Review of the Halfords Tour Series

Report of Elaine McLean

Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Hibbert, Transport and Regeneration

6th July 2011

Officer Contact: Sara Hewitt, Town Centre Manager
Ext. 0161 770 3910

Purpose of Report
To provide a review of the Halfords Tour Series event in Oldham Town Centre

Recommendations
That the Town Centre Partnership Board:
1. Notes the outcomes and impact of the event
2. Provides comments
Review of the Halfords Tour Series

1  Background

1.1 The Halfords Tour Series is an eight-round cycling race event held in May and June. It involves team-based cycling on the streets of city/town centres across England. The event is free-to-attend and televised on ITV4.

1.2 Oldham was chosen to host Round 6 of the Halfords Tour Series on Thursday 9th June. There were free events from 1.00pm with the main races taking place between 4pm and 8.30pm.

1.3 This national event had never been held in Oldham before. Other host venues for the 2011 Halfords Tour Series are: Durham, Aberystwyth, Peterborough, Colchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Woking, and Canary Wharf.

1.4 The 1.1km race circuit in Oldham Town Centre included cobbles, hill climbs and tight turns. It followed: High Street, Henshaw Street, St Mary’s Way, top of Yorkshire Street, and then came back onto the High Street.

1.5 Prior to Round 6 of the Tour Series, the Town Centre hosted Round 3 of the Johnson Health Tech Women’s Grand Prix.

1.6 Oldham also organised a series of activities in the build-up to the main races. Local cycling competitions were held on the professional race circuit. A ‘Promotional Zone’ with cycling demonstrations and displays was also run on Curzon Street, Albion Street and on Clegg Street Car Park. (more details of this local activity are provided later in the report)

1.7 Several local stakeholders helped to bring the Tour Series to the Town Centre: Oldham Council, Oldham Business Improvement District, Unity Partnership, Johnson Construction, Oldham Community Leisure, and Manchester Cabins.

2  Current Position

2.1 The local stakeholders involved in bringing the Halfords Tour Series to Oldham had a number of objectives. The Tour Series has commissioned some independent research that will help identify whether these objectives have been met. Whilst this work has not been completed, initial findings suggest that all of the objectives have been met:

2.2 To raise the profile of Oldham and the local sponsors of the event
2.2 The Tour Series is a prestigious, national event. Oldham and local
organisations sought to raise their profiles in a positive way by being
associated with it - by being the host venue and sponsors respectively.

2.3 In particular, Oldham sought to raise its profile as a place for visitors as well
as inward investors. It would establish itself as a town that hosts prestigious,
national events.

2.4 Establishing such a reputation for Oldham would also create pride amongst
local people.

2.5 The Tour Series cited Oldham as the host venue and local organisations as
sponsors in all publicity as well as part of the event:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publicity:</th>
<th>Local advertisements in:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oldham Evening Chronicle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oldham Evening Chronicle Online</td>
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<td>Oldham Advertiser</td>
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<td>Rochdale Observer</td>
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<td>Tameside and Glossop Advertiser</td>
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<td>96.2 The Revolution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Big Screen and Community Screens</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2,000 flyers for the local area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Halfords Tour Series website</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Halfords Tour Series programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 press releases (produced by Oldham Council and re-issued by Halfords Tour Series)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Branding boards / banners on:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start/Finish Gantry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation Podium and Press Backdrop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Start/Finish Straigh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Race Circuit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marquees in the Promotional Zone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Literature in the Halfords Hospitality Area</td>
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2.6 To raise visitor numbers and spend in Oldham

2.7 The Tour Series is followed by cycling enthusiasts. Cycling is growing in
popularity as a sport - particularly in Greater Manchester and the North West
region with the development of off-road cycling routes and the Velodrome. The
Tour Series also attracts significant numbers of people that want to see a live,
professional sporting event for free. Oldham sought to raise its visitor numbers
in being a host venue for the Tour Series and its spectators.

2.8 Initial findings are that:
- Around 3,000 visitors came to the Town Centre to watch the event.
- Many of the visitors were families - A target demographic of the Town Centre Partnership.
• Over half of the visitors indicated that they were either new or infrequent visitors to the Town Centre (2 respondents were from Colchester).
• Some of the new visitors indicated that they would make future, return visits to Oldham and its Town Centre.
• The visitors spent around £100,000 (net GVA) in the Town Centre on the day

2.9 The figure of around 3,000 visitors was expected, given that this was the first time that Oldham had held the event.

2.10 To facilitate community participation

2.11 Oldham sought to engage local people in the event in different ways to maximise their enjoyment of it and to strengthen feelings of community, which the Tour Series was willing to facilitate.

2.12 Oldham ran 4, local cycling competitions on professional race as part of the build-up to the main races. 125 local people took part.
• Oldham Wheels for All Competition - The Wheels for All Centre at Alexandra Park has specially adapted bikes for people with disabilities. The Centre ran a competition involving 4 pupils from New Bridge School over a section of the circuit.
• Oldham Schools Cycling Competition - The Failsworth School Sport Partnership has been running a pilot project called Rock & Road that seeks to encourage secondary school pupils to take up cycling as a sport. Through the project, 40 secondary school pupils took part in this competition.
• Oldham Team Cycling Competition - Well-known, Oldham-based organisations were approached to enter teams in this competition. It was an opportunity for local businesses, public services and charities to raise their profile and to collect charitable donations.
• Greater Manchester Cycle Clubs Competition - Cycle clubs from across Greater Manchester were invited to take part in this competition. Some of the participants were new visitors to Oldham.

2.13 There was very positive feedback from the participants in the local competitions on the day. Many commented that it was ‘thrilling’ to experience riding the professional race circuit with the building crowds.

2.14 Pride in Oldham was also demonstrated: Liquid nightclub supported the participants by giving them free bottles of water. Oldham Coliseum Theatre also sought to heighten the spectacle for spectators by riding the circuit in pantomime costumes.

2.15 The Tour Series also gave local primary schools the chance to win some cycling-related prizes in a competition, whereby pupils designed a Tour Series Leader’s Jersey.

2.16 To raise the profile of cycling in Oldham
2.17 The Tour Series showcases the elite of national and international cycling. Riders include World, Olympic, Commonwealth, and Tour de France champions. In enabling local people to see professional racing live, Oldham sought to inspire them to take up cycling as a sport.

2.18 To promote participation in cycling in Oldham as well as the cycling offer, Oldham worked with the national sponsors of the Tour Series as well as cycling initiatives to create a Promotional Zone. This included cycling-related entertainment intended to engage people. Visitors could:
- See triple World Champion Ben Savage perform bike stunts in front of the Market Hall, and then take part in skills development sessions led by him.
- Practice tricks on their bikes on the ‘Big Air Bag’, set-up on Clegg Street Car Park
- Calculate their cycling performance on the Velodrome’s Watt Bikes (power testing and time trials)
- Try Oldham Sports Centre’s Spinning Bikes
- Learn about bikes in ‘Bikeability’ sessions run by the Nationwide Academy for Cycling
- Have their bikes maintenance-checked by Halfords
- Enjoy rides on a rickshaw
- See with cycling-themed, street performances

2.19 In relation to this entertainment on the day, there were a number of comments from parents around it providing positive activities for young people and inspiring children to get their bikes out when they got home.

2.20 The Promotional Zone also contained cycling-related displays (in marquees provided by Oldham Markets). Visitors could learn about the following exhibitors:

| National sponsors: | Halfords  
|                    | Johnsons Health Tech  
|                    | Vitesse Cycle Clothing  
|                    | Continental Tyres  
|                    | Cycle Pods  

| Cycling Initiatives: | Visit Oldham - Included information on cycle routes and facilities in the Borough  
|                     | Oldham Community Leisure  
|                     | Oldham Wheels for All Centre  
|                     | Cycle Club Oldham and NHS Oldham  
|                     | Oldham Road Safety Unit and Community Safety Services - Included a bike-etching service  
|                     | Velodrome - National Indoor BMX Centre  
|                     | British Cycling with Visit Manchester  
|                     | National Cycling Academy and Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority - Included recycled bikes  
|                     | International Mountain Bike Association  
|                     | Sustrans  
|                     | Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign |
2.21 Exhibitors indicated that they were pleased with the Promotional Zone on the
day. Visit Oldham reported that 163 people signed-up to the website (the Tour
Series provided a signed, Leader’s Jersey to offer in a prize-draw as part of
this). They also distributed around 300 copies of the new Cycling in
Saddleworth guide and over 400 Oldham bookmarks.

2.22 To celebrate cycling achievements in Oldham

2.23 Oldham sought to celebrate and promote cycling achievements in the
Borough as part of the prestigious event, which the Tour Series was willing to
facilitate.

2.24 To recognise 3 cycling champions connected with the Borough, Oldham
invited them to present the prizes to the winners of the local competitions as
well as the main races:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Competitions:</th>
<th>Paul Braithwaite, a former mountain bike champion, who lives in Oldham</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Grand Prix:</td>
<td>Mandy Jones, a world champion road racer from 1982, who owns Surosa Cycles on Huddersfield Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour Series:</td>
<td>Chris Newton, a multiple world cycling champion and Olympic Silver medallist, who lives in Oldham</td>
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2.25 Oldham also worked with the Oldham Evening Chronicle on a competition to
find a local person to ‘drop the flag’ and start the main races, who had
contributed to the world of cycling. Roy Taylor from Shaw was chosen as the
winner. He is a volunteer ranger at Crompton Moor, where there is the family
cycle route and pump track.

2.26 The Tour Series invited 10 children to be ‘mascots’ for each of the cycling
teams. Children who had recently successfully completed their cycling
proficiency test were chosen. The children were given team jerseys and led
the teams out at the start of the races.

2.27 To deliver an enjoyable and safe event

2.28 The Tour Series and Oldham sought to deliver an enjoyable and safe event.

2.29 The Town Centre Partnership’s Events Group worked on behalf of Oldham
with the Tour Series to plan and deliver the event. It was also helped by a
number of teams from across Oldham Council.

2.30 The event was also delivered without incident. There was also positive
feedback:

“We were in Oldham yesterday (Thursday) and had a very enjoyable day. It's
great to see a council promoting cycling and organising such a fantastic event
- felt quite like a French town ‘en fete’ when the Tour de France passes
through.” Helen Page (Oldham Council - Communications Team)
“We really enjoyed the cycling last night in the town centre. Please make sure this becomes an annual event, though with some extra advertising next time”
Duncan Mawson (Visit Oldham website)

“It’s a good idea and great for the town. I’m surprised they have not done it before now. I have enjoyed it.”
Stuart Beesley (Oldham Evening Chronicle)

“This was a great event - the town centre looked really ‘proper’ - it was amazing to see something this big and exciting in Oldham. Please, please bring it back next year - it didn’t get a massive turnout this time, I think because these things take a year or two to establish themselves. Also could do with more food stalls, street entertainers and promotion in advance.”
Sapere Aude (Oldham Evening Chronicle Online)

“Unfortunately I didn’t manage to see this spectacle live, although I did watch it on ITV4 the following evening. From what I observed I dearly wish I’d been there!”
Shaun McGrath (Oldham Evening Chronicle Online)

“The event could not have gone better, we did not have any problems whatsoever and all the vibes from the teams and those who came along to watch were all positive.”
Peter Hodges, Tour Series Organiser (Oldham Evening Chronicle)

2.31 The Town Centre Events Group and the Tour Series will undertake a full review of the event to inform the planning and delivery of future Town Centre events.

2.32 To create positive media coverage of Oldham

2.33 The Tour Series attracts positive coverage in local, regional and national media. Oldham sought to feature as part of this coverage as a host venue.

2.34 A full review of the media coverage is still to be undertaken. Around 30 media organisations were however accredited in advance of the event in Oldham with several more attending on the day.

2.35 Notably, an hour-long television programme of the highlights from each round of the Tour Series is broadcast on ITV4 the day after the event in a prime-time, evening slot, which is then repeated the following day.

2.36 The programme of Round 6 in Oldham was screened on Friday 9th June at 8pm. It was also repeated on Saturday 10th June at 10am. The programme had an average reach of around 140,000 viewers with the repeat having an average of around 53,000 viewers. Excerpts from Round 6 were also shown in the programme of Round 7.

2.37 Oldham and the Town Centre were shown in a very positive way on ITV4. Comments from the presenters Ned Boulting and Graham Jones included:
- “Oldham provides an Alpine setting for the Tour Series.”
• “The cobbles create a continental atmosphere.”
• “It is a place of choice to stage a cycling event.”
• “There have been a lot of compliments about the circuit.”

2.38 The event was featured on BBC local breakfast news the following day.

2.39 BBC Radio Manchester also broadcast live from the event.

2.40 The Tour Series including Round 6 in Oldham has been covered by the following cycling media: Cycling Weekly, Cycle Sport, Road CC, Road Cycling UK, London Cycle Sport, British Cycling, and Daily Peloton.

2.41 There was extensive, positive coverage in the Oldham Evening Chronicle both in the run-up to the event and afterwards. It featured on the front page of the newspaper on the 1st June 2011. There was also 2 double-page spreads on the 10th June 2011.

2.42 Coverage in the Manchester Evening News and the Oldham Advertiser was relatively poor. There was no post-event coverage.

2.43 The event appears to have been extensively, positively covered on social networking websites (Facebook and Twitter) and photography websites

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 N/A

4 Preferred Option

4.1 N/A

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 None

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 None

8 Human Resources Comments

8.1 None

9 Risk Assessments

9.1 None
IT Implications
10.1 None

Property Implications
11.1 None

Procurement Implications
12.1 None

Environmental and Health & Safety Implications
13.1 There are no environmental and health and safety implications.

Equality, community cohesion and crime implications
14.1 There are no equality, community cohesion and crime implications.

Equality Impact AssessmentCompleted?
15.1 No

Key Decision
16.1 No

Forward Plan Reference
17.1 N/A

Background Papers
18.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

File Ref: TCP/2011
Name of File: Jul
Records held in Oldham Council, Market Hall, Albion Street Oldham OL1 3BG
Officer Name: Sara Hewitt
Contact No: 0161 770 3910 / 4516

Appendices
19.1 None
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet Member [Cllr David Hibbert]</td>
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<td>Executive Director</td>
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