

# News Release



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## Consultation proposed on future of Brandhall Golf Course

The first new major public park in Sandwell's 45-year history could be created in Oldbury alongside a new school and new homes.

The council is looking at possible options for the future of Brandhall Golf Course and is set to launch a consultation for people to give their views.

The consultation would ask people about a proposal to close the golf course and club house as well as potential alternative uses for the site.

The council is putting forward possible options to create a public park together with a brand-new school to replace the existing ageing buildings at Causeway Green Primary and provide much-needed new homes.

The council has carried out a detailed study on golf provision in Sandwell.

Research shows attendances at Brandhall Golf Course have fallen by a quarter in five years, and the course costs £257,000 a year to keep open.

The course has 318 members, which is below the expected number of members for an 18-hole golf course. Nearly two-thirds of current members – 193 of the 318 – live outside Sandwell.

Around £3 million would need to be spent on major improvements to bring it up to the required standard for the future.

Sandwell Council Leader Councillor Yvonne Davies said: “Brandhall Golf Course is currently costing council taxpayers in Sandwell a quarter of a million pounds a year – with £157,000 of that subsidising golfers who live outside the borough. It also now needs major investment.

“While no one likes to see facilities close, we have to consider how we invest in the long-term future of the local community.

“We’re keen to hear what people think of the proposal to close the course and what they would like to see in its place if it closes.

“The Brandhall site offers an opportunity to create the borough’s first new major public park since Sandwell was formed. This would be a new park that everyone could access and enjoy, which would help promote physical activity and healthy living for all ages.

“A new school to serve local families could also be provided as well as new homes to meet people’s housing needs.”

Membership at Brandhall has fallen each year since 2016 from 352 to 318 members, and usage has reduced significantly since 2013/14.

An external report commissioned by the council found an “over-supply” of golf provision in Sandwell, with seven facilities competing for the same customers. These include 18-hole, nine-hole and pitch and putt courses. There are more than 30 further golf facilities within 20 minutes’ drive from the borough boundary.

The proposal to close Brandhall Golf Course and club house follows a recommendation from the Sandwell Sport and Leisure Built Facilities Strategy Members Steering Group. In January 2018, the council’s Cabinet asked for further reports on long-term golf provision in Sandwell and potential alternative uses for the site.

A report to the council's Cabinet on Wednesday 30 October recommends a six-week consultation period to start in early November.

People would be able to give their views via an online survey, email and drop-in sessions in the Brandhall area.

Any proposals to develop the site in the future would be subject to a detailed master plan for the site and planning permission. Local people would be fully consulted before any decisions were taken.

The municipal golf course at Brandhall is currently operated by Sandwell Leisure Trust for Sandwell Council.

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