

Wednesday 6 November 2019

Future of Brandhall Golf Course – Consultation

Dear Resident,

Further to our recent letter regarding the future of Brandhall Golf Course, we wanted to update you now a report has been considered by Sandwell Council's Cabinet (which is made up of councillors who are responsible for making decisions on important matters).

The Cabinet approved a recommendation to carry out a consultation on both the proposed closure of Brandhall Golf Course and club house and potential alternative uses for the site.

We are keen to hear what people think and this consultation gives everyone the chance to have their say before a final decision is taken on the future of the course.

Following the consultation, we will collate all the responses to the survey and report back to a Cabinet meeting for councillors to consider.

The consultation process:

The consultation starts on Thursday 7 November and runs for six weeks, ending on 19 December.

The consultation will include an online survey available at www.sandwell.gov.uk/brandhall

A series of local 'drop-in' sessions have been arranged where people can ask council officers questions about the proposals. There's no need to book, you can just turn up at a time convenient for you. These will take place as follows:

- **Session 1: Tuesday 12 November, 10am-1pm at Brandhall Library, Tame Road, Oldbury, B68 0JT**
- **Session 2: Wednesday 27 November, 1pm-4pm at Brandhall Library, Tame Road, Oldbury, B68 0JT**
- **Session 3: Monday 16 December, 5pm-8pm at Brandhall Library, Tame Road, Oldbury, B68 0JT**

We also have an email address, so you can contact us directly with any enquiries at brandhall_consultation@sandwell.gov.uk

Background to the consultation:

As outlined in our previous letter, 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 six other golf facilities in Sandwell, and more than 30 further golf facilities within a 20-minute drive of Sandwell.

The Council is currently contributing £257,000 each year towards the running of the golf course, with the majority of golf members 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.

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.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please contact us at brandhall_consultation@sandwell.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,



Councillor Maria Crompton

Cabinet Member for Safer Communities