

CABINET – 29 JUNE 2009

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SUMMER GAMES – JULY 2009

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose

1. To enable the Cabinet to consider a request from the Chair of the Special Olympics Board and the Leader of Leicester City Council for the County Council to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the Special Olympics Great Britain 8th National Summer Games to be held in Leicester in July 2009.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended:-
 - (a) that the Cabinet considers making a financial contribution towards the cost of the Special Olympics Great Britain 8th National Summer Games to be held in Leicester in July 2009; and
 - (b) that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Leader, to determine the exact amount of the contribution and to make this award following the outcome of further discussions with Leicester City Council and other funding partners.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To promote the sporting achievements of, and equal opportunities for, people with learning disabilities in the county. In addition, to build on the successful partnership between the County and City Councils and to enhance the reputation of both Authorities.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The Special Olympics will take place in Leicester from 25 to 31 July 2009.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The Council has the power to make such a financial contribution under the provisions of Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 if the Authority considers this would help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the “economic, social or environmental well-being of its area”. When exercising these powers, the Council needs to have regard to its Community Strategy. The particular outcomes in the County Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy which support a financial contribution being made to the Special Olympics are: Outcome 2.6 Improved Community Cohesion through shared learning and recreation, and Outcome 6.1 Improved physical health, well-being and community cohesion through enhanced access to sport, recreation and cultural activities. There are also links to Outcome 5.2 around Tourism and to some of the Stronger Communities outcomes, in particular Outcome 2.4 Equality of access to life opportunities.
6. In this case, it is considered that the test under Section 2 of the Act is met as the holding of the Games will benefit the well-being of county residents and, in particular, the economic well-being of the area as it will raise the profile of Leicester and Leicestershire as sporting venues with a genuine commitment to engagement in all forms of sport and encourage tourism and inward investment in the future.

Resources Implications

7. The City Council has advised that the cost of staging the Leicester 2009 Games is £2.9 million with accommodation and catering being the most significant amounts. Income is forecast to be £1.9 million which includes athletes’ contributions, a contribution from Sport England (£200,000), an existing contribution from Leicester City Council (£200,000) and a contribution from the Lord Mayor’s Appeal (£20,000). The current shortfall in funding is an estimated £1 million.
8. The City Council’s Cabinet, at its meeting on 1 June 2009, considered a report on this matter and approved additional funding towards the Games of up to £1 million (and delegated the decision to make this award to the Director of Cultural Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer). The County Council has been requested by the City Council also to make a contribution towards this £1 million shortfall and, if this is approved by the Cabinet, it is proposed that the exact amount will be determined following the outcome of further discussions with the City Council and other funding partners.
9. If the Cabinet approves the making of a contribution, it is proposed that this should be funded from the projected underspending in the capital financing budget arising from the repayment of debt.

10. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. None

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PART B

Background

12. The Special Olympics is the third 'member of the Olympics family' but, unlike the Olympics and the Paralympics, receives no direct government funding. Both the national organisation (the Special Olympics Games Board) and the National Games, which are held every four years, are dependent on commercial sponsorship, grants and fund raising. The Games will leave a legacy for the Special Olympics community that will ultimately achieve its important aim of promoting the sporting achievements of, and equality opportunities for, those with learning disabilities.
13. In Summer 2007, Leicester was successful in winning the right to stage the National Special Olympics Summer Games which will take place from 25 to 31 July 2009. The Games will include 21 sports at 16 venues with 2,700 athletes, 1,200 coaches, 6,000 visiting families, 1,500 volunteers and seven days of achievements starting with an Opening Ceremony at Leicester City Football Club and concluding with a party in Abbey Park. To quote from the report to the City Council's Cabinet meeting of 1 June: "*The City and County will buzz with sound and colour from the seven days of competition with the eyes of the nation on Leicester and Leicestershire including TV coverage from ITV*". It is estimated that around 167 athletes from Leicestershire will be competing in the Games across a range of sports.
14. A partnership board reflecting the public, voluntary, education, community and commercial sectors has been established as a charitable company (limited by guarantee) to raise the funding and oversee the management of the Games. Both the City and County Councils are represented on the Board. The Board has been making every effort to attract commercial sponsorship but the recession has had a negative impact on raising the funds necessary to stage this major event.
15. In December 2008, the Board became increasingly concerned about the lack of success in securing commercial sponsorship and the potential impact this would have on the Games. Given the urgency of the situation, the Board agreed to undertake a major review of the budget for the Games to establish the absolute minimum requirement. It also agreed actively to seek contributions from partners to ensure the success of the Games in the event that no significant commercial sponsorship could be obtained. The budget was reviewed in detail and a shortfall of £1m was identified. The Board is working hard to find sponsorship, support and donations from commercial and non-commercial sectors and meetings have taken place with the Minister for Sport with a view to seeking financial support from relevant national sports governing bodies.

16. In response to an approach received from the Leader of the City Council in May 2009, the Leader of the County Council indicated that the County Council would also be prepared to consider offering financial support to the Games. The benefits to Leicester and Leicestershire in making the Games a success include:-
- (a) enhanced profile for the City and County through substantial TV coverage;
 - (b) tourism benefits with an estimated 10,000 visitors to the Games;
 - (c) increased awareness of learning disabilities and increased opportunities to improve the life chances of disabled people; and
 - (d) opportunities to promote the support of the County Council and its services through the Special Olympics Leicester (SOL) website, newsletter and other marketing opportunities.

Relevant Impact assessments

(i) Equal Opportunities Implications

17. The Games will raise awareness of learning disabilities generally and will generate opportunities for those involved to improve their life chances through participation in sport, volunteering, etc.

(ii) Partnership Working

18. The Special Olympics Board comprises representatives from a wide range of sectors and organisations, including Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, NHS Leicester City, Voluntary Action LeicesterShire, the University of Leicester, the Chamber of Commerce, Special Olympics Great Britain, representatives of the business community and individuals with a specific interest in, and commitment to, sport and/or learning disabilities.

Background Papers

Report on the 'Special Olympics – Leicester 2009' to the meeting of Leicester City Council's Cabinet on 1 June 2009.