



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Belfast City Marathon

Date: 20 August 2013

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager, ext 3412

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on suggested operational changes in regard to the Council's future input to the Belfast City Marathon (BCM).
1.2	BCM has operated for over three decades and 2014 will see the 33 rd staging of the biggest mass participation event in the city. In 2013 just over 18,000 marathon and relay runners took part in the event. Since 2007 the event has been managed by a limited independent not-for-profit company set up by the Council. The company is overseen by a board with representation from Council (two Councillors), Sport NI, and Athletics NI and with input from the Council's City Events Unit and Corporate Communications section. Currently the Council funds the Belfast City Marathon to the sum of £42,000 per annum.
2	Key Issues
2.1	There are two BCM full-time and one fixed-term contract staff who oversee the planning and delivery of the race. There has also been a significant level of input from the Council's City Events Unit since the creation of the limited company.
2.2	The skill set and knowledge of BCM staff involved has developed extensively since the creation of the company. In fact the level of experience has reached a point where it is evident that there is no longer a requirement for Council direct input to the planning and delivery of the event.
2.3	Therefore, it is suggested that the Council's input from the City Events Unit and Corporate Communications would cease come September 2013, while annual funding would continue as normal. This would allow BCM to plan towards 2014 and beyond.
2.4	The rationale for such a move is threefold: the delivery and planning structures of BCM are such that direct input from Council is no longer required – Officers have discussed this with the Chair and Manager of BCM. BCM now have in place experienced and knowledgeable staff to deliver the event and the freeing up of Council staff will allow them to work on significant event related projects such as the Giro d'Italia 2014, Tall Ships 2015, the annual events programme and bidding for future international events.

2.5	In addition BCM company intend, in the near future, to develop a strategy document that will see the development of the marathon alongside amendments to its delivery structures and the development of a series of new initiatives.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Currently the Council fund BCM to the sum of £42,000. Members are asked to note that this sum of finance is essential to the operation and delivery of the event and without this the company and event could not function.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no relevant equality and good relations implications. However, the project has the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are requested to approve the withdrawal of Council personnel from the delivery of BCM. This will free staff to work on significant event related projects, such as the Giro d'Italia 2014, Tall Ships 2015, the Council's annual events programme and bidding for future international events.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>If approved Officers will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of future city marathons. Outputs of these will be presented to Council as part of the City Events Unit's annual key performance indicators.</p> <p>Timeline: March 2014 Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland</p>	