



17 November 2023

To whom it may concern

Consultation responses on ML2022016, Curran Strand, Portrush

The R&A is the governing body for golf (outside the US and Mexico). Our role is to enhance the integrity, health and enjoyment of the sport from grassroots to the professional game. We are the organisers of The Open, golf's original championship, which has been played since 1860 on iconic links golf courses. The Open brings huge spectator interest and prestige as well as lasting economic impact.

The 148th Open was hosted at Royal Portrush Golf Club in 2019 and will return there in 2025, seeking to build on 2019's success by meeting and exceeding the growing expectations around the championship.

The Open attracted 235,750 fans in 2019, of which 19% of were visitors from overseas. Ongoing investments to the venue mean this number may reach the 250,000 mark in 2025.

The Sport Industry Research Centre, based at Sheffield Hallam University, undertook an economic impact study, and found that the event impact was worth £45 million to Northern Ireland with a further £61m of destination marketing benefit. This led to an overall economic benefit of more than £100m in 2019 alone.

Local hotels and restaurants were significant beneficiaries, with 160,000 commercial bed nights generated in the accommodation sector.

More than 5,400 hours of television coverage of the course and surrounding area were broadcast to hundreds of millions of viewers globally. Since 2019 the economic impact of The Open has grown significantly.

We therefore actively support Royal Portrush Golf Club's marine licencing application. We understand that following detailed analysis concerns have been raised that should the extension to existing coastal defences not be put in place, and further winter storm events occur like that of 2013/14, there is a risk that part of the 6th tee and potentially the 5th green of the championship course could be lost to the sea. Putting in place appropriate measure to prevent this from happening ahead of the Open Championship's return in 2025 will help secure the long-term future of Royal Portrush Golf Club as a championship host.

As part of the discussions in relation to this application we understand there have been references to The R&A's sustainable golf research programme, entitled GC2030.

The R&A invests significant funding in researching sustainability impacts affecting the golf sector. The purpose of GC2030 is to publish the understanding of sustainability risks and issues and provide a balanced view of practical guidance for golf clubs to look at appropriate adaptation or mitigation measures. Research on coastal change



management for golf courses has not yet been published. In regard to coastal erosion it seeks to provide a range of options for golf courses affected by erosion. This research acknowledges that hard engineered solutions can provide effective mitigation alongside other adaptive management approaches.

The R&A's governance role relates to the Rules of Golf which are administered with the consent of its network of affiliated national organisations around the world. Beyond the Rules codes, therefore, The R&A is not a policy or legislative setter or enforcer of any legislation on a national or international basis.

We are grateful for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

The R&A

[Redacted contact information]