

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure & Development Committee

Golf Tourism Synopsis

14th April 2015

For Information

13.0 Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Prosperity.
Lead Officer	Richard Baker Director of Leisure & Development
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on the economic benefits of golf tourism and the importance of supporting the development of the golf tourism sector.

13.1 Introduction

Tourism Northern Ireland recently launched the Tourism Golf Strategy (2015-2020) designed to support the golf sector contribute to the wider tourism vision of a £1 billion industry in Northern Ireland by 2020. Golf Tourism is currently valued at £33m in Northern Ireland and there are real opportunities to further grow this.

The aims of the Strategy are to:

- Grow the value of golf visitors to Northern Ireland to £50m p.a. by 2020.
- Develop the capability and capacity of clubs to host visitors.
- Enhance the reputation and visibility of Northern Ireland for golf tourism in designated markets.
- Build Northern Ireland's capacity to host golf events.
- Support industry leadership and collaboration across the sector.

The Irish Open was hosted in 2012 at Portrush with direct support from Tourism Northern Ireland, and this event would not have been held in Northern Ireland without this support. The Northern Ireland Executive highlighted it as an example of a prestigious global event which "showcases Northern Ireland's iconic landscapes and stand-out features" and "acts as a catalyst for wider industry to develop related product and embrace the opportunities presented". Golf Tourism contributes directly to the visibility and appeal of a destination for events, and as a quality tourism destination.

13.2 The Key Benefits of Golf Tourism

The 2012 Irish Open at Royal Portrush was the first return of the event to Northern Ireland in 60 years. Over the six days of the event (which include practice and Pro-Am days), there were:

- 132,000 visitors.
 - 23% of spectators were from the Irish Open's host council (Coleraine Borough Council);

- 61% of spectators were from the rest of Northern Ireland;
- 16% of spectators were from outside Northern Ireland.
- 9,123 of the 9,584 out-of-state spectators travelled to Northern Ireland specifically to attend the Irish Open.
- £12 million of economic benefit.
- Over 28,000 bed nights.
- Global media coverage estimated at £107 million.
- 10,000 passengers travelled by rail.
- 30,000 used the park-and-ride facilities.

Research suggests that for every £1 spent on green fees, a further £ 4 is spent elsewhere in the economy. According to Fáilte Ireland, golfers are amongst the most valuable visitors to Ireland, spending an estimated €1,200 per person on each trip: more than 2.5 times the expenditure of the average overseas visitor. This ties in with data gathered by IAGTO from a number of countries which shows that golf travellers spend 2.2 times more than the average general leisure visitor.

13.3 Northern Ireland Golf Tourism Monitor 2013/14

Tourism Northern Ireland has been operating the Northern Ireland Golf Tourism monitor since 2013 and the headline results further reflect the benefits and potential of this sector:

	2013	2014
Economic Impact	£ 27m	£ 33.2m
Visiting Golfers Total	134,268	139,300
Visiting Golfers from out-of-state	20,484	22,293

13.4 The Open Championship: Economic & Media Benefits

The table below shows the potential economic benefits of The Open being held at Royal Portrush no earlier than 2019 by using the previous years from 2010 – 2014 as a comparator.

Venue	St Andrews	Royal St George's	Royal Lytham	Muirfield	Hoylake
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of Spectators	201k	180k	181k	160k	202k
Economic Benefit	£100m	£77m	£65m	£88m	£76m
Media Equiv.	£47.2	£52.6	£37	£45	£52.2

Hosting The Open Championship will be one of the largest global sporting events that Northern Ireland will have staged. With The Open returning to Northern Ireland after such a long absence and Rory McIlroy playing in his home country, it is fair to assume that the level of interest will be significantly greater than normal, with the potential for significantly higher levels of spectator numbers and media coverage.