



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 29 JUNE 2016
LEAD OFFICER: MATT GLAZIER, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (WBC)

SUBJECT: SURREY HALF MARATHON 2017

AREA: WOKING

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Surrey Half Marathon has successfully taken place in the Woking/Guildford area since 2014. The event organisers, aat events, are seeking approval for the next three years (2017, 2018, 2019) to hold the Surrey Half Marathon event and kids race annually in March each year in Woking.

Additionally, in support of the borough's health and wellbeing agenda, the event organisers are seeking approval to introduce for the first time in 2017 (and then subsequently annually depending on its success / operational implications) a 5km race which they consider will attract a different cohort of runners potentially attracting those individuals who are currently inactive into regular exercise. From an event logistics viewpoint, the introduction of the 5km event would result in the existing event road closure period being extended by up to an additional 30 minutes – to 1.00pm. The route will remain as it was in 2016.

Whilst Surrey County Council's Highways and Events Team are supportive of the Surrey Half Marathon and kids race taking place, Surrey County Council colleagues have concerns about the impact on extending road closures by 30 minutes particularly on those individuals in a care capacity delivering lunchtime support. Surrey County Council as a result have therefore stipulated that should the Joint Committee be supportive of the 5km race, that all complaints arising from the event as a whole should then be handled directly by Woking Borough Council and not Surrey County Council. On balance, and subject to agreeing accessible entry fees for the 5km, and agreeing with aat-events mitigation arrangements for care-givers that maybe impacted by the extended road closure times, then the borough council would be keen to support the addition of the 5km event.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Woking Joint Committee is asked to agree that:

- (i) The Surrey Half Marathon and kids race can start and finish at Woking Leisure Centre on Sunday 12 March 2017, Sunday 11 March 2018 and Sunday 10 March 2019, and

- (ii) The 2017 event and all future events (subject to any significant operational issues) include a 5km race at an affordable and appropriate entry rate, therefore permitting the event to start at 8.15am and finish at 12.45pm, with roads closed from 7.45am-1pm, and
- (iii) That unless there are any major operational issues of concern or significant requests by the Event Organisers to modify the event following the 2017 event, that subject to a full event debrief the Woking Safety Advisory Group give approval for future events to take place in 2018 and 2019.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are significant benefits to the event organiser if approval can be provided for events in 2017, 2018 and 2019, increasing entry numbers and allowing forward planning.

Although the introduction of a 5km race underpins Woking Borough Council's Health and Well Being aspirations and the extension of the road closures by up to 30 minutes can be mitigated with limited increased inconvenience to residents above and beyond that of the 2016 event, concerns remain about the entry fee of £18 and whether this is fully inclusive given that it is aimed at beginners (Park Run for example is free).

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Background

- 1.1 The aim of the Surrey Half Marathon event is to provide a safe, community-based mass participation sports event for Woking and the surrounding communities. The running events will focus on being fun and family-friendly whilst also catering to more serious runners looking to complete the course as quickly as possible.
- 1.2 2016 was the third edition of the Surrey Half, a closed road half marathon run starting and finishing at Woking Leisure Centre. The route follows the roads to Sutton Green and Jacobs Well, through Worplesdon and Mayford and back to Woking Leisure Centre. 3,300 runners took part in 2016 (of the 4300 registered), predominantly 20-65 years old, with 550 runners taking part in the Kids' Challenge, aged 6-16 years. The event was supported by 250 volunteers and viewed by an estimated 3000 spectators, predominantly local residents.

2016 Event Feedback

- 1.3 The 2016 Surrey Half Marathon was widely received as the most successful yet by residents and stakeholders alike. Broadly speaking there were less traffic management issues, fewer resident complaints (official complaints received by Surrey County Council reduced to 1 in 2016, from 12 in 2015), roads were re-opened on time and in some cases ahead of schedule. This was in part due to a more robust marketing and communications plan for local residents, the event becoming more visible to residents now it is in its third year and keeping a largely consistent route, so residents are fully aware of exact road closures and timings.
- 1.4 The proposed 2017 route will remain the same as the 2016 route (Appendix 1).

Improvements for 2017

- 1.5 Further to event feedback from stakeholders, runners and supporters alike, the following are suggested areas for improvement which at-events are keen to address going forward:
- More café and food stalls within the event village (Woking Leisure Centre).
 - Restaurant discount coupon booklet to be given to each runner to drive footfall into Woking town centre.
 - Introduction of 5km race for beginners, to create a more inclusive event.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The Borough Council is confident that the event organisers can successfully deliver a Half Marathon event that benefits local residents, local charities and underpins the Council's Health and Well Being aspirations. They have evidenced this by delivering 3 successful events, which have greatly improved year on year, with only a few minor improvements required for 2017. Therefore, subject to any major incidents, the borough council are supportive of seeking approval for the event to take place in 2017, 2018 and 2019.
- 2.2 Following consultation with relevant partners, the main challenge to address however is whether the benefits of introducing a 5km race into the event, outweighs the potential negative impact on residents.
- 2.3 The 5km race will start at 8.15am and finish at 9am, with the Half Marathon starting at 9.15am and finishing at 12.45pm. For reference Appendix 2 clearly shows the changes that would occur between the 2016 timetable and 2017 timetable with introduction of the 5km event, and Appendix 3 the proposed route.
- 2.4 The introduction of a 5km race does underpin the Council's Health and Well Being aspirations, providing an inclusive, mass participation event.
- 2.5 However, concerns have been raised regarding the price of 5km entry and up to 30min increase to road closures, although a 1.00pm re-opening is a worst case scenario.
- 2.6 A number of different scenarios identifying the 'pro's and cons' of each option are highlighted for the Joint Committees information below.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 **Option 1 - Surrey Half Marathon** to take place on Sunday 12 March 2017 (and on Sunday 11 March 2018 and Sunday 10 March 2019) **with the introduction of a 5km race**

3.1.1 Pros of 5km Race

- Inclusive event for all abilities, with addition of 5km, underpins the council's Health and Well Being aspirations, by providing an inclusive mass participation event
- Later finish for the Half Marathon, may result in increased lunchtime visitors to the town centre, enhanced by the introduction of a voucher system for local restaurants (subject to agreement with local businesses).

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- More events to watch for spectators, Kids race, Half and then 5km
 - Roads will close at 7.45am for the 5km race to start at 8.15am, only 15mins earlier than in 2016, when roads closed at 8am and the half marathon didn't start until 9am.

3.1.2 Cons of 5km race

- Road closure extended by an additional 25mins to 1pm, was 12.35pm in 2016.
- This extended road closure, although minimal, will result in more residents being inconvenienced for longer.
- Woking Borough Council Officers will become responsible for any road closure related complaints, as Surrey County Council colleagues, who would usually deal with these complaints do not support the extension to the road closures. They have also raised concerns about lunchtime access for carers if event is extended (See Section 4 for further details).
- 5km race does not allow for walkers, as this would negatively impact on road re-opening times.
- Cost of 5km race seems expensive at £18 per runner, when you can take part in Park Run for free.

3.1.3 Pros of approving the event up until 2019 (subject to any major incidents)

- Allows forward planning by the event organisers
- Allows for them to open entries for each event as soon as the previous event has taken place, therefore increasing entry numbers.
- Provides consistency and fits in well with London Marathon training schedules.

3.2 Option 2 – Surrey Half Marathon to take place on Sunday 12 March 2017 (and in 2018 and 2019) without the introduction of a 5km race

3.2.1 Pros

- Event will run as it did in 2016, with the same route and same timings, meaning there will be consistency, now residents have become familiar with the event.
- Surrey County Council will continue to field road closure complaints, as they would usually for events of this nature.
- Roads re-open at 12.35pm, so no/minimal issues with carer's lunchtime access.

3.2.2 Cons

- No beginners offer, therefore not as inclusive.

- Potentially spectators and runners will go home for lunch rather than considering the town centre options, therefore potential for loss of income for the town centre.

3.3 Option 3 – Surrey Half Marathon to take place on Sunday 12 March 2017 only, future events need to be approved on an annual basis.

3.3.1 Pros

- Gives the committee and officers the chance to review the event on an annual basis and therefore only provide approval if the event has been run successfully the previous year.

3.3.2 Cons

- Does not allow forward planning from the event organisers.
- Potential loss of entry, if next year's event cannot capture the interest as soon as the previous event has finished.
- Additional time and resource to seek approval annually.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with various Surrey County Council departments including:
- 4.2 Matt Jezzard SCC Traffic Manager: "The later the start time, the later the finish time. I would not be supportive of a later start on this basis as traffic levels will increase as the day progresses and a greater number of motorists will be adversely affected."
- 4.3 Liz Ulisz Deputy Director - Adult Social Care: "I agree with Matt. The later finish could interfere with lunch time calls."
- 4.4 Alan Morris – Emergency Planning: "If it was decided by the Councillors and Woking BC that they did wish to allow the organiser to run with a later finish time we would expect all complaints regarding the event including closing the roads to be dealt with by Woking BC and the event organiser as from the SCC officer point of we do not support the idea of changing the start / finish time."
- 4.5 SCC Events Team – response to aat-events enquiry 9 June 2016: "After discussing the proposed timings and new 5km event, we would like to state our provisional support for the 2017 Surrey Half plans. Concerns still remain over how the later road reopening will impact on lunch time calls for care providers. This is one area for further resolution. Alan has previously noted that if the later starting time receives support from Councillors as well as from Woking BC, we would expect all complaints regarding the event including closing the roads to be dealt with by Woking BC and yourselves, the event organisers."

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There is no direct cost to Woking Borough Council or Surrey County Council.

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- 5.2 Aat-events will meet all appropriate costs for hosting the event on Surrey Highways and event management overall, seeking local sponsors as appropriate.
- 5.3 The 2016 event raised an estimated £360,000 - £400,000 for charity.
- 5.4 Proposed Entry fees for 2017 are: Kids race £10-£12, Adults £30-£40, 5km £18. Discussion will take place with the event organisers to ensure entry fees are as accessible as possible as well as looking to promote linked opportunities in support of wider health and wellbeing activities. (ie: NHS Coach to 5km course).

6. RISK MANAGEMENT:

- 6.1 In considering whether the 5km event should be endorsed, the event organisers have been asked to respond to various concerns raised as outlined below:

Risk 1: Carers not able to access patients between 12pm-1pm for lunch or any other associated visits.

Mitigation – all local care providers are contacted as a matter of course, this has been done for all previous events and where required personal travel plans can be provided for carers to access their patients. This is managed by the event organiser.

Risk 2: Increase in complaints from local residents, due to road closures being increased by 30 minutes.

Mitigation – all residents along the route will receive two letters informing them of road opening and closing times. Along with all other associated marketing and comms.

Risk 3: Resource and knowledge to deal with traffic / road closure complaints, usually dealt with by Surrey County Council and associated reputational impact on Woking Borough Council.

Mitigation – Sports Development Officer will be responsible for fielding these complaints and will continue to consult with Surrey County Council and event organisers throughout the whole process. Given the number of complaints in 2016, resource should not be a concern, given that the event will be largely the same.

Risk 4: If the start of the 5km is delayed for some reason or the slowest runner takes longer than 45mins, there will be a delay to the start of the Half Marathon, which will increase the length of time the roads will be closed, pushing it back further into the afternoon.

Mitigation – research has been done and Park Run slowest runners take 45 minutes, allowing 15 minute clear up before the start of the half marathon, at a last resort, very slow 5km runners can be held back on Westfield Avenue while half marathon runners pass.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The event as a whole provides an inclusive, mass participation event to the residents of Woking and surrounding areas.

- 7.2 The event also provides the opportunity for local residents to volunteer and spectate at a closed road mass participation event, which is on their doorstep.
- 7.3 Spectator hotspots along the route allow communities to come together to watch the event and enjoy live entertainment.

8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 By providing another race (5km) the race becomes more inclusive, attracting not just regular runners, but also beginners. This, in partnership with the half marathon and kids race provides an inclusive event that could, in theory, be accessed by a number of residents of Woking.
- 8.2 A potential barrier to participation could be the cost of entry, as detailed within Section 5 which will be subject to further discussion with the event organisers.
- 8.3 Aat-events completed an Equalities Impact Assessment from for the 2016 and will do so for the 2017 event, once agreed.

9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below
Human Resource/Training and Development	No significant implications arising from this report

Public Health implications

- 9.1 The event under-pins Woking Borough Council's Health & Well Being ambitions around providing opportunities for mass participation events. The introduction of a 5km race further supports these aspirations, providing an inclusive event that caters for a greater cross section of the local community i.e. experienced runners, children and beginners.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 10.1 The Surrey Half Marathon was successfully delivered in 2016, with a number of improvements made by the event organiser to ensure complaints were kept to a minimum, the event has improved year on year.

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- 10.2 The organisers have taken on board the feedback from the 2016 event and are again looking at ways to improve the event in 2017.
- 10.3 There are significant benefits to the event organiser if approval can be provided for events in 2017, 2018 and 2019. It is therefore proposed that unless there are any major operational issues of concern or significant requests by the Event Organisers to modify the event following the 2017 event, that subject to a full event debrief the Woking Safety Advisory Group give approval for future events to take place in 2018 and 2019.
- 10.4 Although the introduction of a 5km race underpins Woking Borough Council's Health and Well Being aspirations and the extension of the road closures by 25 minutes, (this is a worst case scenario and is likely to be just a 15 minute increase if half marathon runs as it did in 2016) can be mitigated with limited increased inconvenience to residents above and beyond that of the 2016 event, concerns remain about the entry fee of £18 and whether this is fully inclusive given that it is aimed at beginners (Park Run for example is free). Discussions will be pursued with the Event Organisers to reach what is considered an accessible entry fee.

Recommendations:

- (i) The Surrey Half Marathon and kids race can start and finish at Woking Leisure Centre on Sunday 12 March 2017, Sunday 11 March 2018 and Sunday 10 March 2019, and
- (ii) The 2017 event and all future events (subject to any significant operational issues) include a 5km race at an affordable and appropriate entry rate, therefore permitting the event to start at 8.15am and finish at 12.45pm, with roads closed from 7.45am-1pm, and
- (iii) That unless there are any major operational issues of concern or significant requests by the Event Organisers to modify the event following the 2017 event, that subject to a full event debrief the Woking Safety Advisory Group give approval for future events to take place in 2018 and 2019.

11. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 11.1 If the 5km race is approved then the event organisers will begin marketing the event and informing residents / stakeholders and members of road closures via a range of media and comms.
- 11.2 If the 5km is approved, a discussion should be had between Woking Borough Council Officers and Event organisers about the entry fee and whether this could be made more inclusive. Discussions will long the lines of kids race to remain at £10 with 5km race costing £12.
- 11.3 If the 5Km race is not approved then the communication will remain largely the same as if it was approved.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Surrey County Council Traffic Management
Surrey County Council Emergency Planning
Surrey County Council Adult Social Care
Surrey County Council Events Team

Borough Portfolio Holder

Councillor David Bittleston

Annexes:

Appendix 1 – Surrey Half Marathon 2016 Route Map
Appendix 2 - Surrey Half Marathon Pro's and Con's Report – author Toby Jenkins aat-events
Appendix 3 – 2017 5km Route Map – author Toby Jenkins aat-events

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