

Committee(s): Community and Health Committee	Date: 9 March 2020
Subject: Golf Improvement Strategy	Wards Affected: ALL
Report of: Kim Anderson	Public
Report Author/s: Kim Anderson Name: Telephone: 01277 312634 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

The Council has invested in its built facilities in King George's Playing Fields with the new pavilion building, splash pad and adventure play. The Council wants to ensure that strategic investment is also made into the golf course as part of an overall improvement programme in the park and its facilities. It is planned that an audit of the golf course is undertaken which will inform the requirements of the improvement strategy. It is expected that with the planned improvement programme, it will encourage more golf participation and justify any green fee increases that the Council may want to make. The audit will also help to develop an Agronomic plan, Arboriculturist report and irrigation plan. This audit along with options to improve the golf offer at Hartwood will inform the overall five-year improvement strategy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- R1. Agree for an Audit of Hartwood Golf Course to be undertaken which will identify works to be included in The Golf Improvement Strategy.**

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Hartwood Golf Course is a well-established Council managed golf course in Brentwood. The Council is making significant investment into King George's Playing Fields with the improvement of the built facilities, new splash pad and outdoor adventure play together with the refurbished play area.
2. To compliment this investment then the Council also needs to ensure that the golf course receives strategic investment so that it remains attractive for existing and new golfers. The Council is also keen to attract new golfers to the course to increase participation in the sport.
3. With strategic investment the Council could also justify any increases in green fees.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4. The Audit will be hole by hole and will include the following plans and recommendations:
 - Agronomic Plan
 - Arboriculturist report
 - Irrigation plan
5. An assessment of each hole of the golf course would set out the following:
 - Need for bunker improvements, are the bunkers in the right place or do they need to be removed or reshaped, and look at use of alternative eco bunkers/astroturf
 - Assessment of tees and approaches so that golfers can see the hazards
 - Shielding greens due to trees.
6. Any changes to the course will require a health and safety assessment.
7. Other overall improvements such as paths will be assessed if they are financially viable.
8. The audit will also look at opportunities to support staff through appointment of apprenticeships and other training schemes for staff.
9. The audit will also identify machinery requirements, depot improvements and an opportunity to review current policies and procedures.

Consultation

There is no need to consult at this stage as the audit will identify recommendations for that will inform the Strategy.

References to Corporate Plan

The Golf Improvement Strategy sits under the Developing our Communities strand and in particular will help to enhance and develop new sustainable leisure facilities and increase participation in sport and physical activity.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

The costs for undertaking the audit are approximately £5,000 and can be met from existing budgets.

The Improvement Strategy allows an opportunity to increase green fees once the recommended works are undertaken. Fees and Charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Council's budget setting timetable, therefore any revision to green fees will be captured within this process and approved at the necessary committee.

The recommended works from the planned improvement programme will need to form part of a growth bid to be captured within the Council's budget setting process in

future years. The works in their 5 year totality will also need to be distinguished between works that can be capitalised and works that are a revenue cost. In reviewing the 5 year improvement strategy, this project will be assessed as per the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer

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The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, SI 2015/234 issued under the powers conferred by Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (LAAA 2014), ss 32, 43(2) and 46 make provisions in relation to internal audit.

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, SI 2015/234, reg 5(2), officers and members must make available such documents and records and supply such information and explanations as are considered necessary by those conducting an internal audit, provided they are required to do so for the purposes of the audit. 'Documents and records' are specified to include information recorded in an electronic form.

Regulation 5(1) requires that authorities must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of their risk management, control and governance processes. This audit must consider public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

The currently applicable Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) are published by CIPFA, based on the International Professional Practices Framework of the Institute of Internal Auditors. Supplemental guidance is provided in a Local Government Application Note for the United Kingdom Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Council by undertaking this audit will be ensuring compliance with the above legislative provisions. Ensuring that any decision taken is transparent, takes account of strategic risks and good governance prior to a decision being made.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy

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As outlined in the report, the priority for sport and leisure facilities is to provide public benefit for people's health and wellbeing. From an economic perspective, the sport and leisure market is competitive with multiple providers. It is important that the Council maintains and improves its facilities in this regard as wider provision assists our local economy with a range of social benefits – making the borough a more attractive place to live, work and visit. The Audit and review of policies & procedures

will help identify necessary investment and priorities. Longer-term action to invest in sport and leisure facilities will likely help provide specific economic benefit (potential provision of jobs on site and in connection for example), as well as help maintain a healthy local economy.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Partnerships, Leisure & Funding Manager

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The Audit and review of policies and procedures will ensure that there are no equality and diversity implications.

Health & Wellbeing Implications

Name/Title: Jo Cory, Corporate Health & Wellbeing Officer

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Hartwood Golf Course supports the Health and Wellbeing Boards objectives of providing opportunities for residents to be active and improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.