

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Equalities)

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism

## **Rugby League World Cup 2021**

### **Summary**

1. This report asks the Executive to agree the council's financial contribution to York's bid to be a host city for the Rugby League World Cup 2021.
2. The report sets out the opportunity for York to host matches as part of the 2021 finals and the benefits for the city if we are selected:
  - Involvement for residents in what will be a world class event and an exciting festival of sport
  - A legacy of increased engagement with professional Rugby League, a sport that has strong popular roots in York
  - High profile coverage for the city with every match to be televised by the BBC. (There were over 19 m viewers world-wide when the tournament was last staged in England in 2013 and the audience for the sport has grown significantly since)
  - The Community Stadium and the city developing a real profile in international women's sport
  - A legacy of increased participation, especially in the women's game, which is growing in York - we have a team in women's super league which is now in its second season
  - The opportunity to deliver wider public health messages and to encourage participation in active lifestyles
  - The creation of significant volunteering opportunities bringing together students and residents
  - Having the involvement of the players in school and community settings. For example, previous tournaments have seen the French team delivering French lessons in schools and the Tongans or Samoans demonstrating the Haka

## **Recommendation**

3. The Executive is asked to:
  - agree the level of financial contribution, set out in paragraph 9, of £200k
  - agree to the use of the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool funding allocated to support cultural and sporting events in the city to fund the first £108k
  - agree to fund the remaining £92k from the revenue contingency budget in 2018/19
  - authorise officers to enter into a Hosting Agreement based on the terms of the bid as set out in paragraph 21

## **Background**

4. The sixteenth staging of the Rugby League World Cup will take place in England in October - November 2021. The men's, women's and wheelchair World Cups will be staged together.
5. Cities were invited to bid, by 31 July 2018, to host matches, training facilities and team base camps. Up to 14 venues will be chosen, with decisions being announced by the Rugby League World Cup (RLWC2021) in January 2019.

## **York's Bid**

6. York is currently a "Candidate City" within the bidding process. Our bid was submitted by a consortium consisting of the council as lead partner, together with the University of York, York St John University, GLL, York City Knights and Make it York. The bid also has the active support of the York Head of Communications Group. The Principal Hotel has agreed in principle to be the accommodation provider for the hosted teams.
7. York's bid was shaped through informal discussion with the Rugby Football League World Cup in which it was established that York has the potential to host women's matches (the stadium will not be large enough to host the men's matches) and that the following elements would represent the optimum package for the city:
  - Hosting one pool and one semi-final of the Women's World Cup comprising 6 pool games and 1 semi-final = 7 games in total
  - Hosting 4 women's teams & 1 men's team in the city

8. We have been able to put together a strong bid that promises to:
  - Get all residents involved in what will be an exciting festival of sport, one that has strong roots in the city
  - Boost our programmes to get more people active and tackle childhood obesity
  - Provide volunteering opportunities that will bring together residents and students
  - Grow rugby league in York, especially the women's game through high quality sports development activity
  - Help to establish York as a champion of women's sport
  - Showcase York and the Community Stadium internationally
  - Bring visitors to the city at a relatively quiet time of the year

### **The Council's Contribution**

9. The city's bid includes a financial contribution from the council of £200k made up of:
  - £150k in cash
  - A budget of £50k to be retained by CYC to use to market the event, dress the city, promote participation initiatives, get wards and local people involved
10. The cash contribution will be payable in instalments. The first £100k, due in instalments in 19/20 and 20/21, could be met from the Leeds City Region Business Rate Pool funding allocated by Budget Council in February 2017 for "supporting cultural and sporting events".
11. A budget source will need to be identified for the remaining £50k instalment, due in 21/22, together with the £50k marketing budget which will be required at that time. It is proposed at this stage that the balance of funds, after use of Leeds City Region Business Rate Pool funding, comes from the revenue contingency for 18/19.
12. The two universities are both making their facilities available free of charge for training camps.
13. The Stadium Management Company will provide the stadium free of hire fee.

## Options

14. The Executive has the option to commit to the financial contribution proposed in the bid or to withdraw the city from the bidding process.

## Analysis

15. This event offers the opportunity for the Community Stadium and the city to develop a real profile in international women's sport adding to a growing profile in areas such as cycling. This profile will also assist in increasing women's participation in sport and active lifestyles and in promoting public health messages more generally. Above all, it offers the opportunity for residents to come together in an exciting festival.

## Implications

16. **Financial:** The overall cost implication of the recommendations in this report is £200k, split between the financial years 2019/20 (£50k), 2020/21 (£50k) and 2021/22 (£100k).
17. An amount of £156k from the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool was allocated in the 2017/18 budget process to support Cultural and Sporting Events. To date, £48k has been committed / spent supporting the development of a Cultural Strategy for the City, and the Leeds City Region sport and culture development work, leaving £108k unallocated. The first £108k of the expenditure detailed in paragraph 10 could therefore be funded from this balance.
18. This then leaves a further £92k to fund. . The finance and performance report elsewhere on this agenda identifies that funding is available within the revenue contingency.
19. **Equalities:** York's bid focuses strongly on targeting identified areas of inequality for example in participation in sport and active lifestyles. It will also use the connection with rugby league to engage interest in university entry amongst young people who might not otherwise consider it. The initial integrated impact assessment shows a number of potential positive impacts together with the need, if York's bid progresses, to draw up detailed actions plans to ensure that all sections of York's communities are able to benefit. In support of this, the £50k budget will, in part, be used to enable and promote access to activities.
20. There are no other implications arising from the report.

## Next Steps

21. If the Executive approves the Council's contribution the next stage will be for the Council sign the RLWC2021's Hosting Agreement based on the terms of the bid. RLWC2021 will then make their final assessments of bids with candidates to be notified on or before 25 January 2019. At this point RLWC2021 will countersign and return Hosting Agreements to successful host partners.

## Council Plan 2015-19

22. The proposals in this paper support the Council Plan aim of *A Prosperous City for All* where:
  - Local businesses can thrive
  - Efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities
  - Everyone who lives in the city can enjoy its unique heritage and range of activities.
  - Visitors, businesses and residents are impressed with the quality of our city

## Risk Management

23. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations, which could in turn damage the Council's image and reputation. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at less than 16.

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<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date:</b>	13.11.18.
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		
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