

GREAT BRITAIN SAIL GRAND PRIX PLYMOUTH 2022

Briefing Paper Part I



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL



Author: Victoria Allen

Job Title: Marketing & Events Manager

Department: Economic Development

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Introduction and Context

In their 2021 & beyond manifesto, the Plymouth Conservatives set out their commitment to hosting major ocean events: “we will build on our enviable reputation for hosting major nautical events such as the America’s Cup, the Fastnet, SailGP”.

As a result, Plymouth has won a globally competitive bidding process to host, in 2022, the fastest and most spectacular sail racing in the world – the Great Britain Sail Grand Prix (SailGP).

In 2021 Plymouth first hosted SailGP – an inshore ‘stadium’ sail racing event that is viewed as one of Plymouth’s golden moments for economic impact, global positioning and spectator engagement. It has been referred to by many as “the best event Plymouth has ever done”.

SailGP is not just an outstanding, one of a kind global event, it also shares a lot of the same DNA as Plymouth, leading the way in marine technology and sustainability. We began courting the race organisers when the concept was first announced and in 2020 won a competitive bidding process to host the UK event in 2021. Following the huge success of this event we entered another bidding process to host it again in 2022. Despite fierce global competition our bid has been successful.

In line with the Conservative manifesto commitment this provides a great opportunity for Plymouth City Council to build on the success of the 2021 event, placing Plymouth, Britain’s Ocean City, firmly at pole position in the staging of major sailing events in the UK.

Event Overview

Sail GP is an annual global sailing championship. Teams compete across a season of multiple grands prix internationally in cities including San Francisco, New York and Sydney with the first season being held in 2019. The boats are identical F50 catamarans, the fastest and most technologically advanced racing boats ever built – they are engineered for racing at speeds exceeding 50 knots (60mph). The 2022 teams are: Great Britain (skipper: Ben Ainslie), USA, Australia, France, Japan, Spain, Denmark, New Zealand, Switzerland and Canada.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr7r42OX6CE>

In Plymouth, the racing will take place across two days in July, very close to the shoreline in Plymouth Sound, with practice sessions taking place the week prior. The race village and activity hub will be located on the Hoe with a mixture of hospitality and public free and ticketed areas with live commentary, screens and concessions to enhance the spectator experience. Amazing viewing will be plentiful across the entire waterfront area.

The technical area (similar to F1 pit lanes) will have a longer period of occupation at Millbay on Clyde Quay and Trinity Pier where the race boats will be constructed and craned in and out of the water each day for servicing. The public will be able to get up close to view this unique and exciting process.

SailGP 2021 Statistics

- An estimated 27,500 spectators – both ticketed and non-ticketed enjoyed the spectacle
- 6,270 people watched from the ticketed Waterfront Viewing area on Plymouth Hoe where COVID restrictions were in place

- More than 1,000 boats signed up to the 'Bring your own Boat' programme, to view from the water
- Visitors came from 10 countries with COVID restrictions clearly having an impact on travel
- Of the UK spectators, 46% came from the surrounding South West region and 35% from the South East and London.
- Spectator satisfaction was sky high: 97 per cent were positive about the overall experience and thought that hosting SailGP was a good thing for Plymouth
- Of the non-locals, 89 per cent of those interviewed stated they would recommend Plymouth as a holiday destination and 80 per cent were more likely to come back again to Britain's Ocean City as a result of attending.
- Global media coverage of the event was seen across 175 territories with a dedicated TV audience of 2.6 million
- 1,800 online press articles and 297 TV news segments featured the event in Plymouth

Youth Engagement

Inspire is SailGP's community, education and outreach initiative, that aims to leave a positive legacy and build a sustainable sport – by providing equal, life-changing opportunities and new career pathways for all.

In 2021 the Inspire programme included outdoor STEM sessions for schoolchildren in Tinside Lido, free sailing experiences for young people and people with disabilities, and an 'adopt-a-club' scheme where each of the eight teams paired with a local Plymouth sailing club or organisation. In total;

- 400 local children were engaged in STEM activities
- 600 young people from Plymouth were provided with sailing experiences, many for the first time. This included RYA Sailing courses and access to free club memberships
- 144 young people with disabilities took part in inclusive sailing experiences

We will again work with Sail GP and city partners to develop a bespoke engagement programme throughout 2022 to allow young people to:

- Experience sailing for the first time
- Learn through engaging and innovative STEM based modules
- Develop professional routes into the sport through internships, work experience and coaching
- Gain valuable life skills as well as knowledge about health, nutrition and the environment

Powered by Nature

SailGP is the first climate positive sports and entertainment property, going beyond a net zero carbon footprint in all business and event operations. To be climate positive, SailGP has both drastically reduced its carbon output and invests in projects to eliminate more than the remaining emissions, ultimately creating an environmental benefit.

SailGP aims to accelerate the transition to clean energy and be the most sustainable and purpose-driven sports and entertainment property in the world.

Plymouth City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is working towards making Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030. The Council produces a Climate Emergency Action Plan each year which takes a thematic approach to reducing carbon emissions across the whole city. These themes are: Power and Heat, Mobility, Buildings, Waste, and Engagement and Responsibility.

Key targets and aims are:

- Carbon neutral city by 2030
- To facilitate city wide conversations on achieving carbon neutrality
- To inspire rapid local action

Key Values:

- A city approach that supports national and global change
- Everyone plays their part
- No-one gets left behind

The Sail GP event provides an excellent opportunity for engaging with the city at individual and organisational level. It provides a platform for both awareness raising of the climate emergency as well as effecting real change in behaviours and perceptions.

In 2021 activity in Plymouth focussed on technology, sustainability and investing in clean energy. SailGP undertook the following:

- A partnership with the Ocean Conservation Trust to create: An immersive experience to bring the National Marine Park to life at the event and online; Guidelines for boaters to respect the marine environment; 360 footage of sound habitats on headsets at race village also online to download; Donation platform for habitat restoration.
- Use of B&G Biobase Mapping to verify the impact of sea grass regeneration across the National Marine Park.
- Carbon off-setting through One Carbon World with a view to locally offset in Plymouth in future years.
- Financial investment in Plymouth Energy Communities (PEC) energy advisory project plus general promotion of the work of PEC
- Raising awareness of Plymouth Boat Trips and Voyager Marine e-voyager Electric Ferry initiative in partnership with Plymouth University
- Provision of a key speaker for Plymouth's Marine Tech Expo on sustainable marine technology
- Support for the Ocean Conservation Trusts Ocean Ambassadors Training programme

In 2022 we will once again work with SailGP to identify key priorities to be supported through the event.

Links with the Council's overarching strategic objectives

The delivery of Sail GP plays directly into the vision and ambitions laid out in the Plymouth Visitor Plan 2020-2030:

Plymouth is Britain's Ocean City, famous for its Waterfront. We will be one of Europe's finest waterfront cities, celebrated for our unique and diverse marine life, culture and experiences. We will continue to be recognised as unique among UK cities for our natural drama and 500-year history as a place of embarkation and exploration.

Our waterfront and our culture are part of the DNA and 'urban spirit' of the city and have shaped our place and our people over generations and continue to do so today. That means we will deliver original experiences that visitors and local people alike will want to enjoy.

We will continue to use events, festivals, sport and significant celebration years to showcase what is distinctive about our city, project strong positive images to our target markets, attract new visitors and leverage further benefits for our city. We have already secured the British Art Show for 2021.

Tourism is one of the big success stories in Plymouth. Over the last decade tourism has seen visitor numbers and visitor spend each grow by over 20%. Over 5 million visitors make a trip to the city every year spending £347m. Today tourism employs over 8,000 people.

85% of visitors to Plymouth are on a day trip. To significantly improve the productivity of tourism and deliver a sustainable tourism sector for the future, we need to focus on growing the higher value markets. That means UK short breaks, international leisure visitors (building on the profile created through Mayflower 400), and business and conference tourism.

Plymouth needs more high quality, distinctive 'only here' products and experiences that provide a reason for visitors to choose our city for a short break or a business trip

In addition, Partners across the city created the UK's first ever National Marine Park in 2019 and the 'Park in the Sea' was awarded £9.5 million in 2021 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund Horizon Awards to fully develop the idea.

The National Marine Park aims to:

- Support the ongoing enhancement of our world class natural environment and heritage landscape
- Get the entire city and surrounding communities involved with the Sound
- Increase access to our heritage so everyone can enjoy the benefits
- Provide new employment opportunities and career pathways in sustainable future ocean jobs
- Position Plymouth as a UK top day-visitor destination
- Champion health and wellbeing with a new generation of engaged volunteers, communities and champions.
- Support the positive transition to net zero carbon by 2030.

With such a focus on clean energy and sustainability SailGP is the perfect event to align with the emerging National Marine Park priorities.

Economic Recovery

Underpinning the Visitor Plan is a major events strategy to encourage day and repeat visitors to the city. These events are characteristically one-off opportunities with national and international appeal that generate significant media coverage and have the potential to attract significant volumes of visitors.

A [report by Deloitte](#) into the economic impact of SailGP in 2021 has spelt out the direct financial benefits to the city:

- Gross expenditure of **£8.9 million**, including amount spent by spectators, event organisers and the teams.
- Total economic impact of **£6.9 million**
- Had it not been for COVID-19 limiting international visitor numbers and travel this economic benefit to Plymouth would have been closer to **£10 million**.

Positioning Plymouth globally also raises awareness of opportunities within the city for business investment as young, innovative and forward thinking city to do business in particular the marine industries will benefit from the opportunity.

Model of Operation

Sail GP will deliver the event as a 'turn-key package', taking full responsibility for all racing, technical and spectator aspects of the event. They will be supported by the Council's Events Team who will provide use of the Hoe premises licence, broker relationships with the emergency services and other key stakeholders as well as oversee traffic management and use of key event infrastructure.

Hosting the event for a second time provides an excellent opportunity to enact changes from lessons learned, particularly around the use of the Hoe and surrounding areas for race viewing and hospitality.

Plymouth City Council will work collaboratively with Sail GP to create a bespoke marketing, communications and engagement plan which will include an announcement of the event as a key part of the National Marine Park plans.

Financial Implications

In order to keep the costs to a minimum and therefore make our bid as competitive as possible we have taken a city-wide partnership approach. Many organisations have pledged support, space and services in kind.

In the event that any of these partner organisations are not able to provide what has been pledged, Plymouth City Council would be required to find alternative solutions, which may entail further costs. These would be met by the Economic Development budget. However, given the hugely positive feedback following the 2021 event we believe we will be able to secure more, not less support, and our partnerships are stronger than ever.

In addition, it would not be unusual for an event of the scale and complexity of Sail GP to require further investment at the eleventh hour in order to ensure professional quality and safe event delivery. For example, if the terror threat was to increase we would need to fund additional security. This is the same with all Plymouth City Council major events including Armed Forces Day and the British Fireworks Championships. Again, these costs would be met by the Economic Development budget.

If the existing revenue budgets cannot contain the costs of hosting SailGP a contingency of £247k will be set aside as part of the 2022/23 budget process.

The other financial implications are set out in part 2 of the report.

Summary

We are requesting approval and commitment from Plymouth City Council to host the 2022 Great Britain Sail Grand Prix event as outlined above and in Part 2 of this Briefing Paper.

This event will be of significant benefit to the City, generating additional income for businesses, positioning Plymouth on global stage and giving the residents of Plymouth a spectacular event to attend in line with the Visitor and Corporate Plans.