

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 29 May 2019  
**Report of:** Head of Community Services  
**Title of Report:** OVO Energy Women's Cycle Tour

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To highlight the requirements of delivering the OVO Energy Women's Cycle Tour in Oxfordshire over the next three years (2019, 2020 and 2021).
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Healthy Oxford and the City's Cycling Champion
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy, Strong and Active Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	The Corporate Plan & The Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy
<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Support</b> Oxfordshire being a host venue for the OVO Energy Women's cycle tour in 2019, 2020 and 2021;
2.	<b>Agree</b> the principle of an equal share of costs between the County Council, the four districts and the City Council for the three years of the Event;
3.	<b>Recommend</b> that Council allocates a budget of £30,000 funded from reserves to pay the City Council's share of the costs for 2019; and
4.	<b>Agree</b> that sponsorship, regardless of which partner attracts it, will be used to reduce the hosting costs on an equal basis.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Risk Register

## **Introduction and background**

1. The 2019 OVO Energy Women's Tour takes place from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. It is a five day (stage) event and is regarded as one of the leading professional women's stage cycling races.
2. The race began as a supporting event for the men's tour series which is Britain's leading televised cycle race series. It has grown into a prestigious event in its own right. It is now the premier women's cycling race on the international circuit, being the only women's race that has 5 stages. This year for the first time they will be awarding the same prize money for the Women's Tour as for the Men's Tour.
3. All councils across Oxfordshire have agreed, in principle, at an Oxfordshire Leaders meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> March for Oxfordshire to be a host venue over the next three years. This will include hosting the overall start and finish in 2020 and 2021 and hosting stage three of the event on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019.
4. The first year will see day three of the tour taking place in Oxfordshire with the route going through South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse and the end of the stage taking place at Blenheim Palace. The routes for year two and year three are yet to be determined.
5. The OVO Energy Women's Tour is organised by SweetSpot Group Limited (SweetSpot) a sports events and marketing company who are also the company behind the men's OVO Energy Tour of Britain.
6. The delivery of the tour over the three years will be in partnership between the county council, the district councils in Oxfordshire, the City Council and SweetSpot.
7. This report asks for the Cabinet to work with the other council's in Oxfordshire and to support Tour OVO Energy Women's Cycle Tour for the three year period of the contract.

## **Benefits**

8. The OVO Energy Women's Tour offers an excellent way to support the council's strategic objectives of creating Strong and Active Communities and a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy.
9. The signs welcoming people to Oxford inform people that Oxford is a cycling city; Oxford is also a world leader in trying to improve air quality. Evidence from previous events shows an average of 60% of those who attended the event were 'inspired to use their bikes more'.
10. The Youth Sports Trust says there is a direct correlation between girls' future life chances and the amount of physical activity they do in their younger years. A 2018 report from the Office of National Statistics showed that boys aged between eight and 15 years old spend almost twice as much time doing sports activities as girls of the same age. The Council will be working with public health, schools and youth groups to maximise the legacy of this three-year deal with a focus on young women and girls.

11. The tour coincides with national cycling week which runs from 8<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. Oxford has a large cycling community and there are events planned that will be enhanced by the OVO Energy Women's Tour.
12. In addition, there are volunteering opportunities around supporting the races and contributing to any 'mini festivals' along the route that communities may organise. The event can be used to promote opportunities for children and young people to increase the time spent on exercise and social activity that will help to foster community cohesion and supports ongoing partnership working.
13. This three year contract could act as a catalyst to promote a programme of healthy living initiatives involving schools and communities. This would include activities such as pro cyclist to visits schools to give motivational talks.
14. The tour achieves good media coverage; in 2018 there were 1,240,000 viewers. There is extensive media coverage including national newspapers and cycling magazines. The teams have their own social media channels further increasing the reach of the tour.
15. Tourism is an important element of employment and economic prosperity for Oxfordshire. The media coverage and the attendance of people on the day of the event will have short, medium and long-term benefits for tourism in Oxfordshire. This will support businesses and employment.
16. The economic benefits of hosting the women's tour are analysed by SweetSpot for each stage. SweetSpot estimate the economic benefits of the 2018 OVO Energy Women's Cycle Tour to be £1.2 million for each stage. The financial benefits are delivered through overnight stays, spending in the local area and attraction of visitors from outside of the area.

### **Other Options Considered**

17. The alternative option would be to decline the opportunity to be involved. This option is not recommended because it would fail to bring the benefits outlined in this report to the residents and businesses.

### **Financial implications**

18. The cost of hosting the stage in 2019 is £175,000. This includes some additional costs for the start and finish locations as well as traffic management costs for the whole stage. The annual cost will be shared equally between the six local authorities.
19. Oxford City Council's share of the event for 2019 will be £30,000. For the 2019 event the Council's share will be funded from an appropriate reserve subject to Cabinet and Council approval. For the subsequent years funding requirements will be considered within the overall budget setting process. However, sponsorship will be sought for the event, which, if secured, would offset the costs.
20. All sponsorship achieved will be used to reduce the hosting costs evenly across the county, city and district partners.

21. There are likely to be additional costs in 2020 and 2021 when the tour starts and finishes in Oxfordshire. These costs will be worked through once the year two and year three routes are finalised and a budget bid will be made in line with the council's budget setting process.

## Legal issues

22. The event is being led by Oxfordshire County Council who will contract with SweetSpot. The contract between Oxfordshire County Council and SweetSpot is in the process of being finalised. Oxford City Council will need to enter into a funding agreement with the County Council.

23. To contribute resources to hosting a stage of the OVO Energy Women's Tour in 2019, 2020 and 2021 Oxford City Council intends to use the general power of competence. The general power of competence was provided for in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 Act. It gives councils confidence in their legal capacity to act for communities and is designed to allow local authorities to innovate. The general power of competence was provided on the basis that local authorities are able to do anything that an individual with full capacity might do, other than that which is specifically prohibited, with some limitations.

## Risk

24. An event specific Safety Advisory Group will be established to consider the detailed planning and risk mitigation measures. There are currently no identified high risks for this event. A risk register is included as appendix one.

## Equalities impact

25. An equalities impact assessment will be completed during the planning stages to consider potential implications for people with protected characteristics. This would include consideration regarding accessibility during any road or pavement closures and engaging with a range of community groups who may benefit from being involved with the event and any ancillary activities.

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**Background Papers:** None