monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT:	Velothon 2017 - 2020
MEETING:	County Council
Date:	21st September 2017

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To update Members on the 2017 Velothon event and seek the Council's commitment to supporting the Velothon event in 2018 by enabling the route to travel through Monmouthshire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Council agrees to support the Velothon on July 8th 2018 and support Run4Wales and officers in organisational planning and delivery.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 As members will be aware the Welsh Government has entered into a 5 year contract with the Velothon event organisers to deliver an annual cycling event that enables mass participation on closed roads as well as both youth and pro races. The decision making process by all the host authorities is required early to ensure planning and marketing of event is in place. This view was echoed at the Monmouthshire Event Safety Advisory Group on 7th September, notably from Gwent Police Force Planning.

3.2 There will be a significant change for the 2018 event as there will not be any professional race. Instead, 2018 event, will concentrate solely on a mass participation race. The 140km and 110km routes will be similar to the 2017 event and the intention is to introduce a further 50km route. The event timings for the race will be starting between the window of 7-9am from Cardiff depending on the participation levels.

3.3 The 2017 event took place on the 9th July following on from the May 2016 event. Whilst Ironman still had overall responsibility for the event, Run4Wales were the local delivery partners and it was noted that improvements in decisions and planning were made. As a result resident communications were substantially improved and they were able to quickly respond to issues as and when they arose.

3.4 The 2017 event was delivered under a new governance structure implemented by Welsh Government which included a Steering Group made up of representatives of the host Local Authorities, blue light services and governing bodies together with the event organisers. Supporting this Steering Group were a number of groups set up to consider specific operational strands of activity, .i.e. start & finish, route, risk, and communications. This structure was effective and enabled issues to be considered and determined at the local level. A similar structure was replicated within Monmouthshire through the creation of an MCC Velothon Steering Group to enable effective planning at a local scale.

3.5 The Internal MCC Steering Group has undertaken de-briefs following the 2017 July event to capture what went well and what needs to be improved in future years. This document is included in Appendix 1. It is clear that the organisation of this year's event improved in a number of key areas, most noticeably around resident communication and road closure timings, however as you would expect with an event of this scale there are is still areas for improvement and it will be the responsibility of the event organisers to implement the recommendations made in the debrief report to achieve this.

3.6 The main areas of concern from this year's event and going into 2018 are:

- The impact of the road closures on specific communities, particularly Llanfoist and Usk and ensuring road closures are kept to a minimum.
- Ensuring Monmouthshire maximises opportunities for tourism and businesses.
- Develop and grow community participation and engagement – build on the exceptional work around Usk with the bike off theme.
- Litter left by participants needs addressing.
- Ensuring vulnerable people and communities who need services are adequately provided and planned for.

3.7 The cost of the event for Monmouthshire is mostly around the commitment of officer time. Whilst there are some small costs involved in additional sweeping and clearing of around 2k it is the time that is the main cost. These costs have been estimated by officers at 18k for time spent at meetings, planning and on the event day delivery. It is likely a similar cost will be incurred in 2018. These costs have not been attributed to the event but are absorbed by existing service budgets.

3.8 The fantastic results of the engagement events as driven by partnership work with MCC and Usk Town Council and partners were a huge success. The work has been held up as an example of brilliant practice and other local authorities are being encouraged to try to do similar work. The "Bike Off" engagement with the local school, clubs and societies in decorating bikes have become almost a destination for cyclist to view and feel welcomed all year around.

3.9   Issues highlighted in the 2016 debrief specifically provided by Monmouthshire were listened to and addressed especially around key infrastructure and getting roads reopened quickly. The addition of a rolling road closure for the pro race in the afternoon was a significant improvement. The removal of the pro race in the future will significantly reduce road closures across the county as all roads will reopen by early afternoon. It is felt that there have been improvements year on year.

3.10   **3.10**   There were comments, letters and emails around aspects of the Velothon 2017 which involved unhappy businesses who lost trade, residents who felt they were being forced to stay in and could not go out and also some views around litter after the event. Negative press from the Abergavenny Chronicle also did not help in promoting the event. There was only one formal complaint received by MCC for the whole of Velothon 2017. This involved concern around dangerous signage in one particular rural area.

3.11   Run4Wales have now formally accepted they are the lead organisation for the 2018 event and have already commenced work on plans and are now seeking confirmation from all the host authorities of their continued support. The date being published for 2018 is 8th July and initial entries for the race are already underway. We understand that the other authorities have confirmed their commitment with Monmouthshire being the remaining Council to do so. Early engagement by this Council will enable us to work with Run4Wales to review and build upon the lessons from this year's event.

3.12   The proposal for the 2018 event is to not have a professional race and to concentrate on mass participation via the Sportif. This will reduce the road closures. The opportunity to encourage more cycling, encourage new people into the sport and ultimately improve wellbeing is important for some of the Public Service Board outcomes.

3.13   Monmouthshire are in discussion with Run4Wales about the possibility of a shorter route that could start in Usk which would ensure there is significant benefit to local business. However this may also mean more disruption to local residents and a greater input of staff time. These discussions are ongoing.

4.   **REASONS:**

4.1   Run4Wales demonstrated their ability to improve on the event management of this year's Velothon event. Learning the lessons from 2016, they implemented a well-trained and resourced call centre which significantly reduced the calls and complaints received by the council. Resident communications and information was produced earlier than in 2016. Various mailshots of maps and information were produced and sent to all affected communities. However the distribution of event plans within the agreed framework was not adhered to and plans such as the Traffic Management Plan, Risk Assessment etc. were

received late or not at all. The coordination of the needs of essential service providers was led by the MCC Steering Group in conjunction with Run4Wales and was successfully delivered on the day, minimising the impact on users.

4.2   As with any event in its formative years there are still areas which need to be improved to ensure that the credibility and confidence in the event and its organisers continues. Early discussions with Run4Wales have identified the following strands of work to offset the main concerns expressed this year:

- Road closures – Run4Wales are reviewing the highways closure times for Monmouthshire especially with the pro race not happening in 2018.
- Stewards – there is an acknowledgement that stewarding arrangements needs a refresh and more local knowledge and training needs to be available.
- Community participation – the organisers would like to develop and expand the excellent work in Usk and produce a community engagement plan to ensure better relationships with those communities most affected to encourage community participation / events on the day of the Velothon.
- Toilet infrastructure – the event organisers acknowledge that there needs to be an increase in the number of toilet facilities provided on the route to prevent participants taking comfort breaks in appropriate places.
- Litter – Run4Wales are currently reviewing the food that is provided at feed stations to minimise or indeed eliminate packaging and therefore litter on the route. Information will also be sent to participants to discourage them from discarding gel wrappers etc during the event and the negative impacts on the communities if they do.
- Business engagement – early discussions with businesses to support them in maximising the commercial opportunities around the event, particularly around Twyn Square in Usk especially after 2017 Bike Off success.
- Direct contact between Run4Wales and businesses who have voiced their continued frustration this year.
- A better relationship needs to be developed between the Velothon, the Abergavenny Chronicle and some frustrated residents.
- Distribution of event plans within agreed frameworks.

4.3   Given the magnitude and scale of this event it is inevitable that communities will be disrupted, early engagement by the organisers will enable potential issues to be highlighted much earlier in the process and where possible mitigated. As a partnership we are keen to promote the opportunities that the Velothon can bring by providing opportunities for community events as well as commercial opportunities to promote Monmouthshire as a tourism and cycling destination.

4.4   Some of the key evaluation statistics from the 2016 event suggest there are benefits leading up to and after the event. The post event survey 2016 shows that 48% of respondents chose to visit and train around the regions before the race; 16% visited Cardiff, 16% Monmouth, 10% visited Caerphilly, 3% visited

Newport and 3% visited Torfaen. Extrapolating to the 11,906 registrations, suggests 914 visitors for Cardiff, 914 visitors for Monmouth, 571 for Caerphilly, 171 for Newport and 171 visitors for Torfaen. Eating, drinking, walking and sightseeing were the most popular pursuits, with Velothon participants spending higher than the average Visit Britain tourist; Velothon riders spend £57 on accommodation per night, £61.45 on food & drink and £29.95 on leisure/entertainment activities. In addition, based on their race-day experiences, 97% surveyed said they would visit Wales again. MCC have asked event organisers to ensure evaluation of 2017 event is available for members as soon as possible as this has been requested by economy and development select.

4.5 Our MCC communication and engagement update in Appendix 2 shows some of the excellent work carried out in this area. It also demonstrates the reach of the event on social media and the positive and negative press coverage.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Any costs incurred in hosting the event will be met from existing service budgets. These costs for 2017 have been calculated at 20k.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Ensure community and engagement plan from Run4Wales is in place and essential services are considered through our own internal teams.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTEES:

All Cabinet Members
SLT
Emergency Planning Manager
Head of Public Protection
Communication and Engagement manager

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – MCC Internal debrief paper
Appendix 2 - MCC Communication and engagement update
Appendix 3 - WG & Run4Wales Velothon debrief & Action plan

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS

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