

REPORT TO CABINET

16TH FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

SENIORS OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP, ROYAL PORTHCAWL GOLF CLUB, 2017.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for contribution of funding and officer support to the Senior Open Championship, 2017, and work to establish Royal Porthcawl as a venue capable of hosting the Open Championship.

2 Connection to Corporate improvement Plan

- 2.1 This proposal will contribute to the SIP priorities of *People in Bridgend County benefit from a stronger and more prosperous economy and Bridgend County is a great place to live, work & visit*. This proposal will also contribute to the Corporate Improvement Plan priority of *working together to develop the local economy*.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Bridgend County visitor events strategy was approved by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Cabinet in April 2014. It sets out a clear ambition and future direction for those events that attract, or have the potential to attract, visitors to the County. The vision is for Bridgend County to be recognised as a successful and dynamic events destination. The priorities for achieving this are:

- (a) Create an environment which nurtures and supports events;
- (b) Refresh and develop an on-brand events programme;
- (c) Support the provision of flexible event spaces; and
- (d) Support a consistent approach to event planning, management and evaluation.

The type of support required or available will vary based on the nature of the event.

- 3.2 In 2014 Bridgend County was the host of the first golf major to be held in Wales when Royal Porthcawl hosted the Senior Open Championship, sponsored by Rolex. It is estimated that there were over 43,000 people in attendance at the event including spectators, officials, players and caddies, which generated an estimated economic impact of £2.16m. This figure includes £1.1m for the accommodation sector, £785,000 spent in shops and cafes and £275,000 spent by the event organisers on services in the local economy. In addition, the Media Equivalence Value from the comprehensive TV coverage for Porthcawl and Bridgend County was calculated at a further £5.2m. The co-ordination and engagement of local stakeholders was exemplary and contributed to the higher than expected visitor numbers and the positive experiences of those who visited.
- 3.3 Prior to hosting the Senior Open Championship, Royal Porthcawl hosted the Coral Welsh Classic on the European tour three times between 1980-1982, and the Wales Senior Open in 2009, 2010 and 2013, as well as the 1995 Walker Cup. Royal Porthcawl will also host the Royal and Ancient Amateur Championship in

2016. From the above, it can be seen that over a period of time, the scale and calibre of championship golf hosted in the County Borough, has increased significantly.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

4.1 The Senior Open Championship will return to Royal Porthcawl Golf Club from 27-30 July, 2017. Whilst the number of spectators will be determined to an extent by the weather conditions throughout the week, the target is 43,000 for Championship week with a predicted economic impact close to that of 2014.

4.2 Prior to this, players not qualified will play an 18-hole stroke play qualifying round at one of the following golf clubs - Pyle & Kenfig, Southerndown, Ashburnham or Machynys Peninsula. It is envisaged circa 400 qualifiers in total will arrive from Saturday 22 July to practice ahead of official qualifying on Monday 24 July.

4.3 Welsh Government is supporting the delivery of the three Senior Open Championships between 2014 and 2024 with a grant of £5 million and a request has been submitted by the event organisers for a contribution from BCBC of £50,000.

4.4 The proposed £50,000 contribution is the total capped funding package requested from the Council towards the event, to cover the costs associated with any or all of the following as considered appropriate by the European Senior Tour (EST):

- The EST commissioning a contractor for the preparation of the private lane leading to the main Championship car park in the form of pothole repairs and hedge trimming, where necessary.
- BCBC's playing field for use as the entrance for players, officials and courtesy cars and as an overflow car park, as necessary. At this time it is not anticipated that the playing fields will be required for car parking, although certain access will be required. Any area used will be made good following the event.
- Liaison and assistance with the Championship's traffic management plan from the highways department and the events safety advisory group. Following the experience of 2014 it is considered that a very similar traffic management plan will be developed and therefore the impact will be similar.
- Provision and distribution of cones to line any roads, as deemed necessary, leading to and from Royal Porthcawl Golf Club.
- All costs associated with local promotion and marketing, including school roadshows in partnership with Golf Development Wales.
- All costs associated with the family day taking place on Saturday 29 July. This will be organised with the Championship, with the agreement of Rolex as presenting sponsor.
- All costs associated with the 'open top bus', linking the town centre with the golf course, mirroring the successful experience of 2014.

4.5 In return for the proposed contribution and in addition to the substantial estimated impact on the local economy, the Championship will provide the following benefits to the Council:

- Official designation – "Championship sponsor of the Senior Open Championship presented by Rolex 2017"

- Championship logo – the right to use the Championship logo in BCBC’s advertising and promotions until 31 December 2017, subject in each instance to supplying draft artwork for prior approval by the PGA European Tour
- On-Course advertising boards – the right to four on-course advertising boards which will be positioned on the golf course to attract TV exposure with the BridgendBites.com and BCBC logos
- Logo identification – the right to display the BCBC logo on the welcome archways, front cover of the official programme, daily drawsheet and promotional literature such as posters and flyers
- Website acknowledgement – inclusion of the BCBC logo on the Championship sponsors’ page on europeantour.com, linking to bridgendbites.com
- Official programme – one full colour page of advertising and a welcome message from the Leader of BCBC
- Exhibition space – allocated space within the public tented village of the event for an information stand from which to promote Bridgend County (dates to be agreed)
- Corporate hospitality – twenty guests on each of Thursday 27 and Friday 28 July as well as invitations for up to six BCBC representatives on Sunday 30 July to the Sponsors’ hospitality facility located in the tented village
- Patrons golf day – two fourballs (eight persons) to play the Championship course on Monday 31 July, following conclusion of the Championship
- Admission tickets – one hundred daily tickets for use in BCBC’s marketing campaign. Additional tickets may be purchased at a 50% discount.

4.6 It is suggested that this support will not only be of benefit in the short term, with the intention of the event in 2017 being as successful as the event in 2014, but will also support work towards the destination being selected to act as a host for the Open Championship in the future.

4.7 Royal Porthcawl is currently considered as the most likely destination in Wales to host an Open Championship and secure the economic impact that would result from this. An independent study undertaken by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University considered the regional economic impact of hosting an Open Championship to be in the region of £70m. The headline figure includes a forecast economic impact of £25 million and an estimated destination marketing benefit of £45 million gained through global television exposure of the week-long event. The return on investment from hosting major golf tournaments is therefore considerable. The Council has significant landholdings in Porthcawl, and could therefore expect to harness the economic benefit of being a host destination, in the public interest.

4.8 It is proposed that the regeneration service will establish a Senior Open Championship 2017 liaison group with representation from relevant officers across the Council and a representative of EST. If considered appropriate, external organisations may be invited to strengthen the partnership approach. The group will aim to provide advice and guidance to the EST to assist with their decision making, broker relationships between the EST and local stakeholders and identify opportunities in relation to local partnership development, business engagement and promotion and marketing for the EST to take forward.

5. Effect Upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 None

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

6.1 None required

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The Senior Open Championship 2017 liaison group will be supported by regeneration service staff resources.

7.2 The proposed £50,000 contribution to the 2017 Senior Open Championship event can be met from through the strategic tourism events fund, split equally in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

8.1.1 Approve the proposed contribution of £50,000 for the purposes in set out in paragraph 4.4 above;

8.1.2 Authorise officers to establish and support a Senior Open Championship liaison group for the purposes set out in paragraph 4.7 in the report;

8.1.3 Authorise officers to work with the Royal Porthcawl Golf Club to establish the venue as an Open Championship course within the next 10 years.

MARK SHEPHARD
Corporate Director Communities

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Contact Officer: Ieuan Sherwood, Manager, Tourism and Countryside
Telephone: 01656 815334
E-mail: ieuan.Sherwood@bridgend.gov.uk