



<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Acting Chief Recreation Officer</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Recreation Delegated Decision Panel</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> December 2007</b>

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Leeds Half Marathon</b>
-----------------	----------------------------

<b>This Report is for:</b>			
Discussion Only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information Only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Advice/consideration prior to taking a Key or Major decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Decision to be taken by:</b>			
Full Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Governance and Audit Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Executive Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Standards Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
An Area Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member Management Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A Regulatory Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A Chief Officer using delegated authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Executive Summary

The Leeds Half Marathon and Associated Events are held in early May each year and have taken place for the last 27 years in a number of different formats. In 2007, the race had to implement full road closures on the route and these restrictions were very inconvenient to local residents and businesses.

Leeds City Council also contribute to the Jane Tomlinson 10k event, and in 2007 this was hailed a huge success with the organisers hoping to increase the number of entries in 2008 to approximately 12,000. With the Jane Tomlinson 10k and the Abbey Dash taking place in June and November respectively each year, it is considered that there is now less requirement for another major city centre running event within Leeds.

The Recreation Delegated Decision Panel are asked to approve the recommendation that the Leeds Half Marathon will not take place in 2008.

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide background to the Leeds Half Marathon and Associated Events, one of the biggest annual participation events held in Leeds. (The event is organised by the Sport Development section of the Sport and Active Recreation Service).
- 1.2 To highlight the current impact on the residents and businesses of Leeds through full road closures of the route and other additional restrictions on traffic.

- 1.3 To provide information around the impact of the Jane Tomlinson 10k and the Abbey Dash, that take place in the City Centre on an annual basis.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Leeds Half Marathon (formerly the Leeds Full and Half Marathon) and Associated Events are held in early May each year and have taken place for the last 27 years in a number of different formats. In 2007 there were nearly 6,000 participants taking part in events that are part of the day. These are:

- The Half Marathon with approximately 3,800 adult runners;
- The Corporate Challenge Relay with 150 teams of six runners;
- The Family Fun Run with 1100 participants.

- 2.2 The Leeds Fun Run is held in the city centre on roads closed to traffic. The Half Marathon and Corporate Challenge event (a relay event around the 13.1 miles Half Marathon route) follows a route from the city centre out to the Ring Road through Meanwood, west bound along the Ring Road to Horsforth before returning to the city along the A65 Kirkstall Road. The majority of runners will run on the road to provide a wider and more consistent surface than pavements and will cross major junctions including the A660 Otley Road at Weetwood and Kirkstall Road/Kirkstall Lane crossroads near the sports centre and Morrisons retail park.

- 2.3 Although the events start at 9.30am on a Sunday morning in May, the event causes considerable delays around the route for other road users. For example, some residents will only have emergency vehicular egress and access to their properties, due to them living in a cul-de-sac immediately off the route. Such traffic management arrangements create considerable frustration for residents that get caught up in the delays.

- 2.4 There have been three major road racing events held in Leeds during the past 12 months. In addition to the Leeds Half Marathon in May, the Jane Tomlinson 10k in mid June attracts 8,000 participants and the 10k Abbey Dash in November attracts 4,000 participants. The other events are organised externally to the Council by specific event management companies/individuals.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 In 2007, the route was fully closed to traffic on a rolling road closure basis, and complaints were received about the traffic restrictions from local residents and businesses living on the route. Some residents living on certain parts of the route and businesses on Kirkstall Road had no vehicular egress or access to their properties for approximately 90 minutes. Such length of closures were a major inconvenience to the residents and caused a direct financial impact on businesses who had limited or no trade.
- 3.2 The Council heavily supported the Jane Tomlinson 10k in June 2007. With over 8,000 participants in 2007, this now provides another major running event for Leeds

and is planned to take place on an annual basis. The event also attracted much media attention which has been very successful in raising the profile of Leeds as a major venue for a variety of events. This event may continue to require financial and other support in kind from the Council.

- 3.3 It is anticipated that approximately 12,000 participants will enter the Jane Tomlinson 10k event in 2008 (to be confirmed) with the number potentially increasing year-on-year. The organisers have also introduced a Corporate Challenge into the event, which would be in direct competition with the Corporate Challenge event within the Leeds Half Marathon and Associated Events.
- 3.4 In anticipation of further duplication discussions have taken place with the organisers of the Jane Tomlinson 10k and it is hoped that a Fun Run will take place in 2008 in one of Leeds City Council's Parks, which will be a partnership event with the Sport and Active Recreation Service.
- 3.5 In addition to the 2 large City Centre based runs, (these are the Jane Tomlinson 10k that takes place in June and the 10k Abbey Dash that takes place in November), there are also over twenty other 5k and 10k runs at various locations throughout the City. The Half Marathon date in May is now considered too close to the Jane Tomlinson 10k if the events are to be promoted effectively and for city exposure to be maximised. An alternative solution maybe to change the Half marathon date to later in the year. However, the summer holiday period would not attract many participants and October would be too close to the Abbey Dash event. This leaves the existing Half Marathon significantly compromised in terms of selecting an appropriate alternative date.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the Council positively encourages all potential entrants to the Half Marathon to enter the Jane Tomlinson 10k event in 2008. The Council will monitor the public feedback received on the absence of a Leeds Half Marathon in 2008 and use this information to consider the position in 2009 in the context of the extent to which the Jane Tomlinson 10k establishes itself as the primary event in the Leeds' running calendar. Given also the impacts of road closures, increasing costs of staging the event and difficulties in finding an alternative date, it is proposed that for 2008 the resources deployed to support the existing half marathon are diverted to making the Jane Tomlinson run the best 10K in the Country and to seek to grow the associated events.

#### **4.0 Conclusions**

- 4.1 Given the desire to fully back the Jane Tomlinson 10k run, the impacts of restrictions on the road closures cause to residents and businesses, increasing costs of staging the half marathon event, and the successful Abbey Dash, it is proposed that the timing is right now to withdraw the Half Marathon from next years event calendar. A review of options for the half marathon reinstatement will be conducted in May 2008, but in the meantime staff will be fully committed to supporting the Jane Tomlinson 10k for 2008.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Recreation Delegated Decision Panel are asked to approve the recommendation that the Leeds Half Marathon will not take place in 2008.