Delegated Decision Report
10 July 2026

Title: Durham Miners' Gala
Report of: Phil Witcherley, Director of Economic Growth and Innovation
Portfolio: Home to a Growing and Vibrant Economy

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to award £50,000 of North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) investment funding to Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala to support the delivery of the 2026 Durham Miners' Gala.

Durham Miners' Gala is the largest event of its type in Europe and brings over 200,000 visitors into Durham City to celebrate its mining heritage.

The proposed investment will contribute specifically to the delivery of essential security measures, medical services and infrastructure.

This report includes one project requesting a total of £50,000 investment funding.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended:

- To approve the award of £50,000 of North East MSA investment funding to Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala to support the delivery of the 2026 Durham Miners' Gala; and
- To authorise the Director of Finance and Investment and Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

The Durham Miners' Gala is one of the North East's most significant cultural heritage events and the largest event of its type in Europe, attracting 200,000 visitors annually. The event celebrates the region's mining heritage, supports community participation and civic pride, and generates substantial economic benefits for Durham and the wider North East.

Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala has requested £50,000 to support the delivery of the 2026 event. The funding will contribute towards essential event infrastructure and operational requirements, including security, medical provision, site services and public facilities necessary to ensure the safety of the event.

The proposal aligns with the objectives of the North East MSA Events and Participation Investment Plan by supporting a nationally recognised cultural event that strengthens the region's identity, promotes community engagement and contributes to the visitor economy.

1. Background

1.1 The event is delivered free of charge and relies on a combination of fundraising, sponsorship, donations and external funding. Rising costs associated with event infrastructure, security, stewarding, medical provision and insurance have created significant financial pressures on the event organisers.

1.2 The applicant has advised that without financial support there is a risk that essential services required for the safe operation of the event could be reduced, impacting the scale and delivery of the Gala. The proposed North East MSA contribution will support critical event infrastructure and help ensure the delivery of the 2026 event.

2. The Investment Proposal

2.1 The proposal seeks £50,000 revenue funding from the North East MSA Events and Participation Programme to support essential infrastructure and safety requirements necessary for the delivery of the 2026 Durham Miners' Gala.

2.2 The funding will contribute towards the essential delivery costs including security, first aid and medical provision, waste management and public toilet facilities required to meet Safety Advisory Group requirements and ensure the event can operate safely.

2.3 The proposal aligns with the North East MSA Events and Participation Programme by supporting a nationally recognised cultural event that generates significant visitor activity, celebrates regional heritage, supports community participation and contributes to the visitor economy. The applicant states that the event generates up to £10 million of economic activity annually.

3. Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	26/27	Total
Number of cultural, tourism events taking place	1	1

Outcomes	26/27	Total
Number of attendees participating in a cultural tourism event	200,000	200,000

4. Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Proposal Start Date	11/07/2026
Deliver Durham Miners' Gala Event	11/07/2026
Evaluation Report submitted	July 2026
Financial Completion Date	31/07/2026
Anticipated Proposal Completion Date (date by which all outputs / outcomes will have been achieved)	31/07/2026

5. Evaluation

5.1 The recipient will be required to provide a post-event evaluation report evidencing delivery of the event, visitor attendance, delivery and impact of safety and security measures, media reach, community participation and achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes. The evaluation report will also include evidence of expenditure against the approved budget and details of the wider economic, cultural and social impact of the event. This information will be used by North East MSA to assess the success of the investment and inform future funding decisions.

6. Appraisal

6.1 The business case has been appraised and is assessed as GREEN overall. While the Financial and Management Case is currently rated AMBER due to a limited number of outstanding clarifications, these are expected to be satisfactorily addressed before contracting. Consequently, an overall GREEN rating is considered appropriate.

Overall RAG assessment		
Risk Rating	The Strategic, Economic & Commercial Case	GREEN
	The Financial & Management Case	AMBER
	Overall Rating	GREEN

Appraisal Summary – Durham Miners' Gala

The Durham Miners' Gala is a major annual event in Durham City, celebrating the region's mining heritage and the cultural significance of the Durham Miners' Association. It attracts significant visitor numbers and contributes to the profile of Durham and the wider North East.

The project demonstrates alignment with the North East MSA's strategic priorities and supports wider economic, social and cultural ambitions. The proposal complements the Corporate Plan, Local Growth Plan, Mayoral Manifesto and Deeper Devolution Deal, particularly through strengthening place identity and civic pride, supporting the visitor economy and raising the profile of the North East.

The application provides detailed outputs and outcomes. The proposed attendance levels appear reasonable based on recent reported attendance.

The proposal indicates a strong value-for-money position, reflecting the expected economic benefits relative to the level of funding requested.

Cost estimates are reported to be based on supplier quotations obtained through the event management company. The breakdown of costs remains relatively high level and could be strengthened with greater detail, however sufficient detail has been provided to demonstrate that the project has been correctly budgeted.

The proposal identifies governance and financial management arrangements, including overall financial responsibility and day-to-day financial oversight. Further detail on organisational oversight and mechanisms for how financial costs will be captured and reported through the claims would strengthen the assessment.

The risk assessment identifies health and safety considerations, but wider financial, management and operational risks would benefit from further development. Subsidy position has been reviewed by North East MSA and concluded that the proposed funding does not constitute a subsidy.

6.2 **Recommended Conditions of Funding**

Number	Pre-Contract Condition
1	Applicant to provide an updated risk register with clear project specific risks and mitigating actions detailed.

Number	Funding Condition
1	On submission of final claim, applicant to provide a statement signed off by their Finance Director, confirming the full cost of delivering the event to enable match funding to be captured as a leverage output.

B. Potential Impact on North East Mayoral Strategic Authority Objectives

The Mayoral Manifesto, devolution deal and Local Growth Plan recognise the benefits that events bring to the region – socially, economically and reputationally. The North East MSA Corporate plan sets out an objective to establish a regional events programme and Cabinet approved an Events & Participation Investment Plan in March 2026.

Durham Miners' Gala 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. Durham Miners' Gala 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. High-level risks comprise:

- **Financial risk**: arising from increasing event delivery costs and reduced fundraising capacity. Mitigation: North East MSA funding will support essential event infrastructure and safety requirements.
- **Public safety risk**: associated with hosting an event attracting around 200,000 visitors. Mitigation: professional stewarding, security, first aid provision and oversight through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG).
- **Security risk**: including potential terrorism or major incident threats. Mitigation: dedicated security planning, police engagement, trained security personnel and event search procedures.
- **Reputational risk**: should the event fail to proceed or operate safely. Mitigation: delivery by an experienced organiser, comprehensive risk management arrangements and investment in critical event infrastructure.

D. Corporate Implications

D1. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the project is included below.

Funding source*	**2026/27**	**Total**
North East MSA Investment Fund Capital (£)		
North East MSA Investment Fund Revenue (£)	£50,000	£50,000
Total North East MSA	**£50,000**	**£50,000**
Recipient's Funds Capital (£)		
Recipient's Funds Revenue (£)**	£0	£0
Total Match	**£0**	**£0**
Project Total	**£50,000**	**£50,000**

*As noted in section A of this report, this investment is part of the £13m committed by the North East MSA Cabinet in March 2026 for the Events and Participation Investment Plan, within which Durham Miners' Gala is designated as a Grassroots Event. The £50,000 contribution set out in this decision is therefore drawn from the Events and Participation Investment Plan budget allocation for Grassroots Events.

** The financial profile includes only the direct costs to be funded by North East MSA. The recipient will meet general event costs, currently estimated at approximately £216,000, through its own resources and donations. This contribution will be reported as leverage at project closure, and an associated funding condition has been included.

D2. Legal implications

The comments of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

D3. Equalities implications

The North East MSA 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.

D4. Consultation and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala, Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Investment, Monitoring Officer, Portfolio Holder and North East Mayor at the North East MSA.

E. Appendices

None

F. Background papers

North East MSA Cabinet, 17 March 2026
(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 17/03/2026 14:00
Decision - Delivering the Mayor's Culture, Creative Industries and Sport Strategic Framework - North East CA

G. Contact officers

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H. Glossary

North East MSA	North East Mayoral Strategic Authority
SAG	Safety Advisory Group