

WIRRAL COUNCIL

Cabinet

6 November 2014

SUBJECT:	Success of The Open Championship 2014
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Leader of the Council
KEY DECISION?	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces a presentation to be delivered regarding the economic benefit analysis of The Open at Hoylake in 2014
- 1.2 To further build on this economic benefit, Cabinet are asked to support a North West Open Golf Championship Memorandum of Understanding.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The return of The Open Championship in 2014 provided Wirral with a significant opportunity to build on the success of the previous Open in 2006.
- 2.2 In planning for the Open Championship this year a number of marketing initiatives were undertaken, including:
 - A broadcast quality promotional film, used by the R&A and international media.
 - Gateway signage to welcome visitors from far and wide onto Wirral.
 - Bespoke literature to support Wirral's local tourism businesses.
 - Target advertising e.g. billboards notices, etc.
 - On site visitor information displays.

The Council worked with colleagues at Merseyslearn to deliver "WorldHost" training programmes to over 250 people. This training encouraged and supported Wirral's tourism businesses in anticipation of welcoming tens of thousands of visitors to Wirral. The training was provided to a range of services and people including local businesses, taxi drivers and to the Wirral Golf Ambassadors.

- 2.3 The Council's tourism team promoted the peninsula's visitor offer and over £100,000 of accommodation enquiries were taken during the week of the 2013 Open at Muirfield. These provisional enquires were distributed throughout Wirral's accommodation providers and many resulted in bookings.

2.4 To ensure that the Council evaluates the economic success of an event of this scale and to ensure that any claims of success can stand up to scrutiny, it was necessary to seek the assistance of independent experts. Therefore in collaboration with the R&A (as event organisers) reports were commissioned from Repucom, the Sport Industry Research Centre from Sheffield Hallam University and the North West Research Agency. The outcome of those findings are to be reported to Cabinet this evening via a headline presentation.

2.6 In addition to the visitor attraction statistics, Staff from the Councils Economic Policy Team worked with colleagues from Job Centre Plus (JCP) to organise an Open Golf Jobs Fair on the 7th May 2014. 400 people were registered on the day and with further subsequent advertising, this figure increased to 1000 registrations. These registrations led to 944 jobs for 20 different employers. JCP never anticipated large numbers of claimants signing off due to the work they took up as the hours worked for most individuals were within the JCP part time limits. The real benefit was the work experience, enriching CV's and the skills they picked up as part of the pre employment training that occurred. Current hospitality vacancies across the district are being considered for those claimants who registered for the event and are still unemployed.

3.0 NORTH WEST OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

3.1 The North West Coast is home to three of the current Open Championship venues – Royal Liverpool Golf Club, Royal Birkdale Golf Club and Royal Lytham & St. Annes. This provides the North West with an enviable opportunity to host a championship every 3 or 4 years.

3.2 To ensure that all agencies and delivery partners are operating on as consistent and uniform a Championship model as possible, the Chief Executive of Wirral and the R&A have been designing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will layout the common foundations for future delivery of a North West Open Championship.

3.3 The MoU is attached at Appendix 1 to this report and identifies the co-signatories as R&A Championship Staging Limited and the Local Authorities in Wirral, Fylde, Sefton and Lancashire County Council along with Lancashire Constabulary, Merseyside Police and Merseytravel, plus the train operating companies Northern Rail and Merseyrail.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The Planning for the Open Championship 2014 started some 18 months before the event. The staging of an event of this nature required a detailed traffic and transportation plan, to cater for up to 12,000 vehicles visiting the event on a daily basis. In addition to the Traffic and Transportation plan, there was a need to ensure that other essential services and local businesses were aware of the planning for the event and able to consider how the Championship may impact them.

4.2 A consultation strategy was drawn up which included the following:

- The council provided a local community Open Golf office at the rear of the Hoylake Job Centre Plus. The West Wirral Constituency team also operated from this premise from May through to September.

- The team based at the open Golf office dealt with 186 individual residents enquires leading up to the Championship itself and then from early June through to the end of July an average of 25-30 residents and local business owners dropped in to ask specific questions or catch up with latest information regarding the golf.
- The Open Golf office was used as a one stop shop for all golf related matters and issued over 1000 residents parking permits.
- The lead planning officer for the golf delivered 7 separate local community presentations, and undertook question and answer sessions at each event.
- There were separate events held for the local businesses and those of the Wirral Tourism partnership. These events not only relayed details of the plans for the event but also highlighted opportunities from the event

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The primary risks related to the Staging of The Open Championship here on Wirral were that of a reputational nature. If it had not been a successful championship then it could result in Hoylake not remaining on the Open Championship rota.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 As part of the initial planning for the event, all voluntary, community and faith groups were alerted to the golf via a letter drop. A number of these groups contacted the planning team to discuss specific matters e.g. local churches had weddings, etc during the week, community groups wanted advice as to how they could assist in the local delivery and welcome to Wirral, etc.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 To provide an operating budget for the delivery of the Open Golf a sum of £100,000 was made available from Council Reserves. This sum was used amongst other things to fund a bespoke highways and local area cleansing operation prior to and during the week of the Championship. It was vital to bring in extra resources so as not to impact on any existing domestic services.
- 7.2 This budget also covered the costs of the Highways Engineer on producing the traffic and transportation plan and also covered costs of office accommodation, fees for public meeting venues local area grounds maintenance, signage, resident's permits, etc.
- 7.3 There were no staffing, assets or IT issues in delivering the Golf. Staff undertook work relating to the golf as part of their normal duties.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Open Championship was undertaken with a full biodiversity impact assessment and all the traffic and transportation plans were designed to encourage the use of public transport and therefore there are no carbon reductions or environmental implications arising from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Open golf was delivered as a result of major multi-agency planning. As a result the police Wirral Area Commander had plans in place to provide a suitable and sufficient policing plan.

11.2 The event organisers and the multi-agency partners designed a suitable event safety plan.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet note the findings of this report and the economic importance of an Open Championship to Wirral and to the North West region.

12.2 That cabinet support the North West Open Golf Championship Memorandum of Understanding.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The Open Championship is a truly international sporting event and offers a unique opportunity for Wirral to demonstrate that it can successfully host an event of this scale.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - North West Open Golf Championship Memorandum of Understanding.

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

Nil

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date
Nil	

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Nil	