

## **Brandhall Golf Course – Your Questions Answered**

### **1. When would the golf course close to customers if closure is approved following the consultation?**

Following consultation, the council will consider people's views before making a final decision. If a decision is made to close the course, we will work with the golf club, members and other relevant stakeholders on the timing of the closure. Existing leases would also be considered.

### **2. If Brandhall Golf Course closes what other golf courses are available in the local area?**

There are six other golf facilities in Sandwell, which include 18-hole, nine-hole and pitch and putt courses, and more than 30 further golf facilities within a 20-minute drive of Sandwell.

### **3. Do other golf courses offer a 'pay and play' option?**

Yes, all the golf courses in Sandwell offer pay and play options, giving you the option to turn up and play at these courses without being a member.

### **4. Is there availability at other local golf club courses to cater for more users?**

Yes, following a recent review, all golf courses in the local area can accommodate more golfers.

### **5. Do other local golf clubs / courses offer lessons?**

Lots of other local course do offer lessons, we would advise checking with courses directly because detail will vary.

### **6. Do other local golf clubs / courses have competitions?**

All clubs have competitions, but this will be different at each club – so it is worth checking with each one for their competition schedule.

### **7. What would happen to the club house – would it be demolished?**

If a decision was made following consultation to close the golf course, the future of the existing buildings would depend on any agreed plans moving forward.

### **8. How many staff are affected/may lose jobs?**

There are six people in total involved in running the golf course who could be affected if it closes. They have been briefed about the proposals and consulted as part of the consultation process.

Should the course close following the consultation, the four council grounds maintenance staff who work at Brandhall would move into other positions in the council, and Sandwell Leisure Trust would work with their staff/contractors to look at options for the future.

### **9. How many new homes do you estimate could be built on the site?**

This is one of the key things we have been keen to talk to people about during the consultation. It would depend on the amount of open space included in any development, as well as the size and type of housing provided. We would not know for certain until after the public consultation and after we have prepared a master plan for the site.

The consultation included three different options for the size of park that could be created alongside a school and homes if the course were to close.

#### **10. What type of new homes would they be?**

We envisage there could be a mix of tenures/ownerships on the site. Planning policy requires a minimum of 25% affordable housing. These could be affordable homes provided by registered providers of social housing, they could be council homes, or a mix of both.

We shall not know a detailed mix of housing types or tenures until after consultation and after we have prepared a detailed master plan for the site. However, the council would consider all options for tenure including private ownership, shared ownership and starter homes to help meet the housing needs of Sandwell's younger people.

#### **11. How much and what percentage of the Brandhall Golf Course site do you envisage would be retained as green space after new homes and the school are built?**

The amount of open space was one of the key parts of the public consultation. The consultation included three different options for the size of park that could be created alongside a school and homes if the course were to close.

There are options with 4.5 hectares area of open space (equivalent to 7 football pitches), 6 hectares of spaces (equivalent to 10 football pitches) and 8.5 hectares of open space (equivalent to 14 football pitches). 8.5ha is the same size as Brunswick Park in Wednesbury or equivalent to six Parsons Hill Parks (1.37ha). The 8.5ha option would mean we would be retaining approximately a quarter of the site as formal open space.

In addition to this there would be elements of landscaping across the site, and a linear area of open space that would be retained as a buffer for the motorway and overhead pylons. These have not been included as part of the 8.5ha figure.

#### **12. Would the road network be redesigned/new roads built to cope with extra traffic?**

As with any proposed new development, the impact it would have on the surrounding highway network would be investigated and assessed in depth within a transport assessment. This would include an estimate on the amounts of traffic that would be generated by each element of any redevelopment and at what times that traffic would likely travel (through past experience and using industry standard evaluation tools).

Existing base traffic levels would be collected through surveys and then the impact of any new additional traffic to the network would be modelled to assess what mitigation would be required to negate that impact. This could include junction improvements, new roads and junctions, improved pedestrian crossing facilities and other highway safety improvements depending on the finding of the study.

#### **13. How much would the school cost the council to build?**

This would be dependent on the proposed plans.

#### **14. How would wildlife and trees on the site be protected?**

An independent tree survey would be carried out as part of a master plan for the site. This survey would help identify where there are important trees that need to be retained and protected in any new development. The survey would also identify any trees that are diseased or of poor quality.

A master plan would show where trees are to be retained and where new trees should be planted. There would also be an ecological survey to identify the species of plants and animals / birds on the site. In accordance with planning policy, steps would need to be taken to mitigate the impact on any animals and birds using the site. We would not know what these could be until we have the ecological survey. There is also the opportunity to enhance the landscape, including trees, as part of a new development.

**15. How much would it cost to create a new park and maintain it?**

If it was agreed to develop the site and create a new park, the size and type of park would need to be carefully considered and this, together with any facilities, would determine how much it would cost to create and maintain.

**16. Would Parsons Hill Park be retained/incorporated into the new park?**

It is proposed the Parsons Hill Park is considered as part of the potential wider development site and is replaced as part of any new park. Parsons Hill Park could be a good location for new homes with the park being incorporated into the wider open space provision across the site.

**17. Why is Sandwell Council considering building on green space?**

Brandhall Golf Course is currently classed as restricted because it is not fully accessible to the public. This means local people are not able to use this green space as they would other local parks. If a decision is made to close the golf course, this provides an opportunity to open part of the site to local people as a fully accessible public park. By doing this we would be making green space more accessible in the community.

**18. Why is Sandwell Council considering building houses on a greenfield site when there are brownfield sites available? What brownfield sites have been/are being considered for new homes?**

The council has a brownfield first policy, meaning that brownfield sites should be considered for development first. All large brownfield sites are already allocated for housing, meaning that housing development would be supported on these sites.

The issue with some of the brownfield sites is that they are not viable for housing because of land contamination. The council is working with the landowners of brownfield sites, where possible, to support them to bring the site forward for housing using grant where possible such as Mill Lane off Station Road in Oldbury that is currently on site.

However, should the housing supply from all allocated sites be brought forward, which may not be possible, there would still be a shortfall in terms of the council's current targets for housing need. The development of greenfield sites does therefore need to be considered to meet this housing shortfall.

**19. What would happen to the existing Causeway Green Primary site if it gets replaced?**

Following the public consultation, the council would look to develop an option appraisal for the vacant school site to support the follow-up report to Cabinet. Should the existing school site be released for development, housing development would be considered appropriate as it is within a predominantly residential area although the vehicular access to the site would require further investigation.

**20. What and where would extra school places be provided for children who will live in the proposed new housing?**

Once planning approval for any residential development was granted, and the type of housing confirmed, the council would look at the number of potential school places a new housing development might create. Over recent years, the council has expanded a number of local primary and secondary schools in response to a significant birth rate across the borough.

Demand for school places has eased with a fall in the latest birth rates, which will lead to a manageable surplus of places in schools that could accommodate any new demand following occupation of any new housing.

**21. What will happen after the consultation – will people’s views be listened to? Will findings come back to Cabinet before any decisions are taken?**

We’ve been keen to hear what people think and this consultation gave everyone the chance to have their say. Following consultation, a further report including the findings of the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

If the decision is taken to close the golf course, any proposals to develop the site in the future would be subject to a detailed master plan and planning permission. Local people would be fully consulted before any decisions were taken regarding redevelopment.

**22. Has the Council considered the flood risk on the site and how this could affect developing it for housing?**

Any proposals for developments, should the course close, would require the preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment to identify any potential flooding issues and solutions. As part of the Flood Risk Assessment, a drainage strategy would be required which would identify how sustainable drainage systems could contribute towards a proposed solution.

The results of the Flood Risk Assessment and the proposed solutions to any potential flooding issues would be incorporated into any master plan layout and concept plan.

**23. If more houses are built and the number of residents in the local area increases, how will the Council ensure that everybody has adequate access to local services? GPs etc?**

The Council would work with its partners, including the National Health Service at its regional level, to assess the potential levels of future demand for community services as a result of any redevelopment and compare it with the levels of existing provision. Any areas of potential shortfall of provision that are identified would then be a priority to be addressed by the partners.

**24. Wouldn’t a new park just encourage more anti-social behaviour?**

We would ensure through the design, management and usage of the park that it provides the opportunity for people to engage in positive activities. We would work with our Anti-Social Behaviour teams to ensure that this has a positive impact on the local community.