

15th Nov 2021

BRIEFING NOTE TO: Ward Members, Brinnington & Central

FROM: Denise A. Irving-Lang, Active Stockport Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on plans to host a Stockport Active Weekend in Stockport in June 2022, key elements of which will be a series of urban Town Centre cycling races (Criterium) in partnership with British Cycling and a Walking & Running Festival.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2021 the Council, in partnership with Totally Stockport/BID and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) hosted a hugely successful Cycling Festival and 5k Run. The purpose of the event was to increase footfall into the Town Centre as part of Covid recovery efforts and to promote and provide opportunities for people to be more physically active.
- 2.2 Originally there was a desire to host an 'Enduro', a very specialised type of cycling race, however due to receiving only a handful of participants due to a clash with a high-profile national race and the specialism of this type of racing, it did not go ahead in the end. To mitigate any risk of something like this happening again, British Cycling have been brought on board at the outset as a key partner to jointly deliver a successful cycling event with a long lead-in time.
- 2.3 Planning has now begun for an event next year, building on the elements that worked particularly well and the lessons learned. The event will be delivered as a Stockport Active Weekend that will take place on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th June 2022. The range and type of community activities planned will help to maximise footfall into the town centre thereby supporting local retailers and hospitality businesses as part of the town's continued Covid-19 recovery plans along with promoting active travel as a leisure activity and a sustainable mode of transport, contributing towards tackling the climate crisis.
- 2.4 The Stockport Active Weekend will be a partnership event organised by Stockport Council, Totally Stockport/BID, TfGM, British Cycling and Running Bee Foundation as well as key partner clubs from the local cycling and running community. The project team planning the event are ensuring it will be Inclusive by Design and once again local Paralympian Megan Giglia will be engaged to act as an Ambassador and critical friend.
- 2.5 Activation activities will take place on the Saturday at key locations in the Town Centre to raise awareness and promote the main events and activity schedule of the Sunday.

3. COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

- 3.1 An inspiring and animated Event Village will once again be located at St Peters Square where the Cycling and Running Festival events will also start and finish.
- 3.2 A broad range of activities are being planned to target all cohorts of the local community, regardless of age or ability. In the run up to the weekend all schools will once again be engaged to participate in an Inter-School Competition and an invitation will be extended to all Uniformed Groups like Beavers, Cubs, Brownies and Guides.
- 3.3 Quirky activities like the Smoothie Bike and Rollapaluzas Countdown Clock will be on offer, providing fun opportunities for families and Life Leisure will be offering various challenges. An area will be set up with different types of bikes available to try, like infant Balance Bikes, Electric Bikes, Unicycles, Adapted Bikes for disabled people and bikes with toddler carriages. There will also be mechanic workshops on offer where people can have their bikes MOT'd.
- 3.4 Reducing barriers to cycling is a key priority for this event and in addition to our Paralympian Ambassador Megan Giglia, the CP Wheelers, 'adapt-e' adapted trike specialists and organisations specifically targeted at supporting under-represented groups will be engaged.
- 3.5 Fusion Extreme, a prominent and well-known urban sports company, will once again be performing exciting freestyle BMX, Trials Bike, Mountain Bike, Scooter, Skateboard and Parkour demonstrations. These were incredibly popular this year. Local urban sports clubs will be engaged and invited along on the day to recruit any interested parties.
- 3.6 Bramhall based 'Cheshire Cycling Club' will be offering Led-Rides of different distances and for different target audiences. They have an established reach into the cycling community and are one of the events key partner clubs.
- 3.7 Local walking groups and networks will be engaged to deliver Led-Walks of various distances and terrain so there is an offer for all abilities.

4. CRITERIUM

- 4.1 The Council will be working in partnership with cycling's National Governing Body 'British Cycling', to offer a high-class schedule of Youth and Senior racing across the Sunday. The North West Youth Racing League have expressed a desire to use Stockport as an official fixture location in their annual racing calendar and have offered to provide capacity to support with organising the infrastructure that is required for hosting competitive racing of this nature.
- 4.2 The racing route will be a lapped course on closed town centre roads of varying distance and time depending on age and ability. It will be technically challenging and incorporate multiple sections which will entertain spectators. The route focuses on key landmarks and avoids the need to close any significant routes into the town whilst also retaining access at all times to car parks as it's important we don't impede those who want to visit the town centre over the weekend. The

majority of the route will have safety barriers either side and will include dedicated manned crossing points which will allow pedestrians to cross during intervals in the race.

- 4.4 The proposed route would involve the temporary relocation of the bus stops on Mersey Square including the temporary stops created while the new transport interchange is being developed. Routes avoiding Mersey Square are not logistically possible given the circular nature of the race. As it's a Sunday it is hoped early discussions with the bus operators will allow alternative locations to be identified and the process managed in a timely way.
- 4.5 Senior colleagues from Highways (Network Management, Feasibility & Road Safety and Highway Maintenance), Structures and Conservation will once again be involved in discussions regarding the proposed route with a number of site visits being scheduled.

5. RUNNING FESTIVAL

- 5.1 Running Bee Foundation delivered this years 5k Run exceptionally well and they will be brought back to deliver a 'My First Mile', a 5k Run and a 10k Run, ensuring that regardless of age and ability, there is an option for everyone at Stockport's Running Festival.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the route starts and finishes in the Event Village before heading East through Vernon and Woodbank Parks, into the Goyt Valley and back. Running Bee Foundation have a proven track record of delivering large scale sports events and worked well with the Council this year.
- 5.3 The Council and Running Bee Foundation will work in partnership with Stockport Harriers who have offered to provide official pacers for the events, which is a common and popular element of modern day running races.
- 5.4 All finishers will receive a medal and goodie bag with trophies for the winners.

6. BUDGET & MARKETING

- 6.1 Totally Stockport/BID is providing funding towards the event along with a contribution from the Council. Given the long lead-in time the steering group and key partners are confident of being able to generate enough interest in order to recruit a sufficient level of paying entries that mean costs are covered.
- 6.2 In addition, sponsorship packages are once again being developed to secure a headline sponsor for the event along with a series of supporting sponsors. There are a number of prominent cycling retailers in the borough including Decathlon and Evans Cycles who recently opened a store in the town centre, along with a number of independent cycle shops all of whom will be approached about becoming involved in the event. The large, anticipated footfall over the 2 days will

make the event attractive to those outside the cycling and running community including developers and partner organisations. The steering group were successful in securing a healthy level of external sponsorship this year.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Stockport Active Weekend is likely to be one the most significant events held in the town centre during 2022, particularly with British Cycling being on board, and should be an exciting and inspiring event attracting visitors from far and wide into the town centre over the two days. The wide range of inclusive events planned will not only appeal to elite cyclists and runners but also to novices keen to experience something new, and the planned family friendly activities will appeal to those looking for a fun filled day out.
- 7.2 The weekend will become a key feature of the town's continued Covid Recovery Plan and by attracting significant footfall into the town centre the event will support retailers, leisure operators and hospitality businesses.
- 7.3 Whilst it is unclear what Covid restrictions will be in place next June the Steering Group will continue to review arrangements to ensure compliance.