

SUBJECT: Velothon 2017 - 2020

MEETING: Council

DATE: 28th July 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

To update Members on the 2016 Velothon event and seek the Council's commitment to supporting the Velothon event from 2017 – 2020 by enabling the route to travel through Monmouthshire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1** That Council agrees to support the 2017 – 2020 Velothon subject to an annual post event review

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 in 2015 resulted in delays to the announcement of the date and route, potentially impacting on participant numbers and more importantly the time available to work with effected communities and businesses to improve communications and where possible impact. As a result host authorities are being asked to confirm their commitment to the event for the remaining 3 years of the contract to enable the development of effective partnerships with Councils and their communities.
- 3.2** The 2016 event took place on the 22nd May following an amended route designed to minimise the impact of the event on Usk town and its community. A significant improvement on this year's event was the appointment of Run4Wales as the local delivery partner which enabled decisions and impact to be assessed and undertaken at a local level. As a result communications were substantially improved and they were able to quickly respond to issues as they arose.
- 3.3** A new governance structure was implemented by WAG to oversee the delivery of the 2016 event 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 strands of activity, e.g. communications, emergency planning etc.

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 a Working Group and Emergency Planning Group to enable effective planning at a local scale.

- 3.4 The Internal Working Group and the Steering Group have undertaken de-briefs following Mays 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 significantly improved in a number of key areas, most noticeably around communication and planning, however as you would expect with an event of this scale there is still areas for improvement and it will be the responsibility of the event organisers and officers to work together to achieve this.
- 3.5 The main areas of concern from this year's event are:
- the impact of the road closures on specific communities, particularly Llanfoist and Usk
 - Lack of toilet facilities
 - Litter left by participants
 - How to improve the benefits for businesses within Monmouthshire
 - How to develop community participation and engagement
- 3.5 Run4Wales have already commenced work on the 2017 event and are now seeking confirmation from all the host authorities of their continued support. 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.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 Run4Wales demonstrated their ability to significantly improve on the event management of this year's Velothon event. Learning the lessons from 2015 they implemented a well-trained and resourced call centre which significantly reduced the calls and complaints received by the council. Velothon officers pro-actively engaged with communities attending community / town council and public meetings. Two newsletters were produced and sent to all affected communities, albeit that we are aware that these newsletters did not reach all the intended households. The co-ordination of the needs of essential service providers was led by our Emergency Planning team 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 Llanfoist and Usk to enable the roads to be partially opened for a longer period of time between the mass participation and pro cyclist races. These times would be published within the local community. They would also review the opportunities to shorten the closure times following the pro-race.
- Community participation – the organisers would like to develop 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. Additional infrastructure is already being planned for next year’s event.
- 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.

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.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Any costs incurred in hosting the event will be met from existing service budgets.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTEES:

All Cabinet Members
Member Seminar

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

10. AUTHORS:

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Community Delivery

Ian Saunders Head of Tourism, Leisure & Culture

11. CONTACT DETAILS

debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

iansaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk

VELOTHON WALES 2016

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL RETURN

9TH JUNE 2016

DE-BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to ensure that lessons from the Velothon Wales 2016 are fully captured and that actions are implemented to help improve organisational planning and event management, please list below the key learning points your organisation would wish to see taken forward in all the categories below in terms of:

- What went well and needs to be seen as best practice for the future
- What did not go so well and needs to be avoided and done differently
- What are the key lessons learnt and what recommendations need to be implemented

Governance Arrangements, Planning Structures and Engagement with Stakeholders

1.	<p>What went well and needs to be seen as best practice for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working relationship with Nigel Russell (Run 4 Wales) – he responded to concerns quickly and was largely to resolve queries. • The willingness of Velothon organisers to speak to local community groups was appreciated. • Event Control at 101 House worked well – there was an incident where the race was temporarily halted – but the governance structures worked and the incident was dealt with.
2.	<p>What did not go so well and needs to be avoided and done differently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in announcing the date and consequently obtaining member approval gave less ‘lead in’ time to work with communities and plan promotional activities. • Pre-agreed layout at Event Control was not adhered to. Local authority reps moved into a separate room. Wifi and laptop connection via port was not good. Representative was not given a dedicated landline or mobile phone. • Lack of regular scheduled briefings during the day at Event Control due to Run 4 Wales reps being busy. • Agendas / minutes from the Velothon Subgroups were often not circulated until the day before the next meeting – hence it was difficult to keep up with the issues. In addition – some decisions made at these meetings were changed – but not always communicated. • Paperwork for meetings was often sent to the wrong people. Venues for some meetings were incorrect. • Event plans were not issued within the timeframes given. The Stewarding Plan was never received. Last minute changes to event plans should highlight what the changes made are – to assist in picking up points. (Use track changes or amendment page at front of document). • Replies from Run 4 Wales to queries raised were not always prompt or forthcoming.
3.	<p>What are the key lessons learnt and what recommendations need to be implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promises made by Velothon organisers should be formally documented in a written document. • It is important to spread the benefit of the Velothon particularly for those communities most significantly impacted – there is disproportionate impact on rural communities. Can the Velothon offer grants for communities to have parties, have meals in the local pub, support the local church etc. • Opportunity for businesses to have a presence in Cardiff at the expo if desired at a subsidised or nil rate? • Consider introducing a competition for residents to win free entry – e.g.10 spaces per county and the authority could then follow their preparations and have feedback on the event itself. • The Velothon could promote local charities that are relevant to the local community. • Consider using local produce at feeding stations to assist in promoting Monmouthshire. • Consider running a shorter route to attract more cyclists although the benefits have to be weighed against the increase in road closures. • Track changes in documents / highlight what amendments have been made to Velothon documents. • Early distribution of minutes following meetings with actions highlighted.

Risk Management, Responsibilities and Accountability

1.	What went well and needs to be seen as best practice for the future?
2.	What did not go so well and needs to be avoided and done differently? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of confidence in the event organisers due to last year's poor performance meant that communities and elected members were instantly suspicious of this year's event.• Disproportionate gain to Cardiff as Monmouthshire residents take all the pain from the extensive road closures but none of the financial benefits.• Pro-race did not contain high profile cyclists and there was no female pro-race.• Lack of toilets for competitors – more facilities need to be provided and those urinating in public need to be fined/prosecuted.• No safety talk for volunteers.• No live tv coverage of the race.• Cost/time spent by MCC staff to assist in facilitating the event.• Some businesses commented that their business was negatively impacted.
3.	What are the key lessons learnt and what recommendations need to be implemented? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Velothon organisers were to promote cycling in Monmouthshire as part of their publicity campaign for the event – this was promised but not carried through. This needs to be a consideration for next year.

Traffic Management Planning


1.	<p>What went well and needs to be seen as best practice for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance Warning Signs were in place 14 days before the event – no spelling mistakes or vandalism reported this year.• Traffic related queries were answered quickly by Run 4 Wales.• Traffic plans were an improvement on last year.• Road closure timings were released earlier this year.• Velothon website, including the route details, was comprehensive.• During the actual event, the management of certain Emergency Local Access Points (ELAP'S) was both effective and efficient (however this was not always the case and appeared to be dependent on the individual stewards).• Car Windscreen signs were a good idea to assist carers through the road closures.
2.	<p>What did not go so well and needs to be avoided and done differently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 'closure' of Llanfoist for the day created significant community unrest including threats of a Judicial Review.• The Traffic/Route group seemed unclear on what to do in an emergency if the route needed to be altered. This was only resolved in the last 2 weeks before the event – more pre-planning was needed.• Some stewards had no local knowledge despite this being raised as a recommendation after last year's event.• Frustration from local residents that the open/managed access times for the ELAP's points were not publicised. It would have allowed residents to plan their day around the opening times.• The biggest single issue was the length of road closures – the last cyclist went through Usk at 2.20pm – the road was not re-opened until 3pm. The road closure timings stated 3.30pm.• The A4042 closure times were confusing and not clarified until quite a late stage – meaning the information on the second residents leaflet was incorrect. Residents living in Goytre/ Penperlleni were not aware the A4042 was open – there were 'Road Closed' signs from Cwmbran onwards which only added to the confusion.• There did not seem to be consistency across the agencies involved in assisting in an agreed way information that the Velothon required for ensuring crossing the route / along the route could be addressed.• Organisers need to be aware that domiciliary care rotas are not normally completed until the week before they are delivered – so final requests for access cannot be expected until the rotas are completed.• There was a large amount of litter on the Tumble.
3.	<p>What are the key lessons learnt and what recommendations need to be implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No date set for next year's event – no consistency in the planning and keeping the date a constant within the cycling calendar. Parameters have changed since the initial discussions. The date needs to be agreed ASAP so that authorities can begin promotion events.• Look at ways in which the Velothon can be undertaken in a more sympathetic way for local residents, for e.g. controlled crossing points.• More consideration given to the route if the event is held next year – to consider its effect on residents, especially in Llanfoist. This could be achieved by wider representation on the WG route group with a view to consider consequences of route identified and not just 'processes' required to accommodate RTOs.• Earlier decision on A4042 closure times and explaining when and what sections of the roads are still open so people can still travel if they need to. Less confusing signage along the unaffected parts of the A4042.• Roads and managed access points could be re-opened between the sportive and the elite race and opened immediately after the last cyclist had gone through – to reduce the length of the closures for residents.• 'Green Zones' could be implemented – to highlight areas where cyclists can drop their rubbish along the route.

- Stewards could be given 'handouts/leaflets' to give to motorists / residents detailing alternative routes on the day.
- More information on roles and responsibilities of Velothon staff and who has the power to do what, e.g. stop the race. This should also apply to stewards so they understand their role.
- Car windscreen signs – a good idea but should be implemented earlier next year.
- Clarity / consistency at an early stage on how Velothon Wales wish to receive ELAPs / Access information.
- Road signage lettering on some signs was too small for information to be absorbed.

Communications and Publicity

1.	<p><u>What went well and needs to be seen as best practice for the future?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communications with residents – two Public Information leaflets as opposed to one last year. Residents and businesses were better informed and more aware of the event. • A marked reduction in the number of complaints received by the Council – those that were received were resolved quickly. • Velothon hotline reduced demand on MCC resources. • Velothon team took the lead on community engagement and attempted to directly tackle any challenges that came up e.g. in Llanfoist.
2.	<p><u>What did not go so well and needs to be avoided and done differently?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision of cycling and the prestige of the elite race was lost in the negativity of residents and complaints/concerns over the event. • Not enough consideration given to the fact that Monmouthshire is a rural county – farmhouses may not be on the route (yet the farmers' fields are) - therefore do not receive resident comms. • Not all residents received both or any information leaflets and the second leaflet was not issued within the 6 week deadline. • Leaflets were often tucked within 'junk mail' e.g. pizza leaflets and therefore discarded. • Some postcodes did not receive the first leaflet due to an administrative error. Some that crossed local authority postcode boundaries received the incorrect leaflet. • The second leaflet contained incorrect information on the closure of the A4042. • Information leaflet did not contain much detail on the route – with emphasis on residents being directed to the Velothon website. • The explanations around the road closures re: M4 and Magor were confusing.
3.	<p><u>What are the key lessons learnt and what recommendations need to be implemented?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the message given out to residents is accurate. • Need to get resident communications out on time and earlier if possible. Particularly important for businesses impacted and those providing support for households e.g. carers. • Ensure that communications to residents are even clearer next time – highlighting not only what roads are closed but explicitly explaining what roads are open so people can still travel if they need to.

Any other comments



This year's event was a definite improvement on last year – however there are still significant improvements that can be made to ensure that residents are not adversely affected by the closed road event.