

<b>Report to Accountability Board</b>	<b>Forward Plan reference number: N/A</b>
<b>Date of Accountability Board Meeting:</b> 20 January 2017 <b>Date of report:</b> 6 January 2017	
<b>Title of report:</b> Transport Improvements to support The Open Championship 2020	
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## 1. Purpose of report:

- 1.1. This report to the SELEP Accountability Board (the Board) describes the transport improvements necessary to secure Royal St George's as the venue for the 2020 Open Championship.

## 2. Recommendations:

The Board are asked to:

- 2.1 **To approve** the draft letter of support to be submitted to the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (the R&A) in relation to the transport improvements at Sandwich Station.
- 2.2 **To note** the intention for the transport improvements at Sandwich Station project to be considered at a future Board meeting for approval of the £300k funding allocation following consideration of the Business Case by the SELEP ITE and identification of an appropriate funding stream.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Open Championship (The Open) is the oldest of the four major international championships in professional golf. It is administered by The R&A and is the only major outside the United States. It is a 72-hole tournament contested over four days, Thursday through Sunday. Since 1979 it has been played in the week which includes the third Friday in July.
- 3.2. The Open is held annually at one of nine 'link golf' courses across the UK recently being played on a five year rotation at St Andrews and alternating between England and Scotland in between; these courses are:
- Carnoustie (Angus, Scotland)

- Royal Birkdale (Southport, England)
- Royal Liverpool (Wirral, England)
- Royal Lytham & St Annes (Lancashire, England)
- Royal Portrush (Antrim, Northern Ireland)
- Royal St George's (Sandwich, Kent, England)
- Royal Troon (Ayrshire, Scotland)
- St Andrews (Fife, Scotland)
- Turnberry (Ayrshire, Scotland).

- 3.3. Royal St George's at Sandwich in Kent has previously hosted The Open on 14 occasions, and most recently in 2011. A total of 180,000 spectator admissions were recorded at The Open in 2011 and 37,000 passengers travelled on the special High Speed train service from London St Pancras, operated by Southeastern.
- 3.4. The courses listed in paragraph 3.2 are the only venues considered by R&A as suitable for hosting The Open, having been through a rigorous assessment process carried out at the time of its inclusion on the list. The list operates as an annual rota, with venues being picked to suit R&A requirements for that particular year.
- 3.5. R&A indicated in 2016 that it would like Royal St George's to host The Open in 2020, however it was concerned about a number of challenges that were experienced in 2011.
- 3.6. In particular, in 2011, the level crossing was on occasions closed for some 40 minutes per hour when the 12 carriage trains served Sandwich train station. This had a knock-on effect, significantly delaying spectators accessing the venue by car, bus and on foot, and resulted in considerable adverse publicity. In addition, the existing passenger bridge over the tracks was not fit to bear the large number of arriving passengers.
- 3.7. R&A has indicated that should these difficulties not be overcome, it will lose this opportunity to host The Open in 2020, and The Open would be highly unlikely to return until such time as the appropriate transport improvements were undertaken.
- 3.8. Partners in Kent have been working to resolve the challenges identified from 2011 which include improvement to transport accessibility to the venue from the local Sandwich rail station. The improvements necessary are:
- To extend the up and down platforms at Sandwich railway station from 8 to 12 carriage length.
  - To construct an additional footbridge linking the up and down platform passengers at Sandwich railway station with a pathway.

- To construct a pathway from the extended up platform to the start of a footpath which links the station to Royal St George's Golf Club avoiding the town centre.

#### 4. Economic benefits of hosting The Open

4.1. The R&A has commissioned Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre since 2010 to undertake research into the economic benefit delivered to each locality from hosting The Open. The table below provides a summary of the research's findings:

Year	Course	Economic Benefit	Spectator numbers & television coverage
2010	St Andrews, Scotland	<p><b>The Open delivered a £100m benefit to Scotland.</b></p> <p>This headline figure includes <b>£47.43m</b> of direct spending in Scotland attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth <b>£52.55m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>A total of 201,000 spectator admissions were recorded.</p> <p>The Open was broadcast globally for more than 3,000 hours, by 43 broadcasters, via 86 channels, to 363 million viewers.</p>
2011	Royal St George's, Sandwich, England	<p><b>The Open delivered a £77m benefit to the Kent economy.</b></p> <p>This headline figure includes <b>£24.14m</b> of direct spending in Kent attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth more than <b>£50m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>A total of 180,091 spectator admissions were recorded. Of these, 134,000 spectators came from outside of the county.</p> <p>The images of Kent were broadcast to a worldwide audience of nearly 500 million homes.</p>
2012	Royal Lytham & St Annes, England	<p><b>The Open delivered a £65m benefit to Lancashire.</b></p> <p>The headline figure includes <b>£28m</b> of direct spending in Lancashire attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth <b>£37m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>A total of 181,400 spectator admissions were recorded.</p> <p>Over 3,800 hours of televised coverage reached 500 million households worldwide.</p>
2013	Muirfield,	<b>The Open delivered a £88m benefit to</b>	A total of 142,036

	Scotland	<p><b>Scotland.</b></p> <p>This headline figure includes <b>£24.4m</b> of direct spending in East Lothian and Edinburgh attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth <b>£45m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>spectator admissions were recorded.</p> <p>A record 4,500 hours of Open Championship television coverage was broadcast from Muirfield, across 104 television channels, with a global audience reach of 501 million households.</p>
2014	Royal Liverpool, England	<p><b>The Open delivered a £75m benefit to the regional economy of Wirral and Liverpool.</b></p> <p>This headline figure includes <b>£30m</b> of direct spending in the local economy attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth <b>£45m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>A total of 202,917 spectator admissions were recorded.</p> <p>The televised coverage reached 500 million households worldwide.</p>
2015	St Andrew's, Scotland	<p><b>The Open delivered a £140m benefit to Scotland.</b></p> <p>This headline figure includes <b>£88m</b> of direct spending in Scotland attributable to event specific visitors and organisers, as well as a destination marketing benefit worth <b>£52m</b> derived from exposure on global television.</p>	<p>A total of 237,024 spectator admissions were recorded.</p> <p>The televised coverage reached more than 500 million households worldwide.</p>

4.2 The Open will also provide a substantial impetus to the tourist economy in the coastal communities in East Kent.

## 5. Project development

5.1 At the end of 2016, the Member of Parliament for South Thanet (Craig Mackinlay MP) convened a working group of Dover District Council (DDC), Kent County Council (KCC), L&B Rail Executive (Consultants), Network Rail, The R&A, Royal St George's Golf Club and Southeastern.

- 5.2 The working group commissioned Network Rail to undertake an initial feasibility study into the transport improvements, and a visual site survey and topographic survey of Sandwich station.
- 5.3 A commitment to provide a financial contribution is expected to be provided from KCC and the East Kent District Councils. This is due to sit alongside a further contribution from R&A. Further information is set out in the Confidential Appendix.

## **6. Next steps and Timeframe**

- 6.1. The R&A Board is scheduled to convene in early February 2017 to make a formal announcement on which venue will host The Open in 2020. For Royal St George's to be considered, the R&A is seeking written confirmation of funding for the required infrastructure improvements relating to Sandwich railway station. It was agreed at the meeting held at the end of 2016 that DCC and KCC would liaise on this matter and respond to the R&A by the end of January at the latest.
- 6.2. This project has arisen subsequent to the Local Growth Fund round 3 submission, and therefore has not been considered by the SELEP, nor has it been included in the prioritised list of pipeline projects. A business case has not been submitted to the Independent Technical Evaluator, and therefore its assessment against value for money and deliverability has not been undertaken.
- 6.3. However, in order for the submission to R&A to proceed, the Board is asked to consider the overview of the project and to approve the submission of a letter in support of the project to The R&A. This letter sets out the SELEP willingness to explore the possibility of funding the project in recognition of the significant economic benefits to the local economy. The draft of the letter is attached in Appendix A.
- 6.4. Were a funding agreement entered into, a stipulation in the contract would be for The R&A to commit to The Open being hosted at Royal St George's every 7 years to ensure an ongoing economic benefit to the south east.
- 6.5. The proposal would be for the funding to be managed within the Kent and Medway programme. Further discussion at a future Board would be required on which funding stream could be used.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The project is not currently included in SELEP's Growth Deal or any funding bid to Government for LGF. For the funding decision to be taken, an agreed approach will need to be in place to demonstrate how the circa £300,000 contribution will be funded (e.g. through locally identified LGF underspend on a project currently included in SELEPs Growth Deal programme).
- 7.2 All decisions to award funding must be supported by a Business Case, in line with SELEP's Assurance Framework and which has been assessed through the Independent Technical Evaluation (ITE) process to ensure that the project demonstrates Value for Money.
- 7.3 Following the completion of the ITE review of the Business Case, the funding decision can be considered at a future Accountability Board meeting, subject to funding for this project being identified in line with the SELEP Assurance Framework.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The funding for this project is not within 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 which formed part of the SELEP submission to Government in July 2016. Therefore in accordance with the information set out in the financial implication section above, should the Board indicate its support for the project, then a decision on the funding will need to be made by the Board at a future meeting.
- 8.2 The Assurance Framework requires all funding decisions to be supported by a robust business case which has been independently assessed. As yet a business case has not been prepared or submitted to the SELEP ITE, and therefore the outcome of a value for money and deliverability assessment is not known.
- 8.3 In light of the absence of any funding certainty and an independent technical evaluation of the Business Case being available at this stage, and no funding stream identified, it is not possible for the Board to provide outright confirmation of any future decision being undertake in respect of this project. To do so could give rise to a legitimate expectation, and one which could give rise to legal proceedings, if The R&A were to rely upon the assurances provided and funding later is not allocated.

## **9. Staffing and other resource implications**

9.1 None at present.

## **10. Equality and Diversity implications**

10.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

(a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act

(b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

(c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

10.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

10.3 In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the project and their ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision-making process and where possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

## **11. List of Appendices**

11.1 Appendix 1 – Confidential Appendix

11.2 Appendix 2 – SELEP Draft Letter of Support

## **12. List of Background Papers**

12.1 None

(Any request for any background papers listed here should be made to the person named at the front of the report who will be able to help with any enquiries).

Role	Date
Accountable Body sign off	