

RICOH WOMEN'S BRITISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 1st February 2010 it was formally announced that the Ricoh Women's British Open Championship 2012 would be staged at Royal Liverpool Golf Club between 9th and 16th September 2012. The Authority and its partners have been working with IMG, the owners of the event, and Royal Liverpool Golf Club for sometime to secure this tournament for Wirral. It is part of the Council's overall strategy to develop golf as a major tourism and economic driver for Wirral. Cabinet will also be aware of the recent announcement of the return of The Open championship to Royal Liverpool in 2014.
- 1.2 This report seeks the agreement of Cabinet to the arrangements that will have to be put in place to facilitate the Women's British Open at Royal Liverpool in 2012.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Women's British Open Championship is one of the most prestigious events in the British golf calendar. The event was established by the Ladies Golf Union in 1976 and its popularity and prestige has grown steadily. The Women's British Open now attracts in the region of 8,000–10,000 spectators per day.
- 2.2 As with any significant sporting event it requires a great deal of pre-planning and organisation. An officer working group is in the process of being established to oversee the preparatory work required. There are a number of specific measures that the Council will have to put in place in order to facilitate the event :

- Practice range

There will be a requirement for a practice range for the event and the Authority will provide the Hoylake municipal golf course practice range from Sunday, 9th September through until Sunday, 16th September 2012, including a provision to use the facility on Monday, 17th September should play not be completed on Sunday 16th as scheduled.

The Council will facilitate access and egress to the practice range for vehicles and pedestrians via Morpeth Road. IMG will be responsible for managing the practice range operation and personnel for this and will provide transport for the players between the practice range and the Club house. The Authority will provide access to the practice range in advance of the Championship to allow installation of this infrastructure.

- Car Parking

The Council will provide Hoylake municipal golf course for the purpose of car parking for spectators and VIPs attending the event from Tuesday, 11th September until Sunday 16th September, including a provision to use the same facility on Monday 17th September should play not be completed on Sunday, 16th as scheduled. Vehicle numbers are anticipated to be no more than 4-5,000 cars.

The Council will facilitate access and egress to the golf course for vehicles and pedestrians at various points to be agreed with IMG and in conjunction with Merseyside Police.

IMG will be responsible for managing the car park operation and will employ a professional traffic management company for this purpose.

IMG will also provide all necessary temporary event related infrastructure for the car park operation including temporary buildings/offices, crowd control barriers, and signage/branding. The Council will provide access to the golf course in advance of the Championship to allow the installation of this infrastructure.

- **Rail closure and replacement bus service**

Merseytravel has agreed to close the Hoylake to West Kirby section of the railway line, provide a replacement bus service and provide a temporary level crossing over the railway line to link the practice ground and Morpeth Road. These arrangements will be put in place from Sunday, 9th September, until Sunday, 16th September, inclusive (including a provision for the same on Monday, 17th September should play not be completed on the Sunday). Merseytravel will be responsible for the closure and replacement bus service and the Council will co-ordinate arrangements with Merseytravel on behalf of the Ricoh Women's British Open Championship.

- **Traffic Management**

Wirral Council will provide any necessary road restrictions and road closures as agreed in conjunction with IMG and Merseyside Police. If it is deemed necessary to provide a pedestrian access bridge over Meols Drive linking Hoylake municipal golf course and Royal Liverpool Golf Club, the Council will provide authorisation for this with IMG being responsible for the provision of the project and any stewards required to manage pedestrian movement.

- **Marketing and PR support**

The Council will provide marketing and PR support for the event. IMG will provide appropriate acknowledgement of the Council's support including local placement. IMG will also work with the host TV broadcaster to ensure that Wirral is promoted in a positive manner as part of England's golf coast. IMG will use its best efforts, subject to the Council providing suitable material, to include a 30 second vignette to promote Wirral and the North West region within a TV World Feed.

2.3 **Conclusions**

Hosting the Ricoh Women's' British Open Championship in 2012 is a fantastic opportunity for Wirral. It will attract significant numbers of spectators and will again raise the profile of Wirral and generate benefits to the local economy. Clearly a great deal of work will be required between now and the event. Formal working groups are now being put in place to facilitate this work and will also be used as a basis for the advanced planning for the return of The Open championship in 2014.

2.4 Initially the focus will be on responding to the organisation's requirements and providing the necessary infrastructure to support the Women's Open. In relation to the Municipal golf course work is progressing on the capital funded scheme to improve the land drainage prior to the event. It is envisaged that a number of minor

alterations will be required to facilitate its use for car parking. One very significant aspect of the arrangements for the Open in 2006 was the community engagement mechanisms put in place to inform and reassure the local community. Similar mechanisms will be put in place during the run up to the Women's Open in 2012.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The costs of securing and supporting the event will be contained within existing budgets. It should, however, be noted that the use of the Hoylake municipal golf course for the practice range and car parking purposes will involve a loss of income to the Council during that period. This is likely to be in the order of up to £5,000 per week. IMG will use its best endeavours to prevent any damage to the practice range area and the municipal golf course. Whilst a certain amount of normal 'wear and tear' is expected as a result of the Ricoh Women's British Open, any damage that both parties agree to be unreasonable will be repaired by the Council at IMG's expense.

4. Staffing implications

- 4.1 There are no additional staffing implications as a result of this report.

5. Equal Opportunities/Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Equalities issues will be dealt with as part of the planning for this event.

6. Community Safety implications

- 6.1 Community safety issues will be dealt with as part of the planning for this event.

7. Local Agenda 21 implications

- 7.1 Local Agenda 21 issues will be dealt with as part of the planning for this event.

8. Planning implications

- 8.1 Any detailed planning issues will be dealt with as part of the planning for this event.

9. Anti-poverty implications

- 9.1 This initiative will contribute to the implementation of the Council's Investment Strategy.

10. Human Rights implications

- 10.1 There are no direct Human Rights implications as a result of this report

11. Social Inclusion implications

- 11.1 This initiative will contribute to the implementation of the Council's Investment Strategy.

12. Local Member Support implications

- 12.1 The event will take place in Hoylake but the initiative is of significance to the Borough as a whole.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Background papers are contained in the file on the Women's Open Championship.

14. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees the actions set out in the report required to facilitate the hosting of the Ricoh Women's Golf Open Championship at Royal Liverpool in 2012.

J. WILKIE

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