

Cabinet

1 November 2016

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor Abdul Khan

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director of Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

All Wards

**Title:**

Coventry Half Marathon 2017

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**Is this a key decision?**

No.

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**Executive Summary:**

Coventry's Half Marathon is an established 13.1 mile annual road race that starts and finishes in Coventry city centre. In 2016, the 'Decathlon Coventry's Half Marathon' attracted 4,212 runners and the associated Schools Challenge event attracted 1,033 children as participants. In 2016, the event secured over £80,000 in charitable fundraising.

Since 2014, the Coventry Half Marathon has been delivered by GO2 (or Achieve Events (UK) trading as GO2). In recent weeks, GO2 have advised the Council that they are not looking to extend their contract for delivering the event. In order to secure the event next year for the benefit of runners, local businesses and charities, approval is now sought for a contingency budget of £50,000 to support an alternative model of delivery for the 2017 event.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested:

- (1) To approve a £50,000 contingency budget to support delivery of the Coventry Half Marathon in 2017.
- (2) To approve the procurement of the necessary services for the delivery of the Coventry Half Marathon in 2017

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Other useful documents:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title:**

Coventry Half Marathon 2017

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Coventry's Half Marathon is an established, 13.1 mile annual road race that starts and finishes in Coventry city centre. In 2016, the 'Decathlon Coventry's Half Marathon' attracted a record 5,220 entrants and 4,212 runners on the day. In 2016, the event secured over £80,000 in charitable fundraising. A city centre Schools Challenge event was also held alongside the Half Marathon race. The Schools Challenge was a city centre race, which represented the culmination of a 12-week running programme for local schoolchildren. The Schools Challenge event attracted 1,033 children and 210 teachers, with a total of 1,243 participants on the day.
- 1.2 Following three successful years as organiser of Coventry's Half Marathon, Achieve Events (UK) – trading as GO2 – have recently advised the Council that they will not be seeking an extension to their current agreement, which ended with this year's event.
- 1.3 Subsequent to the announcement of GO2's withdrawal from the event, a number of local stakeholders have indicated their support for its continuation. Council officers have commenced work to look at alternative options for delivering the event both for 2017 and beyond. The proposed investment recommended in this paper would provide a contingency budget to secure financial certainty around the delivery of a 2017 event.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposals**

#### **Option 1 - Cease to fund the event.**

- 2.1 The Council's annual subsidy to the Coventry Half Marathon, funded through Public Health Grant, has supported and secured its ongoing delivery. The ending of the current contract with GO2 provides a break-point in contractual arrangements and commitments. If Council funding for the event is now ceased, the revenue subsidy could be secured as an ongoing saving or re-profiled to support other priorities. However, without Council support, it is most likely that the Coventry Half Marathon event would cease. Local charities and suppliers would lose charitable funding and revenue currently generated by the event. Runners could still participate in a range of alternative Half Marathon events outside of the city, but there would be no city centre mass participation running event in Coventry's events calendar.

#### **Option 2 – Confirm a contingency budget for delivery in 2017 and examine delivery solutions for 2018 onwards (Recommended).**

- 2.2 Tendering for delivery of the Coventry Half Marathon through an external supplier has, across the past five events, delivered financial certainty of annual costs to the Council and delivered progressive savings in these costs. Based on previous tender processes, however, it is anticipated that re-tendering for management of the event would not, at this point in time, be likely to secure a Coventry Half Marathon for Spring 2017.
- 2.3 The creation of a £50,000 contingency budget for delivery of the Coventry Half Marathon in 2017 will provide the financial security for the Council to procure the necessary services to deliver a 2017 event, without requiring a single provider to underwrite the event. This option will enable earlier commitment to a suitable Spring 2017 date for the event and enable the prompt procurement of individual service contracts. This will provide continuity for the event (ensuring a Spring 2017 event to build on those delivered in 2014, 2015 and 2016) and

provide certainty of the race's place in the annual calendar for runners, volunteers and supporters. It will further demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the event for wider sponsors and charity partners.

- 2.4 Securing the Coventry Half Marathon 2017 through the above model will also enable more detailed discussions with local partners to continue over future delivery of the event for 2018 and beyond.

### **3.0 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Annual runner surveys conducted by the race organisers following each Coventry Half Marathon show high levels of satisfaction for the event, across a wide range of measures. Public ratings on sites such as Runners World have further consistently rated the event highly, with the growth in runner numbers accompanied by continuing high levels of satisfaction. In 2016, runner numbers grew by 22.2% to record levels for the event.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 If the recommendation is approved, work to formally register a date for the event and open runner registration for a 2017 Coventry Half Marathon would progress immediately. Key services and supplies would be procured in the following weeks, with delivery of the event planned for Spring 2017.
- 4.2 Work to secure delivery arrangements for the Coventry Half Marathon 2018 would progress concurrently with delivery of the 2017 event.

### **5. Comments from Executive Director of Finance**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

The total cost for the Coventry 2018 Half Marathon will not be known until all associated costs and income streams are taken into account. It is estimated that £100,000 will be the maximum cost of holding the event in 2017. In addition to the existing £50,000 budget currently allocated, a further contingency of £50,000 will be allocated from reserves that are currently un-earmarked. Any resources from this contingency that are not utilised will be returned to reserves.

The overall level of un-earmarked reserves, and the extent to which they can support budgeted expenditure, will be considered in detail as part of the City Council's budget setting process for 2017/18. This will include ensuring that an appropriate level of un-earmarked reserve is retained in the Council's working capital account.

#### **5.2 Legal implications**

Local authorities owe a fiduciary duty to council tax payers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The approval of the recommendation for the contingency budget would fall within the ambit of the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011.

The procurement of any services and supplies required to deliver the event in 2017 will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Contract and Financial procedure rules set out in the Council's Constitution.

## 6. Other implications

### 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council Plan?

6.1.1 The Coventry Sports Strategy 2014-2024 aims to “develop a more active, inclusive and vibrant Coventry through positive experiences in sport”. The Strategy is structured around eight Vision Aims and 37 Strategic Objectives. The Coventry Half Marathon contributes to a number of these Vision Aims, including:

- VA 1 To inspire more people within the city to take up and regularly take part in sport
- VA 3 To inspire more people to volunteer, coach and be facilitators of sport
- VA 5 To attract high profile sporting events to the city and to celebrate sporting achievement
- VA 8 For sport to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit

6.1.2 The Coventry Half Marathon further contributes to a number of Council Plan objectives, including:

- ***Citizens living longer, healthier, independent lives*** – sporting events and training programmes leading up to them can play a vital role in motivating people to regularly participate in physical activity. Previous runner surveys indicate participation in the race is for many runners, associated with fitness goals and for some, is linked to healthy lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking or becoming more active.
- ***Making Coventry an attractive and enjoyable place to be*** – High quality, mass participation sports, cultural and community events have been linked to positive impacts on civic confidence and pride. Previous runner surveys have indicated many runners have an improved perception of Coventry based on their experiences participating in the event, and runners have consistently rated highly the support received from the Coventry public and race volunteers.
- ***Ensuring that children and young people achieve and make a positive contribution*** – The Schools Challenge, and previously, Mercia Mile, have provided children and young people with an opportunity to participate in a mass participation sporting event, alongside the Half Marathon race. In 2016, 1,033 children ran through the city centre as part of the Schools Challenge – as a culmination of a 12-week running programme introduced through their schools.
- ***Encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city*** – In 2016, over 5,400 people ran through Coventry city centre as part of the Coventry Half Marathon and the Schools Challenge. The event has become a popular feature in the city's annual events calendar, generating widespread public support.
- ***Developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods*** – The Coventry Half Marathon brings runners together from across the city, many running in support of local charities or with clubs, colleagues and/or friendship groups. The runners are supported by residents across the 13.1 mile route, with many supporters also gathering in the city centre for the race start and finish.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

- 6.2.1 Delivery of the Coventry Sports Strategy has been regularly reviewed via Coventry City Council Scrutiny Boards in the first two years of its implementation.
- 6.2.2 With regards to delivery of the Coventry Half Marathon, the proposed contingency fund provides financial certainty for the event.
- 6.2.3. Comprehensive risk assessments will be carried out regarding race management, the race courses and event village. A Safety Advisory Group (SAG) will agree race event safety operations and the a comprehensive Event Operations Manual will be presented to the City's Event Safety Group approximately a month in advance of the race taking place.

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

- 6.3.1 There are no HR implications for the organisation as these proposals will not directly affect the employment of City Council staff. However, Council staff across the Sports, Culture, Destination and Business Relationships Service will take a lead-role in procuring the necessary services to deliver the Coventry Half Marathon 2017.

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

- 6.4.1 Following consultation and analysis of demographic, health, sport and leisure data and survey responses for the city, an Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA) was produced for the Coventry Sports Strategy (see Coventry Sports Strategy 2014-2024 Cabinet Report, Coventry City Council, August 2014).
- 6.4.2 With regards to the current proposals, demographic, health, sport and leisure data and public survey responses highlighted the following considerations within the ECA concerning protected groups under equalities legislation:

### *Vulnerable Communities (disadvantage/poverty)*

- a) The pattern of participation in the city mirrors the city's deprivation patterns, with lower participation rates to be found in the north and east of the city and the higher participation rates to be found to the west and parts of the south.

### *Disability*

- a) 4.5% of the total population of Coventry are economically inactive due to a long term illness or disability.
- b) The proportion of disabled people taking part in sport in the city is less than both national and regional averages.

### *Age*

- a) There is a correlation between age and inactivity rates which are the highest amongst those aged 55+ (67.9%) and lowest for young adults aged 16-25 (43.3%)
- b) Cycling, swimming and athletics are characterised by an even spread throughout the age cohorts up to 64 years
- c) Young people often struggle to afford to participate in sport and active recreation as youth unemployment remains high and students and young earners are often under financial pressure.

### *Gender*

- a) 50.3% of the local population are female.
- b) In Coventry, female inactivity (61.3%) is significantly higher than the equivalent male rate.

- c) In Coventry, the proportion of women regularly taking part in sport (15.2%) is less than half that of men (31.3%).

6.4.3 Access to the Coventry Half Marathon will continue to be supported through a pricing structure that provides discount for Passport to Leisure and Learning card holders. Course design and dedicated wheelchair start sequences will further support the participation of wheelchair athletes in both the Coventry Half Marathon and city mile events. Marketing will continue to promote the event to a diverse range of potential runners.

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

6.5.1 Mass participation running events create an increase in localised litter during the event, particularly around drinks stations and meeting points. An event-specific cleansing programme will be implemented to clear the course and event areas. Dedicated event signage will further be promptly removed post-event.

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

6.6.1 Confirmation of a Coventry Half Marathon 2017 should positively impact on local running clubs, charities and businesses. Council officers will seek to engage the clubs both in relation to the 2017 event and planning for future events, and registered runners will be encouraged to train regularly in the build up to the event. Local charities will further be supported to partner with the event, and a number of local businesses and suppliers will benefit from business opportunities generated through the running of the event.

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