

Dear Resident,

We are writing to you because we wanted you to be among the first to know about a planned consultation exercise on the future of Brandhall Golf Course.

The Council has looked at the current use and condition of the golf course, as well as assessing how many local people play golf or want to play golf.

What we have found is that usage of Brandhall Golf Course has reduced significantly over recent years and memberships at the course are also much lower than expected. The course is in poor condition and would cost around £3 million to improve to an appropriate standard.

There are 39 other golf facilities within a 20-minute drive from Sandwell.

The Council is currently contributing £257,000 each year towards the running of the golf course, with the majority of those playing golf at Brandhall coming from outside of Sandwell.

Taking this into account, the Council is proposing that, subject to consultation, Brandhall Golf Course and club house are closed, and that the site be used to provide services and amenities that are of better use to your local community.

We have been looking into the local area's needs and have found that the top priorities include:

1. A new park
Oldbury and the ward of Old Warley have the lowest amount of open space in Sandwell. The golf course is not considered open space as its use is restricted. We could provide a significantly sized park – potentially the size of Brunswick Park in Wednesbury – that the local community has open access to. This would be the first new major public park in Sandwell's history.
2. A brand-new school to replace Causeway Green Primary School
As you may be aware, the school is in poor physical condition and it's a priority to replace it. The school was severely damaged by flooding in May 2018, causing significant disruption. The site has historically suffered with flooding and, despite additional drainage systems being installed, it remains vulnerable to possible flooding in the future.
3. Housing for local people
There is a critical need for housing across Sandwell and the borough has a shortage of land suitable for building houses. Part of the site could be used to help provide some of the houses that are needed. The site could have a mix of housing types for the local community including affordable housing, varying sizes and a mix of rental and privately-owned properties. This would provide a variety of housing options for local people.

These are our thoughts and proposals based upon our research, but we would now like to hear the thoughts of local people, especially from those who could be most affected by any future developments.

What happens next?

- A report on the future of Brandhall Golf Course will go to the Council's Cabinet of decision-making councillors on 30 October. The report will ask councillors to authorise a public consultation on the future of the site.
- If approved, the consultation will start on 7 November and run for six weeks.
- The consultation would include an online survey and a series of local 'drop-in' sessions where people could ask council officers questions about the proposals.
- The consultation will be available at www.sandwell.gov.uk/brandhall from 7 November.

Should firm plans be drawn up to develop the site in the future, these would be subject to a master plan for the area and planning permission. Local people would be fully consulted before any decisions were taken.

We will write to you again with further details following the Cabinet meeting on 30 October.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the consultation process before it starts, please email brandhall_consultation@sandwell.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,



Councillor Maria Crompton
Cabinet Member for Safer Communities