

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 March 2012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ricki Gadsby
(Leisure and Wellbeing)

OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY – SUPPLEMENTARY DDF REQUEST

Recommending:

That a supplementary District Development Fund estimate of £15,000 for 2012/13 be approved in order to provide funding for the management and public safety of the Olympic Torch

1. The Olympic Torch is due to visit the District on 7 July 2012. It will pass through Waltham Abbey en route to the Olympic White Water venue just across the border in Broxbourne Borough. In order to make the management of the Torch route effective, it has been agreed with Broxbourne Borough Council that we will manage the Torch procession over the last 300 metres of the route which is in their district.
2. Local authorities hosting the Torch Relay are responsible for the management of its passage through their districts. Whilst the security of the actual Torch rests with the Metropolitan Police, all other aspects of the Torch procession remain with the host local authority.
3. There are three key components of the management of the Torch Relay:
 - (a) safety and security of those who attend to watch the Torch procession;
 - (b) street scene management (i.e. street cleansing, litter, parking etc); and
 - (c) local themed events to provide entertainment to those visiting the area to see the procession but who wish to remain in the area for a longer period of time.
4. Of the above (a) is clearly the critical element, ensuring that visitors who attend the Torch route are at all times safe themselves and also are not allowed to interfere with the passage of the Torch and its accompanying vehicle entourage. Although it will not be necessary to provide security/safety barriers throughout the route, there are locations where these will be necessary to maintain safety of the Torch and spectators.
5. Alongside the issues of barriers, there will need to be effective marshalling of spectators along the entire route, as well as communication systems. Whilst every effort will be made to obtain 'volunteers' it will be essential to have key professionals in place to oversee marshalling activities, and in accordance with existing emergency planning arrangements, some payments will be required to secure appropriate trained personnel.

6. In order to achieve the above we are seeking a supplementary DDF estimate. With respect to (b) and (c) we have been assured that every effort will be made to cover these from within resources, although some contingency funding may be required.

7. We regret that this bid for supplementary funding is late in the Torch planning process and could not be taken into account when approving budgets for 2012/13 but the arrangements for the Torch Relay have been confidential until very recently. This has made planning difficult since we have been unable to have open discussions with those who are in a position to assist us. Furthermore, in terms of planning for the Torch, it has been impossible to accurately assess just how many spectators there may be, and in the absence of such data, there is no alternative other than to plan for a large number and resource accordingly. The risks associated with getting this wrong are significant.

8. The Torch Relay presents an opportunity for the District and Waltham Abbey in particular to showcase itself to a very wide audience, especially given that the Relay will be televised throughout its journey around the UK. This may well encourage visitors from outside of the district to come to Waltham Abbey to enjoy the spectacle. The local events being planned to follow the Torch Relay will hopefully also encourage visitors to the area to stay in the area as well as providing entertainment for local residents. They will also provide opportunities for local schools to further involve themselves in the excitement of the Olympic Games.

9. Accordingly, we recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.