

Title The Great North Run Weekend 2025
Report of: Phil Witcherley, Director of Economic Growth and Innovation
Portfolio: Home to a Growing and Vibrant Economy for All

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Chief Executive to approve an award of £100,000 to the Great Run Company for activities carried out during the Great North Run Weekend 2025.

The Great North Run supports the ambitions of the draft Culture, Creative Industries & Sport Strategic Framework for the North East and will enable the development of the North East as a “Region of Sport”.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to:

- Approve an award of £100,000 to The Great Run Company (“GRC”); and
- Authorise the Director of Finance and Investment and Monitoring Officer to prepare the necessary documentation

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

The Great North Run enhances the reputation of the North East region, inspires residents (adults and children) to get more active, and facilitates £25m in charity fundraising. Over 50% of participants travel from outside the region to take part in the event, boosting the local economy with spend in hotels and restaurants. Hosting the Great North Run, (the world’s biggest half-marathon) shines a spotlight on the North East, both nationally and internationally, and is key to the North East CA’s ambition to become a “Region of Sport”. A key component of the Great North Run, alongside the event itself and considerable wider benefits, are the fringe festivals and opportunities for wider participation beyond the main run.

1. Background

1.1 The Great North Run takes place across Newcastle, Gateshead & South Shields, however the positive economic impact is felt across the whole North East region. The event also demonstrates the region’s credentials in delivering major events and showcases the North East nationally and internationally through broadcast on the BBC and internationally.

1.2 The Great North Run Weekend 2025 comprised the following events:

- 28 June 2025 – Great North Run Anniversary, light box sign installation
- 6 July 2025 – Great North 10k, count down to the Great North Run Weekend 2025
- 1 September 2025 – Elite Athletes’ arrival in Newcastle
- 4/5 September 2025 – Community “Shake-Out Run” Events

- 5 September 2025 – Great North 5k & International Race
- 6 September 2025 – Great North Run Mini/Junior Events
- 7 September – Great North Run

1.3 GRC managed the full delivery of the Great North Run Weekend 2025 from their head office in Newcastle. They employ 50 staff based full-time in the North East. The delivery of the Great North

Run Weekend 2025 was supported by groups with representation from Newcastle, Gateshead & South Shields together with other NE stakeholders.

1.4 The key benefits of the Great North Run Weekend 2025 included the following: -

- 60,000 people took part in the Great North Run Weekend 2025 as participants. Approx 50% of those were North East residents, while others travelled to the North East from across the UK and internationally. Participants will have seen all the health benefits associated with training, while local businesses benefitted from the significant expenditure within the region.
- 10,000 children took part in the Mini/Junior Great North Run.
- 2,500 volunteers supported the Great North Run Weekend 2025, from a wide range of community groups. The community groups received donations in return for their support.
- 500 local residents took part in community-based running events in the week ahead of the Great North Run Weekend 2025.
- 700 charities received a total of £25m in fundraising from the Great North Run Weekend 2025.
- Broadcast to 127 countries.

2.0 The Investment Proposal

2.1 Ahead of the 2025 event, GRC were facing a funding shortfall on their plans to undertake an international TV broadcast and some of their wider fringe activities, both of which are valued by the NE Combined Authority. The North East CA invited the submission of an investment request, to ensure that fringe events (which support our residents) and international broadcasts (promoting the region to the world through significant international coverage) continued – making it clear that this would be subject to the normal process of business case development and scrutiny, though our Single Assurance Framework, to confirm that it was VFM.

The Great North Run Weekend 2025 had BBC and international broadcast coverage, securing significant national and international audiences (providing an outstanding showcase for Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and the wider North East region) alongside the following outcomes:

- Thursday 4 September – GNR Shake Out Run. 300 people attended an evening 3k run which started and finished at the Cycle Hub, Newcastle Quayside.
- Thursday 4 September – Schools Challenge in South Tyneside for 250 children.
- Friday 5 September – Media Event and finishers t-shirt reveal at Fenwicks, 75 people attended including Mayor McGuinness, ITV, BBC and Regional News coverage delivered.
- Friday 5 September – Live podcast at Fenwicks, hosted by GNR with Paula Radcliffe. The event was attended by 200 people.
- Friday 5 September – Daniel Lieberman Lecture at The Common Room – attended by 150 people. Daniel Lieberman is a Harvard Professor of Evolutionary Biology and author of books, Born to Run and Exercised.
- Sunday 7 September – Live Screening of GNR Programme in Old Eldon Square to an audience of 400.

3. Outputs and Outcomes

Based on the events excluding the Great North Run itself:

Outputs	25/26	Total
Number of cultural / tourism events taking place	4	4
Number of residents participating in a sports activity	1,375	1,375

Outcomes	25/26	Total
Number of attendees participating in a cultural tourism event	1,375	1,375
Improved perceived health and wellbeing	1,375	1,375

4. Timetable for Implementation

Please see above.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1 An evaluation was undertaken by the GRC. The North East CA worked with the GRC team to ensure that this feeds into wider regional strategies and approaches including the emerging Culture, Creative Industries and Sport Strategic Framework.

6. Appraisal

- 6.1 The appraisal of the business case provided by the applicant has been assessed and is rated GREEN on all aspects.

Appraisal Summary – The Great North Run Weekend

Newcastle, Gateshead & South Shields are the hosts of the Great North Run, however the positive economic impact is felt across the whole North East region. The event demonstrates the region's credentials in delivering major events. It was broadcast Live on BBC1 on 7 September 2025 with an audience reach of 3.086m in the UK, plus an additional 200,000 via iPlayer.

The international programme was broadcast to 127 Countries via Flo Track (Australia/NZ), Great Sports (China), SuperSport (Africa), HBO & Discovery (Pan Asia & Europe), and The Olympic Channel (Worldwide).

The Strategic, Economic & Commercial Case

The project is a unique event with a £36m positive economic impact to the North East. Over 70,000 participants & 200,000 supporters attended the event over the weekend. Over 50% of participants travel from outside region to take part in the event, boosting the local economy with spend in hotels and restaurants. The Great North Run facilitated £24m in charity fundraising, of which at least £4m will be directly invested back into the North East via local charities.

Hosting the Great North Run, the world's biggest half-marathon, shines a spotlight on the North East, and is a key to North East CA's ambition to become a "Region of Sport". Establishing the North East as a Region of Sport can deliver social, economic and reputational benefits and is a key element of the overall Cultural, Creative Industries & Sport Strategy.

The Financial & Management Case

The applicant submitted finance tables outlining a £100,000 budget for event-related media production and associated fringe events. There are no procurement, VAT or subsidy concerns for this project. Funding will directly support event costs.

6.2 Recommended Conditions of Funding

None.

B. Potential Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

The Mayoral Manifesto, devolution deal and Interim Local Growth Plan recognise the benefits that events bring to the region – socially, economically and reputationally. The North East CA Corporate plan sets out an objective to establish a regional events programme.

The Great North Run Weekend directly supports the Mayoral objectives of 'a home to world-class sporting and cultural venues and events, underpinned by eclectic and fast-changing grassroots creativity and energy' as part of our new Corporate Plan. The Great North Run Weekend 2025

therefore contributes to the following missions: 'A home of real opportunity' – by growing our cultural and sporting sectors; and, 'A North East we are proud to call home' – developing a thriving creative economy and working to establish and deliver a regional events and culture programme.

C. Key risks

A full risk register is included in the business case.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the project/programme is included below.

Funding source	2025/26	Total
North East CA Investment Fund Capital (£)		
North East CA Investment Fund Revenue (£)	£100,000	£100,000
Total North East CA	£100,000	£100,000
Recipient's Funds Capital (£)		
Recipient's Funds Revenue (£)		
Total Match		

The Great North Run is a multimillion-pound event managed by the Great Run Company. The funding in the above table is to contribute to a discrete set of costs associated with the delivery of international media broadcast facilitation and wider fringe events. Whilst there is no match funding included in the table, GRC and other funders provide a significant level of match funding to enable the delivery of the main annual event.

E. Legal implications

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

F. Equalities implications

The North East CA complies with the Public Sector Equality duty and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the project and the implications of this will be considered in the project mobilisation and delivery stages.

G. Consultation and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with the GRC, Director of Economic Growth and Regeneration, Chief Executive, Finance Director, North East Mayor at the North East CA.

H. Appendices

None

I. Background papers

None

J. Contact officers

Name: Lesley Strickland
Title: Programme Manager – Events and Sport
Email address: lesley.strickland@northeast-ca.gov.uk

K. Glossary

GRC	Great Run Company
North East CA	North East Combined Authority

L. Consultee

Cabinet Member:	Director/Head of Service:	Director of Finance and Investment:	Monitoring Officer:
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes