

Councillors to vote on staging cycling event next week

COUNCILLORS WILL CONSIDER BACKING BRITISH CYCLING BID

The City of Edinburgh Council is set to back an ambitious bid to bring the Tour de France to Scotland for the first time.

Councillors will be asked to approve a report at their meeting next Thursday 13 December 2012, which sets out the commitments required from the Council, a significant proportion of which would be in kind, should the UK bid be successful.

Attracting the world's largest annual sporting event would be worth £45-55m to the national economy, with over £24m spend expected in Edinburgh.

Under the proposals, Edinburgh Castle would host the Presentation of the Riders, followed by a full day of cycling and complementary activity on the eve of the Grand Depart. This may include displays, cycle shows, stalls, competitions and other cultural activities.

The riders would tour the city centre in 'non-race' mode before making their way slowly to the racing start elsewhere in the city. They would then race down the spine of the UK – through southern Scotland, England and Wales – creating unprecedented spectator opportunities to view the race.

The 2011 event was covered by 100 TV channels, 70 radio channels, 400 newspapers and press agencies, and 70 websites. It was broadcast in 190 countries of which 60 showed live coverage.

 The City of Edinburgh Council's Festivals & Events

Champion, Councillor Steve Cardownie, said:- “Edinburgh is known the world over as a premier events destination – and with good reason.

“I can think of no more dramatic backdrop than Edinburgh Castle and our historic Old Town and, of course, our residents are well used to laying on a fantastic welcome to the many millions of visitors that travel to the city each year.

“The value that our festivals bring to the local and Scottish economy is well known and an event of the Tour de France’s stature would be no different – generating somewhere in the region of £50m. Add to that, the profile and exposure that the associated media coverage would bring with it and it becomes a startling proposition.

“Of course, Edinburgh is no stranger to cycling success, thanks to the incredible achievements of Sir Chris Hoy, and we are already seeing the impact this is having on participation – a trend that would surely continue following a successful Grand Depart.”

The bid is being led by EventScotland with the support of the Scottish Government, British Cycling, UK Sport, the Welsh Government, plus several English and Welsh local authorities. The date has not been confirmed but is likely to be in the next five years, with the potential for it to be as soon as 2014.

It is hoped that a successful event would lead to greater participation in cycling by Edinburgh residents, supporting the Council’s Active Travel Action Plan.