

Cabinet
30th May 2018

<u>KEY DECISION</u> [No]
<u>DATE FIRST PUBLISHED</u> [date]

RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2021 – HOST PARTNER BID

WARDS AFFECTED

All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

NO

1. PROPOSED DECISION

- 1.1. To approve the production of a bid to become a host for the 2021 Rugby League World Cup.
- 1.2. To contribute up to £30,000 per annum in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 from the Transformation Reserve Fund to support the bid.
- 1.3. To publicly launch the bid as part of the Borough's 150th Celebration's
- 1.4. That the Strategic Director, Place, in Consultation with the Leader, be delegated responsibility for the final bid submission.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

- 2.1. Rugby League has a strong heritage in the borough and is the largest spectator sport in St Helens. The Borough has provided international standard players in both the men's and women's game.
- 2.2. St.Helens Rugby League Club and the Council have invested to build one of the best stadia in the Country designed for and dedicated to the sport of Rugby League, with the aim of attracting high profile events such as the Rugby league World Cup.
- 2.3. The Rugby League have commissioned independent studies that place the economic value of hosting World Cup group matches at between £2.4m and £4.5m. Coupled with the direct economic impact each match will be broadcast live by the BBC raising the profile of the borough both nationally and internationally.
- 2.4. The hosting of the event in St Helens could also contribute to other strategic initiatives such as St Helens Town Centre regeneration, raising the profile of St

Helens, and links to public health messages where sport is a key means of delivering healthy living campaigns.

3. FACTS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED DECISION

- 3.1. The Council and Club have been approached by the Rugby Football League (RFL) as a potential host of the Rugby League world cup. The RFL have gained support of the Government to host the 2021 World Cup on the understanding that 80% of the Games will be within the North of England.
- 3.2. Bids have to be led by the Council of the bidding area. Each bidding venue must commit to meeting £250,000 to the cost of hosting the tournament. This can be met by in-kind as well as cash contributions. In-kind contributions include provision of stadium facilities etc., and hence joint working between the Council and Club is important. At this early stage the contributions cannot be fixed but it is felt that at least £160,000 of in-kind contributions can be found and therefore a maximum of £90,000 of additional contribution may be required broken down over each of the three years up to the tournament.
- 3.3. The tournament will follow the 2017 Rugby League World Cup where the England men's team lost narrowly in the final and included a number of players from St Helens. The England women's team also competed with almost a third of their squad having played their club rugby league in St Helens. The next Rugby League World Cup will be in Canada and the USA in 2025.
- 3.4. The format of the men's tournament will see numerous games played in various host venues throughout England. The main emphasis of the bid will be to secure men's games.
- 3.5. The format of the women's tournament has not yet been determined but St Helens would also be keen to host women's matches within the tournament.
- 3.6. Bidding places can also seek to act as training bases for international sides taking part in the tournament and can also seek to access a multi-million pound fund for community game infrastructure.
- 3.7. Additionally, the RLWC2021 provides a set of development opportunities linked to:
 - 3.7.1. Volunteering – participants will be sought from underrepresented groups from lower socio economic backgrounds and will seek to retain them within the community game long after the tournament is over.
 - 3.7.2. Health – the event will focus on five key areas where the sport can make the biggest difference
 - Child Wellbeing (physical fitness and mental resilience)
 - Men's Wellbeing (physical fitness and mental resilience)
 - Dementia (opening and creating memories)
 - Smoking cessation
 - Women's Cancer screening

3.7.3. Community – More than 75% of the local spectators at the RLWC 2013 felt the tournament enhanced community spirit.

3.7.4. Growing the Game – hosts will be able to access significant investment in Rugby League that can support clubs, schools and facility development.

3.8. Initial discussions with the tournament organiser's have resulted in the view that the borough should seek to:

- Host a team training base using Ruskin Drive Sports Village and the Clubs training base at Cowley Language College
- Host three group matches in the Men's Tournament and at least one in the Women's if the format allows
- Seek to access community games funding associated with the tournament

4. IMPLICATIONS/RELEVANCE TO MEETING SAVINGS TARGETS/ PLANNING FOR 2020

4.1. The event is an opportunity to increase the borough's profile nationally and internationally, supporting our objectives of raising aspiration in St Helens.

5. RISKS

5.1 Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

None

5.2 Should this Risk be added to the Corporate Risk Register?

No

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal – There are no legal implications linked to the submission of a bid. If successful the Council will enter into a legal agreement with both the RLWC2021 and St.Helens RLFC.

Financial – Up to £30,000 per annum in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 from the Transformation Reserve Fund to support the bid.

Human Resources – *None*

Land and Property (Asset) – *None*

Anti-Poverty – *None*

Effects on existing Council Policy – *None*

Effects on other Council Activities – *None*

Human Rights – *None*

Equalities –

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside submission of the final bid.

Asset Management – *None*

Health – *The tournament would provide an opportunity to link the*

7. PREVIOUS APPROVAL/CONSULTATION

None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS THEREOF

None

9. APPENDICES

None

*Mike Palin
Chief Executives Department*

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Palin 01744 67(6101)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None