

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT AND
EXPERIENCE**

SUBJECT: IRONMAN WALES EVENT – 2012 AND BEYOND

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for PCNPA's continuing financial support of the Ironman Wales event for a further 2 years.

Introduction/Background

In August 2010 Members agreed to support the Authority in making a financial contribution of 10,000 euro to the Ironman Wales event which was successfully held in Tenby and the surrounding area in September of this year.

The original agreement was made with the understanding that PCNPA would review the success of the inaugural event before committing further financial resources in future years.

This paper provides a brief overview of the 2011 Ironman Wales event and sets out the case for PCNPA continuing to provide financial support to the event for a further 2 years.

Ironman Wales Event 2011

The Ironman series of events form a high profile endurance challenge that includes 22 events throughout the world in countries such as the USA, China, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Spain, France, Austria and Germany with the final being held in Kona in Hawaii each year.

The fact that Pembrokeshire hosted the first Ironman Wales event in 2011 was a real coup for the county. The ability of a range of partners to come together to host such a prestigious and high profile event in Wales was extremely beneficial for the area.

Not only has the event provided a significant economic boost to the county outside of the main tourism season but, from a National Park perspective, it has also raised the profile of the importance of conserving the landscape and carefully managing recreational use in order to create a sporting experience that is now recognised internationally as being almost unrivalled anywhere else in the world.

We are still awaiting more detailed economic analysis from 'World Endurance UK' (the company responsible for owning, organising and controlling the event) but we know from looking at the economic impact of the Ironman event held in Frankfurt, Germany in 2007 that the following outcomes were achieved:

- Over 70% of competitors travelled to the event either with members of their family or with a group of non-competing friends;

- Nearly 90% of competitors stayed either at an hotel, hostel or a camping site;
- The average duration of the stay was 3.5 nights;
- Average spend of athletes was 495 euro and the average spend of guests over 400 euro

All indications from meetings with both the event organisers, Pembrokeshire County Council and the Welsh Government, as key partners, suggest that the Ironman Wales event achieved similar outcomes. In addition to the economic benefits the event has also raised the profile of Pembrokeshire as a key tourist destination as well as providing a boost to recreational activities in the National Park (for example the County Council's series of 'Go-Tri' events (aimed at encouraging newcomers to undertake a triathlon) has proved extremely successful.

Financial considerations

Following the success of the 2011 event PCNPA is proposing to make a further contribution of 10,000 euro in both 2012 and 2013. This contribution is offered as a guarantee in order to secure the event for Pembrokeshire as well as ensuring specific media coverage in relation to the National Park. This would match the timescale of support from the other two main public sector contributors – the Welsh Government and Pembrokeshire County Council.

Negotiations between ourselves and 'World Endurance UK', are ongoing with a view to agreeing the necessary contracts early in 2012. After this initial 3 years period (including 2011) it is envisaged that the event organisers, 'World Endurance UK', will have secured long-term sponsorship arrangements which will enable the public sector contribution to the event to be gradually reduced.

Risk considerations

There are limited risks relating to this investment for PCNPA. However, Members may wish to consider the following:

The Authority may be asked why we continue to contribute to this event and not the many other events organised within the National Park. The scale of this event provides a significant opportunity to achieve the Authority's corporate outcomes of ensuring that residents and visitors enjoy and appreciate the National Park whilst supporting a thriving local economy.

Although our proposed financial contribution is relatively small, it ensures that the Park Authority has a degree of 'control' in how the event is managed and promoted ensuring that it does not conflict with the Authority's statutory purposes and remains beneficial not just to visitors but to local residents too.

Compliance

The event will directly support the Park's second purpose and also the duty to consider the economic and social well-being of the Park.

Human Rights/Equality issues

Not relevant.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

It is unlikely that the event will have any adverse impacts.

Welsh Language statement

We will take the opportunity to encourage the event organisers to reflect the bilingual character of Pembrokeshire in their promotional materials.

Conclusion

While the National Park Authority rarely supports individual events, the Ironman Wales event is considered to offer enormous benefits to the area from a recreational and economic perspective. In addition, the event provides a significant opportunity to raise the profile of the National Park and Pembrokeshire as a key tourist destination in Europe.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve a 10,000 euro contribution in both 2012 and 2013 towards securing the Wales Ironman event and associated media coverage for the next 2 years.

Background Documents

None

(For further information, please contact the author, James Parkin)