

**APPENDIX A**

South East LEP  
c/o Essex County Council  
County Hall  
Market Road  
Chelmsford  
CM1 1QH

Mr Johnnie Cole-Hamilton  
Executive Director-Championships  
The Royal & Ancient Golf Club (R&A)  
Beach House,  
Golf Place,  
St Andrews,  
Fife, KY16 9JA

25th January 2017

Dear Mr Cole-Hamilton

**Re: The feasibility of hosting The Open in Kent in 2020**

Thank you for alerting the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to the opportunity for Royal St George's, Sandwich, Kent, to host The Open in 2020.

SELEP understands that investment is required to fund a semi-permanent extension to the platforms at Sandwich Railway Station, an additional footbridge linking the up and down platforms at Sandwich railway station, and related ancillary infrastructure. We believe that financial contributions will be made by The R&A and local authority partners, leaving a funding shortfall of circa £300k.

At its Accountability Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017, SELEP noted its support for the transport improvements at Sandwich Station project, and noted the intention for it to be considered at a future Board meeting. This consideration is subject to the successful completion and assessment of a Business Case by the SELEP ITE and the identification of an appropriate funding stream.

Currently the funding for this project is not within the SELEP gift. This project has arisen subsequent to the Local Growth Fund round 3 submission, and before the SELEP LGF allocation has been announced. Therefore the project has not been considered by the SELEP, nor has it been included in the prioritised list of pipeline projects agreed in July 2016 which formed part of the SELEP submission to Government in July 2016. Therefore an appropriate funding stream would need to be identified by SELEP.

At this stage, SELEP is able to confirm that it would be willing to:

- Ask its Independent Technical Evaluator (Steer Davies Gleave) to examine a business case submitted by the partners on the working group (including KCC, DDC and Network Rail)
- Discuss the findings of the Independent Technical Evaluator at its next appropriate Accountability Board meeting (subject to receipt of the Business Case).
- Explore whether a financial contribution could be managed within the Kent and Medway programme, and if this were the case, consider committing a maximum of £300k to meeting any shortfall in this project.

SELEP would ask that, if funding were to be committed at this future date, The R&A would commit to The Open being hosted at Royal St George's every 7 years.

SELEP recognises that significant economic benefits are brought to the south east by The Open, and notes the research carried out by the Sheffield Hallam University which shows that the direct economic benefit brought to the local economy by The Open is a minimum of £20million. We recognise the significant boost to the local tourism and visitor economy that results from the global television coverage of the event with many overseas visitors saying they may return to the locality based on the positive experience they have had at The Open. This will also support our objective to support regeneration in coastal communities.

Bringing The Open to the South East resonates with the aims and objectives of SELEP to drive forward economic growth and boost job creation. SELEP is very eager to secure such a benefit in future years. However to comply with governance and legal requirements, a funding commitment can only be provided once the business case has been examined and be found to be robust, and a suitable funding stream has been identified.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of your board meeting in early February, and hope to work with you on this key project for the South East.

Yours sincerely,  
 All Accountability Board Members  
 South East Local Enterprise Partnership