

Update on 148th Open preparations	12th February 2019
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing Our Environments & Assets
Outcome	All Environments in the area will benefit from pro-active decision making which protects the features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
Lead Officer	Director of Leisure & Development Project Manager, The Open
Cost: (If applicable)	Not applicable

The purpose of this report is to update members on the ongoing work in preparation for hosting The 148th Open and to seek approval for the allocation of lands to facilitate community parking.

Business Engagement and Development

There have been three business engagement events held in Portrush Town Hall since June 2018. These events consisted of two sessions (2-3pm and 7-8pm) and attracted between 20 - 60 attendees at each session.

The October event included a presentation from Strategic Director at Angus Council to share on the experiences from Carnoustie, which was overwhelmingly positive. Themes covered at the last event in January included traffic and travel arrangements, licensing, food regulations, pavement cafes and World Host training. Businesses also had an opportunity to hear from Stella Marran about the support available to the local food and drink sector through the Foodovation Centre at North West Regional College.

The final business engagement event in Portrush will take place 15th April 2019. A Business Toolkit which was produced in conjunction with Tourism NI and has also been made available to businesses since last June.

In addition to the business engagement events, the council intends to facilitate an information sharing event for local Taxi operators and will have involvement from DVA and the Traffic, Transport and Parking group.

The Council in partnership with Tourism NI is offering the opportunity for businesses to become WorldHost Ambassadors for golf and for the destination. These are half day training sessions running from January to the end of March at four Golf Clubs across the Borough.

Council is also supporting Sodexo recruit 1,500 local workforce to provide catering at the event through sharing employment opportunities in relevant mediums.

Branding, Animation and Events

The 'Proud Host' signs have already been put in place at the main entrance points into the borough. Further branding will be erected on lamp posts on approach roads, at strategic roundabouts and within town centres in May and June.

The animation plans for the week of the event are being developed and will be presented to Council then the business community on 15th April at Portrush Town Hall. The plans include a twilight market, live music, children / family entertainment and an interactive golf zone in Portrush. Live music events will also take place in Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Limavady and Coleraine throughout the week of the event.

The R&A have agreed for Council to take the Claret Jug on a road trip to showcase some of the hidden gems on the Causeway Coastal Route including Glenariff, Cushendall, Cushendun, Ballycastle, Dark Hedges, Rathlin, Causeway, Portrush. This is scheduled to be filmed in April and will then be shared online at a later point in time.

Legacy

The 148th Open legacy fund is £100k, and is focused on supporting initiatives to benefit the community. Whilst the fund is 'owned' by the R&A, it will be administered by the Council. At present Council's funding unit is in consultation with The R&A and TNI is developing a programme and process to distribute the legacy fund.

Based upon the impact of the event, specifically the disruption and inconvenience caused to the communities within the immediate vicinity of the event, the R&A has deemed that the geographical parameters for spend are limited to the town of Portrush.

Another strand of legacy is sport, health and wellbeing, and the Council has recently received a conditional offer of £35k from Department for Communities towards a schools golf programme aimed at introducing children to golf in areas of high social need.

In addition to the above, there will be the economic legacy and the civic pride generated from hosting the event. This will be partly measured through the event evaluation as agreed by Council in February last year.

Traffic, Transport and Parking

The Traffic, Transport and Parking plan, was both shared with Members in December and with the local community at a consultation event in January. The presentation and details provided can be found Council's website.

There is work ongoing to create a community impact register which seeks to identify and facilitate businesses, residents, care providers and others who are directly affected by road restrictions contained within the Traffic and Transport Plan.

Community and Business Engagement

Council is planning four further business and community engagement events across Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Limavady and Coleraine. These will take place in April and May. The events will provide an overview of the traffic, transport and parking plan, opportunities for businesses and the community to partake in the event and make the most of additional visitors to the area.

Community, Business and Non-Golf Parking

To date all matters relating to The 148th Open Golf Championship, have been referred to the L&D Committee, including land use. Maintaining a consistent approach, the following land uses are proposed:

In order to create additional parking, specifically for businesses / staff and residents, member's approval is sought for the allocation of the following lands for the period of the event (14-21 July 2019):

- Lansdowne Recreation Grounds – Dedicated as a Portrush business and staff car park.
- Lansdowne Green – Additional non-golf community parking.
- Parker Avenue Football Grounds – Displaced residents, who do not have access to off-street car parking.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the above preparations and approve use of the Council lands to provide community and business parking during the period 14-21 July 2019.