of the race and organisers are addressing those issues. A summary can be found in section 9 of this report.
- 4.8 Denbighshire County Council has continued with its regular communication with Human Race, the organisers of Etape Cymru, and Wrexham County Borough Council, in relation to the 2012 'closed road' cycling event which was held on Sunday 9 September 2012 and plans are now underway for the 2013 event to be held on Sunday 8 September.
- 4.9 Organisers have met with the Safety Advisory Group (Police, Ambulance, Emergency services and Wrexham / Denbighshire Highways and Regeneration officers) and local Members to review 2012 and they have taken on board the Group's recommendations and to avoid such problems in 2013.

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

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.

- 5.3 Denbighshire County Council is also committed to the Tourism Strategy for North Wales, in which its Action Plan includes the development of major events and outdoor attractions and activities. .
- 5.4 The Chief Executive, in his paper, ' An Excellent Council, Closer to the Community' has also highlighted the need to market Denbighshire as a destination and key to this will inevitably involve investment in major events that will attract residents and visitors to different parts of the county.

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

- 6.1 No financial contribution has been made to the event from Denbighshire County Council.
- 6.2 Staff time provided by Highways, Regeneration and Cycling Centre of Excellence project to support the event planning by the organisers.
- 6.3 Minimal cost associated with celebratory event on the Friday and Saturday will be absorbed from existing revenue budgets.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

- 7.1 Consultation and engagement is already taking place with the following departments: Highways, Public Transport, Health & Safety, Countryside, Cycling Centre of Excellence Project, Regeneration & Tourism, Chief Executive, Corporate Communications the Lead Member for Tourism, Leisure & Youth and the relevant ward Members.
- 7.2 North Wales Police and other emergency services have been fully involved, and a joint Wrexham/Denbighshire Safety Advisory Group has been established again to oversee traffic, transport and pedestrian management procedures for this event.
- 7.3 The matter has also been discussed by Communities Scrutiny Committee. Whilst the committee is generally supportive of the event taking place, they have raised a number of concerns. These issues are addressed in section 9.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 8.1 The Council is not currently considering any financial contribution to this event.

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

- 9.1 A number of risks/ concerns have been identified by Communities Scrutiny. These are listed below, together with some remedial plans that are being put in place in order to mitigate the risks going forward.

9.2 Communications with residents/ landowners living along the route. Organisers of the event have learnt from the previous year's experiences and they have a clear marketing and communications plan in place. They have already been in discussions with local Members. This work will be complemented by a Communications Plan that will be drafted and implemented by Denbighshire's Corporate Communications and Marketing Team. They will use a wide range of communications methods to inform people of the route and arrangements, including the media, social media (Twitter and Facebook), features in County Voice, the corporate website, direct mail, community newsletters and advertisements in the local newspapers covering the area.

9.3 Public liability: Event organisers have public liability insurance – a statement and copy will be provided by the event organisers, as well as medical service insurance and participators insurance. Event organisers took full responsibility for the safety of the event in 2012.

9.4 Results of any risk assessments undertaken with respect of public liability matters: Event organisers carry out a risk assessment and it is the duty of the Safety Advisory Group to ensure that this is done. The Highways department also ensures this is done.

9.5 Inadequate marshalling: This is an issue that the Safety Advisory Group is taking forward. North Wales Police have insisted that they have more involvement in this year's event. Event organisers have also promised to ensure better marshalling and will also ensure that all marshals are briefed well in advance about their roles and responsibilities

9.6 Validity of figures on economic benefit: The Council is confident that the figures it has for the economic benefit of the 2012 event are valid. (It should be noted that the economic impact measured is for the wider area covered by the event, and not only for Denbighshire)

The Council has been in discussion with event organisers about the need to arrange a supplementary event on the Saturday at Llangollen Pavilion, to coincide with the registration process. This event will be arranged and led by Denbighshire County Council's Leisure Services and supported by representatives of the local community, with the aim of gathering local support for the race and for the potential of economic benefit from the event.

Steps are being taken by the organisers, working with Highways and Regeneration officers to address a few concerns raised by businesses.

- 9.7 Start the event earlier** – The event already has an early start (7am) and organisers believe it would be impractical to start any earlier. The Safety Advisory Group is looking at this issue, but consideration needs to be given to police and emergency services presence.
- 9.8 Member involvement at the Safety Advisory Group** – having taken advice from the Safety Advisory Group members, it has been suggested that it would be more appropriate for members to be involved in the Event Planning Group – with one Member representative from Denbighshire and one from Wrexham.
- 9.9 Opportunity to market Denbighshire as a destination:** Promotional materials to promote and market Denbighshire as a destination appeared on Etape Cymru’s website last year. This will be repeated this year with information about hotels, tourist information centres and local eateries included.

Information packs will be provided at the registration point and the Council will be utilising every opportunity possible to promote the event at relevant shows, festivals and activities. The Council will also be using its own website and publications to market the event and Denbighshire as a destination.

The event noted in 9.6 will be to ensure that Denbighshire has adequate marketing opportunities.

10. Power to make the Decision

- 10.1 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)