

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 6 March 2015 Case Study of Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire

Recommendations

- a. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee considers the potential economic and social impact of the Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire.
- b. That the Committee continues to endorse the principles underpinning the County Council's Sportshire vision (particularly in relation to major events) in the context of our business priorities.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Transport

Background

1. This report was prepared at the request of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee. The Committee wished to explore the Ironman tender as an example of the Tourism Strategy in practice and examine the potential benefits for the people of Staffordshire and the local economy.
2. This report provides a summary of the projected social and economic impact of the Ironman in the local area. The report also sets out the progress to date and future plans to ensure a long-lasting legacy for the residents of Staffordshire.
3. In September 2013, Staffordshire County Council - in partnership with Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT) - began the development of the "Sportshire" agenda. Sportshire aims to create a compelling sporting offer which generates visitors, jobs and prosperity for our county. Central to the success of Sportshire is the delivery of a major events calendar.
4. On the approval of the Informal Cabinet, three major event tenders were submitted in 2014. The National Road Race Championships bid was unsuccessful but The Ironman 70.3 and UK Corporate Games were awarded, with these events taking place on June 14th and June 26th respectively.

Introduction

Sportshire

5. Sportshire aims to identify a suite of projects and interventions designed to achieve the step-change needed to transform Staffordshire into a leading sporting destination with a booming sporting economy. Four key objectives have been developed:
 - a. Staffordshire is known nationally as a “Sporting Destination” with a high-performing visitor economy.
 - b. The area hosts a calendar of significant sporting events, delivering economic growth, promoting Staffordshire and inspiring further participation.
 - c. The County has a thriving sports industry, which provides high levels of employment to local people.
 - d. Our residents participate regularly in sport and physical activity and enjoy the health benefits of an active lifestyle.

The realisation of these aspirations will contribute significantly to Staffordshire County Council’s priority outcomes of enabling residents to:

- a. Access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth.
- b. Be healthier and more independent.
- c. Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their communities.

Why bid for major events?

6. Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors within the global travel industry. The Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games stimulated the sector and last year over £1.1 billion was spent by live sport visitors in the UK. However, industry experts report the fastest growing trend is amongst tourists that travel to participate in sporting events. Increasingly, people are booking holidays around participation in an event or competition. These tourists are often high-spending and accompanied by non-participating friends or relatives, increasing the economic benefit to the destination. It is this market that offers the greatest opportunity for Staffordshire’s visitor economy.
7. Staffordshire has a unique proposition in terms of its natural environment. A National Park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Country Parks, expanses of open water, rock-climbing and specialist mountain-biking facilities can all be found within our borders. In this way, the County is well-suited to host large-scale, outdoor, mass-participation events. Amongst other assets is the world-leading facility, Saint George’s Park: home to each of England’s 24 national football teams and the venue of Team England’s 2014 Commonwealth Games preparation camp.

8. In 2014, in an attempt to harness the potential of these assets, we successfully tendered for two major sporting events: Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 and the 2015 UK Corporate Games. These events will attract an estimated 14,000 visitors into the area, creating a projected economic impact of 7.2 million pounds. Furthermore, these events will provide a global platform to promote Staffordshire both as a destination for sport but also as a great place to do business.
9. Before compiling these event tenders, a cost-benefit analysis was completed on a number of potential mass-participation events. Based on that activity, Ironman, UK Corporate Games and National Road Race Championships emerged as events that would be likely to achieve our strategic objectives and represent the greatest value for money.

Demographic of the competitors	High earners with large disposable incomes, typically with families
Typical length of stay	2 nights
Size of field	2000-3000
Television coverage	Channel 4, highlights package
Ratio of competitor to spectators	1:4
Projected economic impact	2.7 Million pounds
Cost of licence fee	£100,000 per year for three years

Figure 1.1 Rational for Ironman Tender

10. The reported benefits from previous Ironman host cities in the UK (ranging from economic impact, health of residents, to destination marketing) reinforced the case to put forward a bid.

In Bolton, the race generates a total spend of around £2.7 million annually. This includes an athlete race week spend of £1.4m on food and accommodation. Spectators spend around £1 million while Ironman themselves spend around £180,000 on local suppliers. An additional £273,000 gets spent in the area on course recces and training camps throughout the year. The success of the event has led to Ironman becoming a central element in Bolton City Council's tourism strategy.

Ironman Wales reports that an estimated economic impact of £3.4 million is generated for Pembrokeshire annually. An athlete survey revealed that 54% of competitors had previously never visited the area; 98.9% said they would return in the next three years: a significant legacy for the visitor economy.

11. On Feb 4th the Informal Cabinet approved the business case to bid for the event. This included £300,000 investment over three years and the free use of the Shugborough Estate and Chasewater Country Park.
12. Following a competitive tender process which included venue recces with delegations from the Ironman global headquarters (Tamper, USA) - Staffordshire was awarded a three year contract to host the event beginning on 14 June 2015. It will be the first new UK Ironman event for 11 years.

Ironman Staffordshire 70.3

13. The World Triathlon Corporation (WTC) is a global event organiser with responsibility for the delivery of a series of long-distance triathlon races. These races have three main formats: Ironman, Ironman 70.3 and Ironkids. With over 100 races worldwide, featuring 200,000 athletes and an estimated 2 million spectators, Ironman has global appeal and is broadly acknowledged as one of the most respected brands in sport.
14. The Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 consists of a 1.2-mile (1.9 km) swim, a 56-mile (90 km) bike ride, and a 13.1-mile (21.1 km) run. The course takes in four Staffordshire's districts (Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Stafford) and a number of key visitor destinations including Chasewater, Cannock Chase and the Shugborough Estate (See Appendix 1.1 for course maps).
15. Over the event weekend Ironman will deliver Ironkids - a 'run only' event for children aged 3-14 years - to be held in the grounds of Shugborough Hall Estate with participants finishing under the iconic Ironman gantry. The focus of Ironkids is on fun and active lifestyles and the event will be aimed at local families. 500 athletes were signed up at the time of writing.

Successes to date

16. The launch of the event was supported by an innovative social media campaign led by Staffordshire County Council. The series of short teaser videos released in advance of the launch reached over 77,000 people.

Pre-registration for the event closed after reaching 8,000, with event capacity of just 2,600. Tickets went on sale on August 26th and sold out in just 14 minutes making Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 the fastest selling event in Ironman's global history.

The event has attracted 2600 participants from 36 countries, with competitors travelling from destinations such as Australia, New Zealand and America. 14% of the competitors are Staffordshire residents (see appendix 1.2). This means that while the event has attracted a healthy level of local representation, the demand for accommodation and other spending activity from out of area participants, will provide a significant boost to our visitor economy.

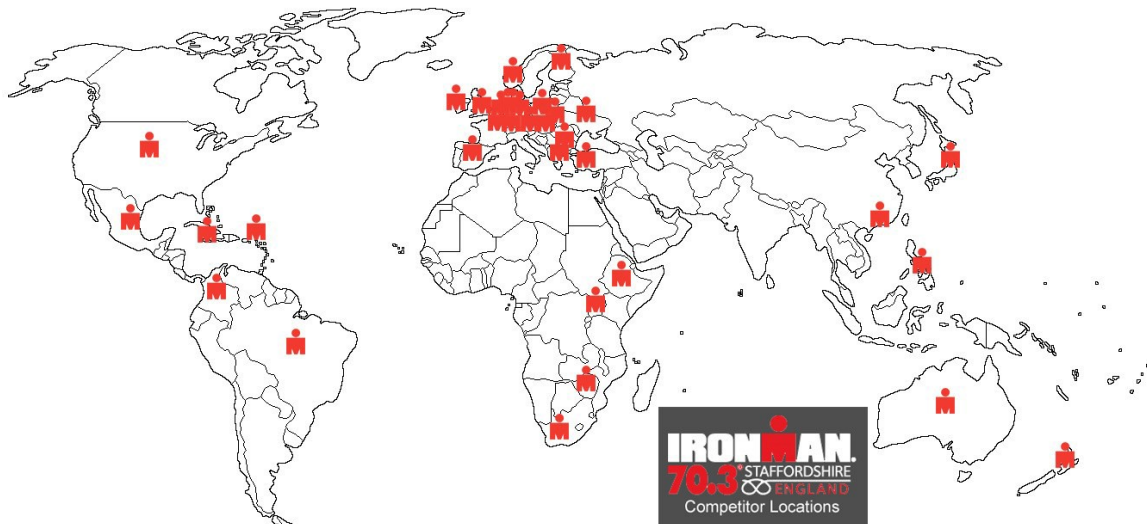


Figure 1.2 Country of residence of Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire competitors

17. The worldwide appeal of Ironman creates an avenue from which to market Staffordshire. The participation of celebrity chef, Gordon Ramsey, has already generated significant media exposure. Ramsey has been interviewed about the event both in the national press and on prime time television. Chat show host Jonathon Ross, Sky Sports presenter Charlie Webster and former England Footballer Danny Mills have also confirmed their participation.

Partnership Working

18. To date, one of the key outcomes of the tender process and operational planning has been of the strengthening our relationship with strategic partners locally.

Health

19. The Sportshire concept and subsequent event plan have been developed in consultation with Public Health. The creation of a varied and appealing calendar of events supports the “Active Staffordshire” aspiration of “everyone, active, more often”. Although the event is unlikely to attract physically inactive participants, the competitor demographics show that for 57% of athletes it is their first time competing over this distance. As a result we expect to see an increase in the activity levels of “semi-sporty” individuals. The relay format of the events allows participants to compete in one discipline and provides a stepping-stone to multi-sport activity.

As part of the contract agreement with Ironman, Staffordshire County Council received 6 individual and 6 team places for SCC employees which were allocated via a ballot. We intend to monitor the impact that participation in the event has on the employees’ physical activity behaviours and general feelings of wellbeing.

Entrust

20. Entrust have been a key partner in the planning and delivery of the event. The close proximity of the course to their Outdoor Education Centres (Chasewater, Latches Wood and Shugborough) presents a substantial commercial opportunity to the outdoor education strand of their business. Entrust have subsequently entered contract discussions with Ironman to deliver a number of services including swim safety support, catering, transport and group accommodation.

Entrust have also opened up onsite camping for competitors at their Shugborough site, with pitches for over 1000 people available; The onsite Yurts sold out immediately. As well as generating revenue, Entrust's involvement in the event will also raise awareness of their current outdoor recreation offer to a large population of physically active and affluent competitors.

Volunteering

21. SASSOT have been commissioned by Ironman to recruit the 600 volunteers necessary to deliver the event. They are working with VAST to ensure that we can retain sport volunteers in these roles beyond the life of the event, growing the capacity of our volunteering workforce locally.
22. Work is being undertaken in partnership with Triathlon England to improve the sports infrastructure across the County. A series of "Go-Tri" events aimed at increasing participation will be delivered this spring and additional support will be available to both Staffordshire's triathlon clubs and coaches, helping them manage any increases in demand they experience as a result of the event.

Hospitality

23. Working with training provider, Winning Moves, a Sports Tourism module has been developed for the Staffordshire hospitality industry. The module will work with the sector to make the most of the commercial opportunities presented by Ironman and the UK Corporate Games. The first workshop was delivered in November and will ultimately be supported by an electronic toolkit to help businesses develop content and promote services via social media.
24. A dedicated page has been developed on the Enjoy Staffordshire website to promote the local hospitality offer. Competitors and spectators can find information regarding accommodation, visitor attractions and places to eat and drink.

Conservation

25. Ironman are conducting a number of ecological assessments at Chasewater. This will provide local ecologists with a better understanding about the habitat at Chasewater following the major dam repairs.
26. A communication plan designed at both raising awareness of the conservation issues facing the site and encouraging potential visitors to enjoy the area responsibly has also been developed with Cannock Chase AONB Unit.

Conclusion

27. Hosting a mass participation event of this nature will deliver growth within the visitor economy through an increase in out-of-area visitor spend. The Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 will help further promote the County as a global destination for sport and enhance the credentials of our events industry.
28. The Sportshire agenda has made significant step towards achieving its vision statements. It is hoped the delivery of this event, will provide further evidence of the multi-agenda impact sport can have.

Report Author: Jude Taylor

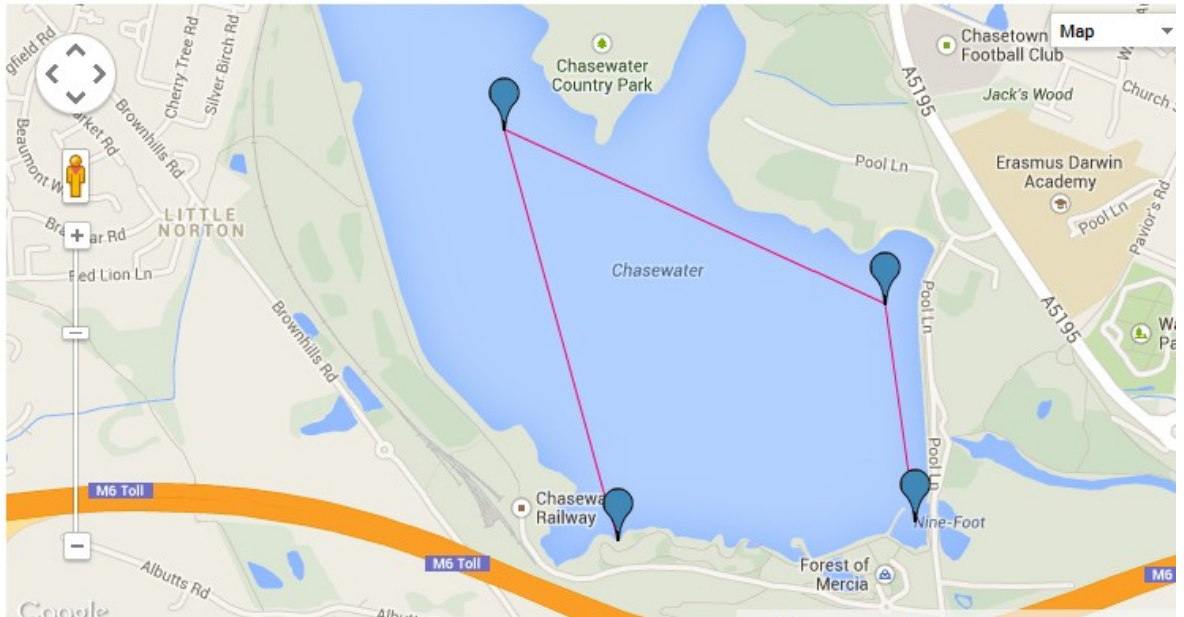
Job Title: Sportshire Coordinator

Telephone No: 01785 276637

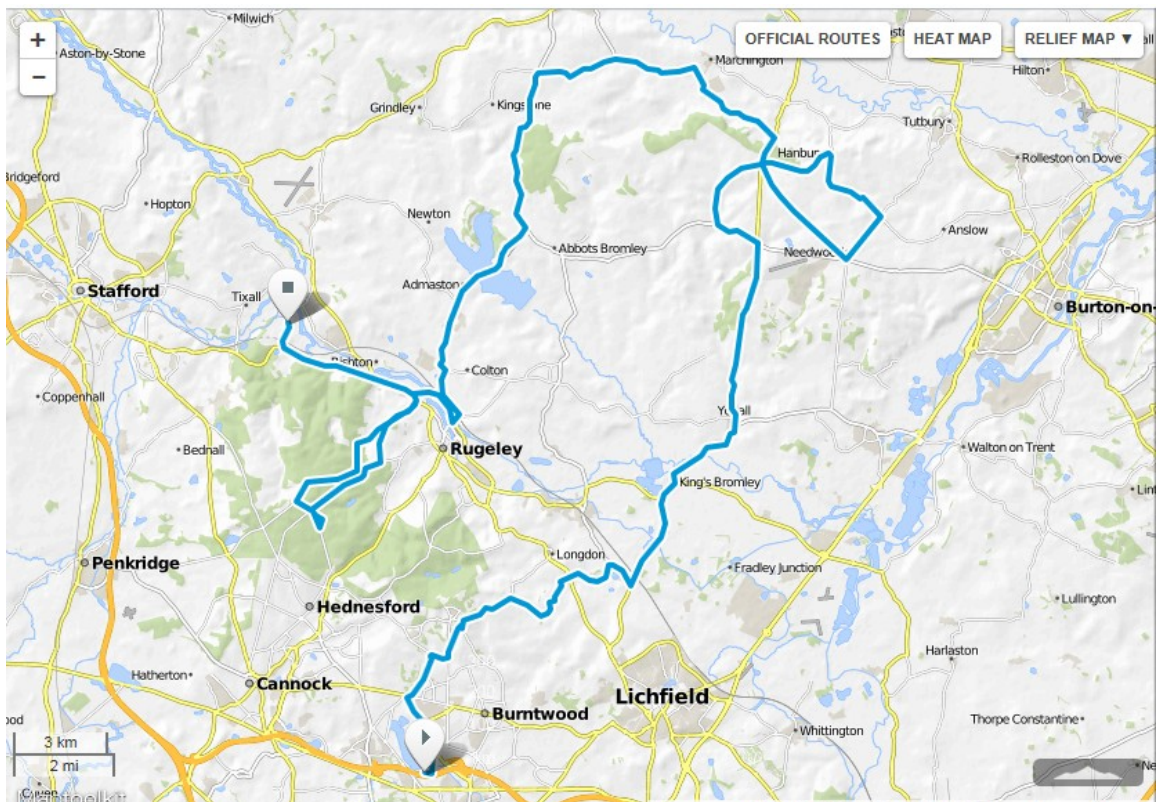
Email: jude.taylor@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendix

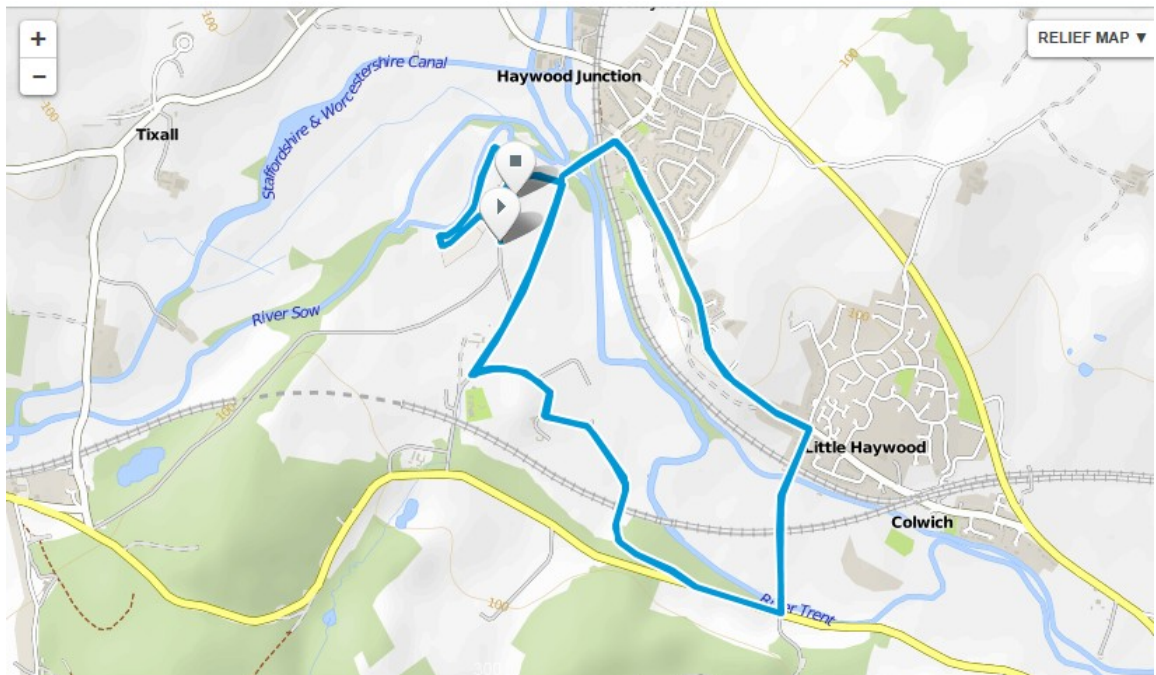
1.1 Ironman Swim Course



1.2 Ironman Bike Course



1.3 Ironman Run course



2.1 Athlete profile, Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 2015

Male	79%
Female	21%
First Timer	57%
Age	
Average	40.31
Oldest	72
Youngest	18

GBR (Great Britain)	94.30%	GER (Germany)	0.10%	ZWE (Zimbabwe)	0.10%
IRL (Ireland)	1.00%	JAM (Jamaica)	0.10%	UKR (Ukraine)	0.10%
SUI (Switzerland)	0.10%	FRA (France)	0.20%	FIN (Finland)	0.10%
USA (United States)	0.80%	ETH (Ethiopia)	0.20%	ESP (Spain)	0.10%
AUS (Australia)	0.40%	NZL (New Zealand)	0.30%	POL (Poland)	0.30%
BRA (Brazil)	0.10%	JPN (Japan)	0.10%	NOR (Norway)	0.10%
ZAF (South Africa)	0.40%	HUN (Hungary)	0.10%	TUR (Turkey)	0.10%
CAN (Canada)	0.20%	CHE (Switzerland)	0.10%	GRC (Greece)	0.10%
DEU (Germany)	0.20%	LVA (Latvia)	0.10%	SVK (Slovakia)	0.10%
VGB (Virgin Island, British)	0.20%	PHL (Philippines)	0.10%	AUT (Austria)	0.10%
BEL (Belgium)	0.20%	MEX (Mexico)	0.10%	HKG (Hong Kong)	0.10%
NLD (Netherlands)	0.20%	BGR (Bulgaria)	0.10%		

Staffordshire Residents

288

14%

2.2 UK competitors' location, based on current postcode

