

Division(s):

CABINET– 23 APRIL 2019

OVO ENERGY WOMEN'S TOUR

Report by Area Manager OFRS, Project Delivery Manager

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet are RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **support Oxfordshire being a host venue for the OVO Energy Women's cycle tour in 2019, 2020 and 2021.**
 - (b) **agree the principle of an equal share of costs between the county, the four districts and the city council.**
 - (c) **allocate a budget of £30,000 to pay the county council's share of the costs in 2019.**
 - (d) **recommend the council agree to fund the council's share of the hosting fee for years two and three through the annual budget setting process (2020 and 2021).**
 - (e) **agree that sponsorship, regardless of which partner attracts it, will be used to reduce the hosting costs on an equal basis.**

Executive Summary

2. Oxfordshire has secured an agreement with the event organisers of the OVO Energy Women's Tour. The OVO Energy Women's Tour is the UK's biggest and most prestigious bike race. A founder member of the UCI Women's World Tour, the race attracts the world's top cyclists – including Olympic and World Champions to complete on British roads over five days each June. All councils across Oxfordshire have agreed, in principle, at an Oxfordshire Leaders meeting on 4 March for Oxfordshire to be a host venue over the next three years. This will include hosting the overall start and finish in 2020 and 2021 and hosting Stage 3 of the event on 12 June 2019. This is being led by Oxfordshire County Council who will be in contract with SweetSpot, the event organiser.
3. The OVO Energy Women's Tour presents an exciting opportunity to showcase the county, and to maximise the potential economic value. SweetSpot estimate the economic benefits of the 2018 OVO Energy Women's' Cycle Tour to be £7.7 million. The OVO Energy Women's Tour will also bring energy and focus to engage with local communities specifically around the health and wellbeing agenda. The delivery of this event will contribute

significantly towards the key objectives and priorities in the council's corporate plan.

Introduction

4. Launched in 2014, the five-day event has been won by the likes of home favourite Lizzie Deignan and Marianne Vos, and is regarded by riders, teams and officials alike as one of, if not the leading professional women's stage race on the calendar.
5. Its origins trace back to 2010 when SweetSpot (the company behind the OVO Energy Women's Tour) organised their first women's cycling race, the Horizon Fitness Grand Prix in Stoke-on-Trent. What began as a supporting event for the men's [Tour Series – Britain's leading televised cycle race series](#) – grew into the Johnson Health Tech Grand Prix Series 12 months later. This quickly became an established and key part of the women's racing scene in Britain, thanks to television coverage on ITV4 in the UK and around the world. The OVO Energy Women's Tour is organised by the company behind the men's [OVO Energy Tour of Britain](#), which has been an ever-present on the UCI (Union Cyclist Internationale) calendar since 2004. At this event's national launch in March 2013, SweetSpot's now Chairman Hugh Roberts first announced the company's intentions to create a standalone stage race for the world's top female cyclists in Britain – the first event of its kind.

<https://www.womenstour.co.uk/>

Report Details

6. The tour achieves good media coverage at a local, national and international level. The 2018 tour recorded 1,240,000 viewers not including Catch Up, On Demand or ITV online viewers. There is extensive media coverage including national newspapers and cycling magazines. The teams have their own social media channels further increasing the reach of the tour.
7. Tourism is an important element of employment and economic prosperity for Oxfordshire. The media coverage and the attendance of people on the day of the event will have short, medium and long-term benefits for tourism in Oxfordshire. This will support businesses and employment.

This supports the Council's vision of "Thriving economy".

8. This event attracts large crowds and we will be looking at routes to include our parishes and larger market towns. We will be co-ordinating and encouraging community involvement including schools, town and parish councils, charities and cycling clubs. The aim will be to use the event to have a positive impact on community cohesion. Involvement in this event will create networks and relationships across the county that will support future partnership working.

This supports our vision of "Thriving communities".

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9. The Youth Sports Trust says there is a direct correlation between girls' future life chances and the amount of physical activity they do in their younger years. A 2018 report from the Office of National Statistics showed that boys aged between 8 and 15 years old spend almost twice as much time doing sports activities as girls of the same age. We will be looking to work with public health, schools and youth groups to maximise the legacy of this three-year deal with a focus on young women and girls.

This supports the Council's vision of "Thriving communities .

10. The economic benefits of hosting the women's tour are analysed by SweetSpot for each stage. Their analysis shows clear and impressive gross value-added figures. The financial benefits are delivered through overnight stays, spending in the local areas and attraction of visitors from outside of the area. The direct economic benefit will then be further enhanced by showcasing Oxfordshire and by attracting new visitors and increasing tourism.

The financial analysis of a stage from 2018 is included as Appendix 1.

This supports the Council's vision of "Thriving economy".

11. The cost of hosting the stage in 2019 is £175,000. This includes some additional costs for the start and finish locations as well as traffic management costs for the whole stage. This annual cost will be shared equally between the six local authorities.
12. The delivery of the tour over the three years will be in partnership between the county council, the four district authorities, the city council and SweetSpot.
13. As part of the package there are sponsorship packages available. There are three-year, two-year and one-year packages offering advertising, VIP access and staff involvement within the race structure.
14. Any sponsorship agreement will be between the county and the sponsor and will be formalised through a Heads of Agreement. All sponsorship achieved will be used to reduce the hosting costs evenly across the county, city and district partners.
15. The current approach to sponsorship is to utilise existing contacts across the delivery team and direct approaches to business networks in the locations that the tour is passing through. In addition, we will be approaching individual local businesses and the town and parish councils. This will be supported by the involvement of the economic development staff within the district and city councils to look at all available sponsorship opportunities.

Risks

16. An event specific Safety Advisory Group will be established to consider the detailed planning and risk mitigation measures. There are currently no identified high risks for this event.

Risk	Affected	Mitigation/Control	Risk outcome	Risk rating	RAG
Requirement to repair the route	OCC	Race provider will assess the route and identify minimum requirements with OCC highways	Financial cost to OCC	Medium – likely maximum cost £10k	Amber
Weather disrupting event	All authorities, cyclists, spectators, organiser	Event running in June but limited control	Less visitors	Low	Green
Ineffective Logistical arrangements	All authorities, cyclists, spectators, organiser	SweetSpot are an experienced sports event company with a very good safety record	Unsuccessful event	Low	Green
Ineffective safety planning	Cyclist & spectators	SweetSpot will provide a “technical manual” and a Safety Advisory Group will be established	Injury to cyclist/spectator	Low	Green

The above risks will be managed as part of the service managing this event, if there any concerns these will be escalated to the Risk Register.

Consultation

17. In order to identify the start and finish locations for the event consultation has been undertaken with the following key stakeholders:
- Henley Town Council
 - Blenheim Palace management team

Financial and Staff Implications

18. Oxfordshire County Council's share of the event for 2019 will be £30,000. For the subsequent years funding requirements will be included within the overall budget setting process. However, sponsorship will be sought for the event, which, if secured, would offset the costs.
19. The contract between OCC and SweetSpot is in the process of being finalised.

Equalities Implications

20. An equalities impact assessment will be completed during the planning stages to consider potential implications for people with protected characteristics. This would include consideration regarding accessibility during any road or pavement closures and engaging with a range of community groups who may benefit from being involved with the event and any ancillary activities.

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Annex: 2018 Economic Impact Report – Round 3

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