

Title of Report:	153rd Open Championship
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 May 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Promote our tourist offer locally and internationally
Outcome	Improve prosperity
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	September 2025

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: 07 May 2025
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes	Date: 07 May 2025
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: 07 May 2025
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on Council's role in the continuing planning in advance of the 153rd Open Championship in Portrush in July 2025.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting in April 2025, Council's Leisure and Development Committee received an update report which outlined Council's involvement in the planning and delivery of the 153rd Open Championship.
- 2.2 Following the April 2025 report, Council Officers have committed to bring further updates to Committee on a monthly basis.

3.0 General Update of progress towards the 153rd Open Championship

- 3.1 The 153rd Open will be the largest ever sporting event held in Northern Ireland and is expected to generate more than £213 million in total economic benefit for the country according to an independent forecast by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University.

It estimates that the economic impact resulting from The 153rd Open will be £63 million, while the destination marketing benefit for Northern Ireland derived from coverage produced via linear television and digital platforms will exceed £150m.

- 3.2 History will be made at The 153rd Open at Royal Portrush after it was revealed by The R&A that 278,000 fans will gather at the iconic Dunluce links from 13-20 July for the largest Championship held outside of St Andrews.

- 3.3 The R&A have recruited for around 1,200 roles for The Open across various functions to support the Championship's delivery. Of these, 85% of the roles have been filled by the local Northern Ireland community.

Such was the success of a recent recruitment event held by The R&A in Portrush, that the process has already been closed.

Around 1,200 marshals will also be enlisted to work at the event as well as 500 volunteers.

- 3.4 As is clearly visible to all passers-by, the build of the main infrastructure at Royal Portrush Golf Club is well under way. A site management team has also been set up to manage the contractor community and deliveries from a host of local businesses who are suppliers for the Championship.

4.0 Headline Updates on Council Led Activity

4.1 Business and Community Engagement

- The EPIC Journey to The Open event took place on Kerr Street Green, Portrush, on Friday 2nd May. The Claret Jug was on display and the event was well attended by members of the public, school children, elected members and stakeholders.
- The next Business and Community Engagement Day in Portrush Town Hall is planned for 28th May, from 9am – 3pm.
- The Open Legacy Fund will be launched and promoted at the 28th May Engagement Day
- A rolling program of drop-in sessions in Portrush Town Hall has now commenced, with colleagues from R&A and Council engaging directly with residents and businesses
- Council's Elected Members have received a briefing from R&A's Executive Director Championships and the Director, Public Affairs on Tuesday 6th May 2025.
- Council continues to promote widely amongst local businesses and community organisations including the benefits of the 2025 TNI Business Toolkit.

4.2 Tourism and Promotion

- Branding Plans are well advanced in terms of development, procurement and planning, working with graphic design colleagues and partners at Tourism NI.

- Event Programme for the Championship week is well developed. The main program will run from Wednesday, culminating on the Friday night showcase event.
- Council officers continue to work closely with key partners in terms of the plans for dressing roads, roundabouts, main travel routes towards Portrush. These options have been presented to R&A and TNI for their consideration. Plans are well developed.
- Council continues to explore further activities in other towns, such as promoting “Live at The Open” music and entertainment events.
- Council continues to create, capture and publish content for its Causeway Coast and Glens Live Channel.

4.3 Service Continuity and Town Presentation

As discussed in April, Councils plans for Town presentation and service continuity during the Championship are also well developed especially in terms of:

- Floral Displays and Grass Cutting.
- Enhanced Bin Collections, street sweeping, litter picking & Special Waste Collections.
- Focus on presentation of Civic Amenity sites and Public Toilets.
- Environmental Health and Enforcement Issues including Street Trading and inspections of catering provisions.
- Entertainment Licenses/ Liqueur Licensing / Child Certification.

4.4 Traffic and Transport

- Enhanced public transport (bus and rail services timetabling) across Portrush, the CC&G area and beyond have been finalised and published.
- Translink held a very successful Open Championship Travel Launch day on 10th April at Royal Portrush.
- New arrangements in place for the main Park and Ride facilities depot of buses. This has been moved to the carpark at Railway Road in Coleraine.
- Translink have committed to a final Train departure timeframe Portrush of 23.05 during the Championship week, as well as supplementing this with two additional bus services from Portrush Station at 22.30 and 00.00.
- Council, working with The R&A, has started to roll out its planning and approach to providing passes to residents and businesses for displaced parking and access through road restriction zones.

5.0 Temporary Transfer of Council Owned Lands to R&A

- 5.1 As part of the event delivery, the R&A has made application to Council for the temporary transfer of lands to facilitate the event. The requirement include land for TV compound, public Park and Ride facilities, coach parking and the provision of a public transport hub.

Officers from the Tourism and Recreation team, in conjunction with Land and Property have processed this application through the Land and Property Sub Committee to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

6.0 Budget

- 6.1 All work stream areas are currently under budget, with no significant budgetary risks.

7.0 Other Key Areas of Work

- 7.1 Council also continues to play a key role in the following Open Championship planning groups:
- Safety and Security.
 - Marketing and Communications.
 - Technical and Regulatory.

- Recruitment, Skills and Volunteering.
- Sustainability and Legacy.

8.0 Recommendation

Elected Members are asked to note the content of this update report.