

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	'08 COMMITTEE
DATE:	6TH SEPTEMBER 2007
REPORT NO.	CFO/164/07
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SUBJECT:	FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR WORLD FIREFIGHTER GAMES FROM THE 5 DISTRICTS

Purpose of Report

1. To request Members to actively encourage their respective Authorities to consider providing financial support for the Games.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee note and approve the proposal set out in paragraphs 12 and 13.

Background

3. In Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture it is entirely fitting that MF&RS should bring this major international sporting event to our doorstep. Now that its here, it is important that we and our partners and in particular local authorities, maximise the potential positive impact the Games could provide. Opportunities exist across many areas including tourism, culture, diversity and of course sport. It represents an almost unique opportunity to showcase all that is good about our people and region. Not only that, it is estimated that the Games will have an economic impact on the region of £2.8m according to an independent report by The Mersey Partnership.
4. The Districts have already shown their enthusiasm for the games and have actively sought to hold events within their own regions.
5. Officers are keen to maximise the buy in from all of our Merseyside districts and would wish to see the whole of the Merseyside regions as key partners. Already, Members will recall, that Liverpool through Capital of Culture have committed £120,000 and Merseytravel have made a large-scale commitment through their work on travel arrangements for visitors.

Benefit to the Districts

6. The Games will attract circa 5000 competitors and probably as many again supporters and spectators. They will compete in over 70 sports which when broken down by gender and age translates to over 1000 events!
7. Mindful of the objective to make the Games truly pan-Merseyside the WFG08 organisers have striven to ensure that each of the 5 districts, plus Halton, has a reasonable share of event venues (see Appendix "A" for distribution by District). Members will recall that the Committee "signed-off" this event distribution at the '08 Committee meeting on 26th April 2007.
8. The games is also clearly being run with a social aspect and it is intended that community engagement and interaction created by using the games as a vehicle will happen right across Merseyside. It is anticipated that the Districts will clearly be keen to support and assist this work.
9. One impact of the pan-Merseyside approach however is that it has resulted in some increase in the cost of event delivery. The most cost-effective model would be to use the Liverpool Echo Arena & Convention Centre, which is costing £15,000/day anyway, to stage the majority of events and to only use alternatives where the sport necessitates, for example golf and sailing.

Finances

10. Additional costs incurred as a result of this dispersed, pan-Merseyside approach include transport, additional officials and volunteers, venue hire, equipment hire, security, IT/communications, 1st Aid/paramedics, rubbish disposal etc etc. WFG08 budget for venues other than the Arena, which as mentioned costs £15,000/day to hire, is £70,000. Of this, it is conservatively estimated that circa £50,000 is the additional cost incurred as a result of event dispersal.
11. In making a case for securing financial support, Members will also no doubt wish to take the opportunity to emphasise the economic impact assessment conducted by The Mersey Partnership which predicts a benefit of £2.8m to Merseyside as a whole (not broken-down by District).
12. In order to alleviate the financial burden of event dispersal and to further cement the partnerships between local authorities and WFG08, it is recommended that Members seek to secure:
 - (a) A £10,000 contribution toward community engagement in the districts from each of the 5 Districts – Knowsley, Sefton, St. Helens, Wirral and Halton. (Members will recall that Liverpool through Capital of Culture have already committed £120,000).
 - (b) That where local authority owned venues are being utilised for games events these are provided free of charge.

13. It is proposed that the Chief Fire Officer writes to the relevant Chief Executives with a copy of this report requesting that each Authority considers this level of support.

Conclusion

14. The socio-economic benefits that the Games offers to all 5 Districts (plus Halton) are varied and real. MF&RS are determined to deliver a Games that will be remembered for all the right reasons by competitors and our communities alike. Our Games community engagement programme will infiltrate all areas of the region and leave a valuable and lasting legacy and with a relatively small financial investment our partners in the 5 Districts will justifiably be able to claim that they were part of the team that made it happen.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. There is an opportunity to recruit volunteers for the running of the Games from minority and excluded groups and from youth diversionary programmes being undertaken by MF&RS at present. In this way the Games can provide a lasting legacy for the city and region.

Financial Implications

16. The proposal if agreed by all will increase income to the Games and help ameliorate additional costs. The income is not currently included in games budget forecasts.

BACKGROUND PAPERS