

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Council

Date of Committee 13 December 2005

Report Title Bringing the Benefits of London 2012 Olympics to Warwickshire

Summary It is proposed to invest in a range of activities designed to ensure that Warwickshire, working in partnership, will benefit from the Olympic Games in London in 2012. The Cabinet considered this proposal at its meeting on 20 October and their recommendations are set out in this report.

For further information please contact Angela Baines
Principal Tourism Development Officer
Tel. 01926 414150
angelabaines@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/~~No~~

Background Papers Towards 2012 Olympics and Paralympics – A Warwickshire Perspective.
Towards 2012 – A Proactive West Midlands Response.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN DURING CONSULTATION ON REPORT FOR CABINET:

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)
- Other Elected Members Councillor F P Barnes } for information.
Councillor M J Jones }
Councillor R P L Morris-Jones }
- Cabinet Member Councillor C J Saint – comments incorporated.
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)
- Chief Executive

Council – 13 December 2005

**Bringing the Benefits of London 2012 Olympics to
Warwickshire**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Environment and
Economic Strategy**

Recommendations from Cabinet

1. That Council allocates £50,000 in the current financial year and, subject to the budget for 2006/2007, a further £100,000 to work in partnership to support activities related to the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.
2. That Council reviews funding needs for the Olympics in the course of the normal budget setting process for the years up to 2012.
3. That Council lobbies Government to ensure that current levels of investment to Warwickshire are maintained rather than diverted to the South East.
4. That a further report be submitted on actions to be taken to use the prospect of the Olympics to generate a wider interest and participation in sport in the community and on the potential for the Council to promote high achievement in sport.

1. Background

- 1.1 A large part of the success of the London 2012 Olympic bid was that the whole country had “backed the bid” and so the benefits would be felt nationwide. Whilst the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the Government acknowledge this, there is much competition between and within the regions to gain benefits associated with the Games. Bringing benefits to Warwickshire will require investment in time and resource. This request for funds is outside the usual budget cycle as the International Olympic Committee selected the London bid in July 2005. Having now secured the Games, to the surprise of many commentators, there is urgent pressure to act quickly to access the opportunities available.

2. Opportunities

- 2.1 There are four main areas of opportunity available to Warwickshire related to both the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Training and Holding Camps:

- (i) A Warwickshire College report commissioned by the County Council has identified that Warwickshire is very well equipped to attract training camps for equestrian sports due to the provision at Stoneleigh Park, Moreton Morrell (Warwickshire College) and the Royal Leamington Spa Polo Ground, Southam. Further good opportunities lie in training for triathlon, canoe and rowing at Draycote Water; athletics, track and field and indoor sports at various leisure centres and Warwick University; and for shooting at Wedgnoek Rifle Club. In addition, hotels such as the Belfry Hotel with its golf academy might be able to host holding camps which are used by some countries immediately before the Games to bring the entire Olympic team together for teambuilding and mental preparation. The GB team, alone, spent around £6 million in Queensland before the 2000 Games.

Tourism and Culture:

- (ii) Promotion of the 2012 Games will start as soon as the Beijing 2008 Games come to a close. Over the period up to 2012 Britain's profile will be raised on the international stage sparking increased interest in the nation and its heritage. Experience from the Sydney Olympics has shown that the boost to tourism can also be felt for at least two years following the Games.
- (iii) Shakespeare's Stratford and Warwick Castle are "must-see" destinations for overseas visitors. There is also scope for themed tours to those areas which are less well-known but have much to offer, for example to Rugby in relation to the game of rugby, and our literary heritage extending beyond Shakespeare to George Eliot, Rupert Brooke and Michael Drayton. Warwickshire's canals and countryside also have much to offer to those wishing to come to Britain on a "trip of a lifetime" to capture the essence of the real England beyond the honeypot areas. Additionally, a number of international sporting organisations hold conferences over the Olympics period in the host country.
- (iv) Based on the Sydney experience, the Olympics could be worth over £2 billion to the UK visitor economy, not necessarily all to the benefit of London and the South East.

Education and Sporting Participation:

- (v) Some of today's Warwickshire school children could be competing at the 2012 Olympics. Encouraging participation in sport amongst young people is seen to have benefits not only for health, but in tackling anti-social behaviour. There is likely to be greater interest in sport amongst the general population. This could give impetus for healthy living initiatives.

Business:

- (vi) The 2012 Games will cost £1.5 billion, there are therefore massive opportunities for businesses, not only in building the facilities, but also in

supplying the necessary services and goods. In the construction sector, however, many companies will be engaged in the south east so there may well be price inflation on contracts elsewhere in the country. The heightened profile of the UK is also expected to help attract inward investment.

- 2.2 The value and potential offered through Warwickshire's location on the periphery of the south east region with excellent road and rail links to central London must not be underestimated. This gives us an advantage in comparison to our regional neighbours.
- 2.3 A note of caution should be sounded. The Heritage Lottery Fund has already warned that it will have fewer funds over the next 7 years. There is also a danger that funding for transport infrastructure and other projects could be diverted to the South East. It is recommended that the County Council lobby at all levels to ensure that funding is not diverted to Olympics related projects in the South East at the expense of infrastructure in Warwickshire.

3. Partnerships

- 3.1 Partnership working at all levels will be essential if we are to be successful in benefiting from the Olympics. A good working relationship has already been established with the Leisure and Tourism functions of the Warwickshire districts who are willing for the County Council to take a lead at this stage. Warwickshire College and a number of private sector organisations such as the Royal Agricultural Society of England, owners of Stoneleigh Park, have been involved in discussions to date and are willing to work with the Warwickshire local authorities.
- 3.2 At the sub-regional level, a partnership led by Coventry City Council has been created and for some months the City Council has been working on the potential the Olympics could offer to the City. It has already committed £100,000 a year for three years towards Olympics related activities.
- 3.3 It is our view that the Council needs to join and play a full part in the sub regional partnership, especially because, in the realm of attracting training and holding camps, Warwickshire's offer could be strengthened by working with venues such as Warwick University, (whose Sports grounds are largely within Warwickshire), which has recently hosted the International Children's Games. We believe that Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP) should lead these activities across the sub region and this approach was endorsed at the Coventry & Warwickshire Visitor Economy Forum on 3rd November.
- 3.4 The West Midlands Regional Assembly is taking a lead by establishing a regional Leadership Group along with thematic working groups. The Leadership Group will relate to the LOCOG "Nations & Regions" group which is charged with ensuring that the benefits are felt outside London. Councillors Saint and Hyde are already involved in these activities.

4. Actions and Costs

- 4.1 With the Olympic Games taking place in seven years' time, we are at the start of a long-term project which will have distinct phases, some of which will be dependent on public sector funding and others will depend on private sector funding and/or public/private partnerships, sponsorship and grant funding.
- 4.2 Our earliest priority is to complete the baseline surveys of the facilities suitable for use as training and holding camps. These will be required as early as 2009. Work therefore needs to start immediately in order to secure the necessary investment in facilities and allow time for capital works to be carried out. Warwickshire College, as one of our partners, is willing to carry out this survey work, but a contribution of £8,000 is needed to cover costs. This work will provide the basis for our first material to promote the opportunities available in Warwickshire which will be published through a website and in printed form. The information from the surveys will also enable us to understand our product better and to see where improvements to infrastructure and facilities would be needed to bring the standards of our facilities up to those required by the Olympic athletes and their teams. Investment will be necessary, as at Stoneleigh Park's equine facilities as well as other sporting facilities. Providers of facilities who aspire to having them used for training camps will also be aware that they should be aiming for them being Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant by 2012.
- 4.3 While 2009 may seem far ahead, from past experience it is anticipated that we should be anticipating receiving enquiries soon and there is already much competition within and between regions to attract visiting Olympic teams, so investment in the information package is timely. It is recommended that £15,000 is allocated to enable the production of a prospectus, website and allied promotional material.
- 4.4 Work to attract the conferences associated with the Olympics should start in 2006, working with commercial partners. Tourism promotion for the general public should be phased in from 2008 and the County Council should plan to support this financially. There will be a need for groundwork in putting together innovative tour packages and ensuring that the tourism product (facilities and skills) are up to the required standards through work for instance on encouraging participation in quality assurance schemes and the provision of multilingual resources. Here again, early work from now through the Spring of 2006 is likely to generate longer term benefits.
- 4.5 A link to the details of tenders available for the Olympics 2012 has already been put on the County Council website. Further support is to be carried out in conjunction with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.
- 4.6 Whilst this report concentrates on the potential of the Olympics to generate economic benefits to Warwickshire, we are well aware, as mentioned in paragraph 2.1(v) of the importance of using the potential of the Olympics to generate a wider interest in sport with consequent benefits to community health.

Officers are considering how best these opportunities can be developed and a further report on this aspect can be submitted.

- 4.7 Clearly, the work needed to take full advantage of the opportunities the Olympics present is currently not funded. Our sub regional partners are inviting our participation but it is clear that, if we are to be able to play a full role in the partnership and to undertake the work necessary to generate the full benefits we can expect from the Olympics, it will be necessary to build on our first tentative steps by making a contribution to the partnership. A sum of £20,000 is suggested as a contribution for project development and management of the Coventry and Warwickshire partnership. This amount is far less than the £100,000 already committed by Coventry City Council but it should enable the County Council to demonstrate commitment to the project whilst ascertaining future financial needs. In addition, the West Midlands Olympics Leadership Group led by the Regional Assembly is inviting financial contributions to activities at the regional level. Birmingham City Council has contributed £5,000 and it is recommended that Warwickshire County Council match this. Together with the sums explained in preceding paragraphs to complete the audit of the facilities available in Warwickshire, prepare the first "Olympics prospectus" for the County and commission the websites and other modest marketing it is therefore recommended that Cabinet agrees to authorise a total of £50,000 expenditure in the remainder of the financial year. It is also requested that each of the political groups give consideration to the allocation of £100,000 for this purpose from the budget for 2006/2007 as part of the normal budget process and, thereafter, for the funding to be reviewed annually until 2012.

JOHN DEEGAN
Director of Planning, Environment and Economic Strategy
Shire Hall
Warwick

November 2005