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Mid Sussex Marathon Weekend Board Proposal September 2019

It is proposed that this document be discussed at the next Mid Sussex Marathon Weekend Board meeting, on 1st November 2019.

1. Overview

Since the inaugural event in 2012 the Mid Sussex Marathon Weekend (MSMW) has evolved into a popular and successful annual event. Since July 2014 the responsibility to manage and deliver MSMW has been with Places Leisure as part of their contract with Mid Sussex District Council to operate their leisure facilities. Places Leisure has sub-contracted the Event Planning and Delivery to Active House Solutions since the 2015 event.

The event now consists of 3 events on each of the 3 days: Fun Run, Mile and Marathon. It has reached a point where race numbers have plateaued, so the event needs to evolve or it will become stemmed.

There is significant potential to grow the event and bring more people into the District over the 3-day weekend. The local economy and tourism sector could both benefit to a greater extent than they already do. The event could also be used as a vehicle to promote health, wellbeing and active lifestyles within the local community.

Places Leisure and Active House Solutions would like the MSMW Board to consider the following proposals in order to realise the potential growth and benefits:

1. Re-Brand

- **Proposal:** Create a versatile, modern brand to provide a visual brand identity for MSMW. Such work would result in the creation of a brand toolkit and guidelines.
- **Rationale:**
 - The existing brand assets currently consist of only a single logo.
 - MSMW requires a significant amount of marketing material and branded collateral each year.
 - A new brand will strengthen MSMW's commercial impact and improve opportunity for sponsor brand association and merchandise.

2. New Half Marathon Event

- **Proposal:** Introduce new events that adopt the same unique 3-day format:
 - East Grinstead 5 Mile
 - Haywards Heath 5 Mile
 - Burgess Hill 5k
 - 3-day Half Marathon
- **Rationale:**
 - As a well-established event there is an opportunity to introduce new races that will complement the current offering.

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- Open up MSMW to attract a new audience, making it more accessible and giving new and inexperienced runners the opportunity to “graduate” towards the 3-day Marathon.
- Provide a local event that can fit within the “Couch to 5k” initiative.
- Create further sponsorship opportunities
- Generate further revenue to start realising a surplus for community investment and further event expansion.

3. 2020 Event Proposals

a. Sponsors

- Packages:
 - Marathon & Half Marathon Sponsor:
 - **Proposed:** Roche Diagnostics
 - Fun Run & Mile Sponsor:
 - **Proposed:** Hurst College
 - Race Bag Sponsors:
 - **Proposed:** TBC
 - Media Partner:
 - **Proposed:** TBC
- Sponsor benefits:
 - MSMW Brand association:
 - Logo placement on medal ribbons, T-shirts (runner and volunteer), race numbers, selfie frames, presentation backdrop, promotional material, website
 - Social media posts
 - Website features
 - Press releases and articles
 - Places Leisure centres:
 - Digital display boards
 - Website features
 - Social media posts
 - Event Day:
 - VIP invitation
 - 5m x 5m space
 - PA announcements
 - Runner race bags
 - 5 races places and free 1 month membership to support training

b. Charity Partner

- **Proposal:** NSPCC
- **Rationale:**
 - The NSPCC is the UK’s leading children’s charity fighting to end child abuse.

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- NSPCC's Sussex organisation are visiting primary schools across Sussex delivering their "Speak out, stay safe" programme, which will present a great opportunity to promote MSMW Fun Run and Mile events.
- The Charity is seeking to get local exposure with the aim of recruiting new volunteers, which compliments the MSMW's requirement for volunteers.
- The overall purpose of the partnership will be to encourage increased runner and volunteer participation in MSMW.
- NSPCC to provide:
 - Support volunteer recruitment each race day
 - Provide lunch bags/refreshments (or cost of) for volunteers on each race day
 - PR and marketing: partnership press releases, NSPCC participant profiling, radio where possible
 - Social media exposure – NSPCC London and South East page, plus promotion on local Facebook pages
 - Post-race runner support e.g. NSPCC branded marquee offering massages
 - Possible provision of children's entertainment on race day (e.g. face painting)
- NSPCC to receive:
 - Official charity partner recognition
 - Inclusion of logo on marketing materials/communications and on social media
 - Link to NSPCC Justgiving page and sponsorship form via race listing on entry page, in confirmation email, and in pre-race communications to encourage runners to use their place to fundraise for the NSPCC
 - Race Day branding
 - Option to include NSPCC literature in goody bags
 - First right of refusal as charity partner for 2021

c. Entry Prices

4. Council Support and Point of Contact

Help MSMW to reach out to the business community to generate inward investment opportunities.

Use MSMW as a vehicle to champion health, wellbeing and active lifestyles.

Organise further activities beyond the standard offering at the respective event day.

5. Marketing Fund

Proposal: Each Council is asked to consider the allocation of up to £2,000 in order to create a Marketing Fund. It is anticipated that each of the 4 Councils will make an equal contribution.

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Rationale: The fund will be used to boost the existing marketing budget and increase the reach beyond the **RH** and **BN** postcodes where the majority of our entries currently come from. A campaign would involve increased paid Social Media advertising and visual marketing on the London Transport Network.

Much like MSDC contributes to the upkeep and maintenance of its leisure facilities it is suggested that the Councils see this as an inward investment request as an opportunity to keep their asset fresh and evolving.

The impact of this fund will be reviewed after the 2020 event; see *Economic Impact Analysis*.

6. Economic Impact Analysis

Proposal: Active House Solutions and Places Leisure will seek to complete an analysis of Economic Impact after the MSMW 2020 event, with a view to establishing guidance for future development and investment into the event. This could be a piece of work that the MSDC Regeneration & Economy Programme Manager supports with.

Rationale: An excellent example of how an event has grown in the Brighton Marathon, which has a huge economic benefit to the City. After it's inaugural year the City Council and Event Delivery partner carried out an Economic Impact Analysis: [https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000137/M00002897/AI00016780/\\$BrightonMarathonEconomicImpactFinalReport.pdfA.ps.pdf](https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000137/M00002897/AI00016780/$BrightonMarathonEconomicImpactFinalReport.pdfA.ps.pdf). An EIA of MSMW would assess the benefit of proposed and future investment in the event.

7. MSMW Patron

Proposal: Appoint a Patron for MSMW who will be a suitable figurehead for the event to provide credibility and support. It is suggested that Mims Davies be considered.

Rationale: MSMW would benefit from having a figurehead who will assume the role of guardian over the event. Whilst there is a contract in place to ensure the annual delivery of the event MSMW's current set-up relies heavily on particular individuals. Should any or all of these individuals move on then it is important that the event ethos and principles are maintained.

A Patron can also potentially enhance the credentials of MSMW and be influential in engaging various organisations and parties to participate in the event.

There maybe opportunities in the near and long term future for MSMW to host events further to the race weekend. Events to promote networking, supplier engagement, and potentially a 10 Year celebration dinner would benefit from being hosted by a Patron.