



Notice of Meeting:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Location:

The Atrium - Perceval House

Date and Time:

Thursday, 28 March 2024 at 7.00 pm

Contact for Enquiries:

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Chief Executive:

Tony Clements

This meeting will be held in public. If you would like attend in person and have any special requirements in order to attend, please email democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk or telephone on 020 8825 6253 at least three clear working days in advance wherever possible.

Committee Membership: Councillors

J Ball, P Driscoll, M Rice, C Anderson, Y Gordon (Chair), H Haili, C Tighe, F Conti (Vice-Chair), R Baaklini, H Kaur Dheer, M Hamidi, F Mohamed, K Nagpal, S Padda and B Wesson

AGENDA

- 7.1 **Call-in of Key Officer Decision: Delivering 10 new parks Future of Perivale Park Golf Course** (Pages 3 - 28)

Published: Friday 22 March 2024



Report to Scrutiny

Item No:

Contains Confidential OR Exempt Information	No
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Subject of Report:	Call-in: Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course
Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 28 March 2024
Service report author:	Sam Bailey – Head of Democratic Services 020-8825 7497 baileysa@ealing.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer:	Sam Bailey – Head of Democratic Services 020-8825 7497 baileysa@ealing.gov.uk
Cabinet Responsibility:	Cllr Deirdre Costigan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Action) Cllr Polly Knewstubb (Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities)
Director Responsibility:	Peter George (Strategic Director for Economy & Sustainability)
Brief:	To consider the Key Officer Decision report attached, with reference to the purpose and reason for it being called in.
Recommendations:	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, decide whether to uphold the decision, or to refer it back to the decision maker for reconsideration.

1. **Call-In: Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course**

Cabinet considered a report recommending a creation of a regional park at its meeting of 13 September 2023, titled 'Creation of a Regional Park'. The purpose of the report was to set out the statement of ambition, vision and principles for the creation of a regional park in the borough of Ealing. The report recommended the appointment of landscape architects and land use consultants to develop the vision and to deliver a business case for the regional park. The report also sought authority to engage residents on the proposal to permanently close Perivale Park Golf Course to enable the transformation of the course into a new publicly accessible park that was ultimately going to form part of the regional park. The report set out that transforming the golf course supported the Council Plan objective to create ten new parks, to increase tree canopy and respond to the Council's key priorities. This decision was taken and the decision subsequently call-in at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 October 2023. The Committee considered the reasons for call in and upheld the Cabinet decision.

One of the Cabinet decisions was that Cabinet:

Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Economy & Sustainability following consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Climate Action and Thriving Communities to make any final decision to close Perivale Park Golf Course following consideration of the representations received as part of the consultation.

A consultation has been carried out and the Strategic Director for Economy and Sustainability has now taken the decision to close Perivale Park Golf Course. This is the Key Officer Decision that has been called in to the meeting being held on 28 March 2024.

1.1. **Recommendations agreed by Strategic Director of Economy and Sustainability**

After considering the report, the Strategic Director of Economy and Sustainability agreed the following:

1. Following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to close Perivale Park Golf Course in June 2024.
2. Following the closure, to open the land to the public as a new park.
3. To re-purpose the land as a park adding benches, wildflower meadows, signage and grass paths during the summer and autumn.
4. To keep the café and toilets open pending a decision in the Autumn as to their future.

Reason for Decision and Options Considered:

The reasons for decision and options considered are contained in the decision report, which can be found on the Council's website here:

[Decision - KOD - Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://moderngov.co.uk/Decision-KOD-Delivering-10-new-parks-Future-of-Perivale-Park-Golf-Course)

1.2 Reasons for Call-in

The reasons for call-in, and the details of the Councillors who have requested call-in of the decision, can be found attached as an Appendix to this report.

1.3 Purpose of Call-In

The Constitution identifies the purpose of call-in. A decision may only be called-in for one of the reasons set out in paragraph 15(e) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

2 Legal Implications

Part 2 Article 6.03 of the Constitution gives the Overview and Scrutiny Committee authority to hear called in decisions. Paragraphs 15(f) and (g), of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out the Call-In procedures.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may either confirm the decision, or refer it back to the Cabinet, setting out the nature of the Committee's concerns.

3 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to Overview and Scrutiny Committee hearing called-in decisions. Scrutiny has a role in supporting democratic renewal.

Value for money is obtained through scrutiny enabling and supporting transparent decision making and ensuring that debate on called in topics is heard in a timely manner and in a public forum.

The Cabinet report attached, identifies the financial implications with respect to the issue under discussion.

4 Other Implications

Any other implications relating to the matter under discussion are also dealt with in the Cabinet report, which is attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Key Officer Decision: Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course

Appendix 2 – Call-in form

5 Background Papers

Background papers are identified in the Key Officer Decision report.

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Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course
Responsible Officer(s)	Peter George, Strategic Director Economy and Sustainability
Author(s)	Chris Bunting, Assistant Director Leisure Adam Whalley, Assistant Director Major Projects
Portfolio(s)	Cllr Deirdre Costigan, Cabinet Member for Climate Action Cllr Polly Knewstub, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities
For Consideration By	Peter George, Strategic Director Economy and Sustainability
Date to be Considered	15 March 2024
Implementation Date if Not Called In	25 March 2024
Affected Wards	Perivale
Keywords/Index	Perivale Park Golf Course, Golf, Regional Park

Purpose of Report:

The Cabinet report of 13 September 2023, attached at Appendix 5, included a recommendation to permanently close Perivale Park Golf Course, subject to consideration of the responses to the public consultation on the proposed closure. The closure would enable the transformation of the course into a new publicly accessible park that will ultimately form part of the regional park. The cabinet report said that 'transforming the golf course will support the council plan objective to create ten new parks, increase tree canopy and respond to the council's key priorities'.

1. Recommendations for DECISION

- 1.1. Following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to close Perivale Park Golf Course in June 2024;
- 1.2. Following the closure, to open the land to the public as a new park;
- 1.3. To re-purpose the land as a park adding benches, wildflower meadows, signage and grass paths during the summer and autumn;
- 1.4. To keep the café and toilets open pending a decision in the Autumn as to their future;

2. Recommendations for NOTING

- 2.1. To note that a report considering meanwhile and long-term proposals for the site will be presented to Cabinet in the summer; and
- 2.2. To note that the sports facilities at the north of the site will not be impacted and that there will be an improvement in the access arrangements for dog walkers and walkers.

3. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

- 3.1. The main reason for the closure of Perivale Park Golf Course (PPGC) in favour of making it a publicly accessible park is that it will address an overall inequality in access to green open space. The borough's population is expected to grow by over 38,000 from 360,000 to 398,000 in the ten years from 2021 to 2031 with an associated increase in demand for different less formal outdoor spaces for people to be active. Using 2021 census data¹ it has been determined that the current average provision of public open space across the borough is 1.66 hectares per 1,000 head of population.² Over the next 15 years, as a result of projected population growth, this is expected to decrease to 1.54 ha per 1000 head population. Creating 10 new parks will help to offset this reduction and repurposing Perivale Park Golf Course as a publicly accessible park can make a significant contribution towards this objective.
- 3.2. When compared to the current average provision of public open space across the borough at 1.66 hectares per 1,000 head of population, access for golf at Perivale Park Golf Course equates to 51.5 hectares per 1,000 unique golfers, over 25 times higher. The existing golf course can only be used by a relatively small group of residents with a specific interest in golf. If opened as a park, all residents will be able to enjoy the green space for a variety of purposes. COVID-19 re-focused attention on the role that parks play in society and today continue to serve their primary historical purpose; to provide urban residents, particularly those with little private green space, a shared site for recreation in a natural environment. The establishment of a new park in place of PPGC will further this aim.
- 3.3. Ealing's Health and Wellbeing Board has developed 'Together in Ealing', the new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2023-2028 focussed on tackling inequality through work on the building blocks of health. Theme 3 in the strategy, 'Connecting the building blocks of health and wellbeing', includes commitments to work on these building blocks, including the equitable provision of good quality green space, through the lens of health equity.
- 3.4. Ealing is a diverse and vibrant borough, but it also faces significant health inequalities. Access to functional and good quality green space, that would be created with the proposed new park, will bring many health and wellbeing benefits for all Ealing residents.

¹ [How life has changed in Ealing: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

² [Biodiversity Action Plan | Biodiversity Action Plan | Ealing Council](#)

3.5. Within Ealing, there are currently several locations dedicated to Golf which includes:

- four 18-hole courses (Brent Valley, Ealing, Sudbury, West Middlesex)
- two 9-hole courses, (Perivale and West London Golf Centre)
- one pitch and putt course (at Horsenden Hill Activity Centre)
- three mini-golf courses (at the West London Golf Centre, Acton Park and a new course in Gunnersbury Park on the border with Hounslow); and
- one 26-bay floodlit driving range (at the West London Golf Centre).



Figure 1 - Map showing distribution of Golf Courses in Ealing and neighbouring boroughs.

3.6. Furthermore, there is a good distribution of golf facilities that are accessible for Ealing residents within a short journey time outside of the borough, as shown on the map below. These courses are easily accessible by public transport and car. There is less provision to the east of the borough, which is to be expected due to the lack of availability of land towards central London. However, the 9-hole course, driving range and indoor golf facilities in Chiswick at Duke's Meadow are within 12 minutes' drive time of Gunnersbury Park. To the north of the borough there are accessible golf facilities in Kenton Road, Harrow (Playgolf London with a 56-bay floodlit driving range and a 9-hole course) and at the Harrow School Sports Complex (9 holes). To the northwest there are facilities in reach at the Hillingdon Golf Club (9 holes). All three of these golf facilities in neighbouring boroughs are well within a 15-minute drive time of Ealing's Horsenden Hill and Sudbury golf sites. To the south of the borough there are golf facilities available at Wyke Green Golf Club (18 holes) in Isleworth and in Chiswick at Dukes Meadow Golf & Tennis Centre (9-hole par 3, driving range and indoor centre). The Wyke Green course is just 8 minutes' drive time from the West Middlesex Golf Course in Ealing borough and the council's Brent Valley golf course is only 11 minutes away. The Airlinks Golf Centre in Southall Lane, Hounslow reopened

in 2023 with a new 18-hole golf course, new 24-bay floodlit driving range and a bar and eatery; the facility is located within a 9-minute drive time of the West London Golf Centre in Ealing borough.

- 3.7. The remaining golf provision in and near the borough is therefore considered varied and extensive and the loss of a single 9-hole golf course in this context will have a minor impact on overall golf provision and access to golf facilities in the area.
- 3.8. In addition, at the time of making this decision, the council has become aware that an additional 18-hole golf course is expected to open in Northolt on 1st June 2024. (Golf - The Inspiration Club)
- 3.9. It should be noted that there will be further work undertaken to assess the overall golfing needs in the Borough and this could involve a review of other golf courses. However, it is clear that there is currently significant over-provision of golf courses in Ealing, and this would remain the case following the closure of PPGC. This is demonstrated by the Assessment of Golf Demand in Ealing report as produced by Prior and Partners in February 2024 (Appendix 3) which contains the following key findings:
- Based on a per capita assessment of the number of people served by 1 golf course, the provision of golf courses in LB Ealing is much higher than the London average
 - Based on a theoretical assessment of London adjusted supply / demand for golf courses, 3-4 golf courses in LB Ealing would satisfy demand for golf. There are currently 6 available, indicating there is an estimated theoretical surplus of 2.5 golf courses in the borough
 - Upon closure of Perivale Park Golf Course, there would remain a surplus of golf courses, and provision of golf facilities in LB Ealing would still be much higher than the London average
 - The provision of golf courses in LB Ealing is much higher than that in LB Brent, a neighbouring borough to LB Ealing with a similar population demographic.
- 3.10. Golf courses have poor sustainability credentials due to the extensive use of fertilisers and high levels of grass cutting required to maintain the greens. By allowing the area to return to nature it is anticipated there will be Biodiversity Net Gains which will further complement and align with council policy.
- 3.11. Due to the low membership level the council pays a subsidy to its leisure operator Everyone Active to run Perivale Park Golf Course. The current subsidy is £5,099 per month. This money will be saved and used to fund the management and maintenance of the new park.

- 3.12. Perivale Park Golf Course is highly susceptible to flooding which renders it unplayable for, on average, 10 days per year.
- 3.13. The loss of the golf course will have a negative impact on current users of the facility and this is assessed in the equalities analysis assessment. It must be taken into account in reaching a decision. Alongside the loss of the facility itself as a place to play golf, the golf club has a strong sense of community, however, has a relatively limited membership of 123. The current green fees to play at Perivale Park are the most competitive in the borough which may have an adverse impact upon current members. However, the council is committed to ensure that cost doesn't become a barrier to participation where it has the ability to influence green fees.
- 3.14. It is also noted that membership/usage is increasing, however the membership levels remain low.
- 3.15. The majority of people participating in the council's survey agreed to the principle of closure.
- 3.16. The Council Plan 2022-26 includes for the establishment of 10 new parks and the creation of a new park in this location will further this objective. Cabinet has additionally approved the establishment of a Regional Park and the decision to close PPGC in favour of establishing one of the 10 new parks will also establish further space which could be integrated into the Regional Park in due course.

Timing

- 3.17. The decision is recommended to be taken at this time for a number of reasons:
- The cabinet paper required consideration of the representations received as part of the consultation before taking this decision. The consultation closed on 19 December 2023 and all representations have now been fully considered.
 - The sale of annual golf memberships take place from April to July. Taking a decision in March gives members of the golf course clarity over its future before committing to the cost of renewals.
 - The cabinet paper indicated closure, subject to consultation, in the financial year 23/24.
 - As set out above, it is clear that there is an overprovision of golf facilities in the Borough and therefore given the compelling case to improve the equity of green space provision, the Council should not wait for the wider review of golfing provision before closing Perivale Golf Course.
 - The end of the intensive maintenance of the course will enable the re-wilding, as detailed in the September cabinet paper, process to start during the remainder of the growing season.

Key Implications

- 3.18. Ealing Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019, committing to treat the climate and ecological emergency as a crisis requiring immediate and vital action. The aim is to become carbon neutral as a borough and an organisation by 2030.
- 3.19. Ealing Council's council plan set the vision and strategy for the next four years (2022-2026) and contained a focus on the priorities of our residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. It is a high-level strategic response to the opportunities and challenges being faced now and in the future.
- 3.20. Climate action is one of three cross cutting strategic objectives over the next four years to realise the vision for the borough by greening and keeping Ealing clean, achieving net zero carbon, and ensuring parks, open spaces and nature are protected and enhanced.
- 3.21. The council plan commits to create 10 new parks and open spaces, giving back to nature through re-wilding and re-introducing wildlife, and pioneering 10 new community growing spaces. Furthermore, it pledges to make streets and open spaces beautiful and resilient through planting another 50,000 trees, work towards increasing the proportion of the borough covered by tree canopies to 25% by doubling the number of trees planted each year, ensuring every town has access to wild fruit. In support of these council plan objectives and to respond to the council's key priorities of tackling the climate crisis, fighting inequality, and creating good jobs.
- 3.22. The Council Plan also sets out the ambition to have best in class parks and open spaces which make Ealing a green and family friendly borough, whilst improving biodiversity and air quality. We have seen during the pandemic that access to green space is critical for residents' health and wellbeing and want to increase access to open and green space.
- 3.23. Significant progress has been achieved on the commitment to create 10 new parks with the council celebrating the opening of the first new park in October 2023 at the Central Plaza, South Acton. Additionally, Central Gardens in the Green Quarter, Southall is scheduled to open this summer, providing 4,500m² of new accessible open space.
- 3.24. Work is well underway to create an exciting new park scape at Glade Lane Canalside, a space which is currently inaccessible to the public, will see the creation of two large mounds, similar to those at Northala Fields, at the heart of this new park. The council has taken the decision on revised plans for the future of Warren Farm with the site becoming a local nature reserve, with a new sports ground to be built on additional land next to it.

3.25. Plans to create additional new parks continue to be developed with partners, with further announcements to follow.

3.26. On 13 September 2023, Cabinet approved a number of recommendations including:

- Agreeing in principle to the closure of Perivale Park Golf Course in financial year 2023/24 subject to the outcome of the proposed consultation.
- Delegating authority to the Strategic Director of Economy & Sustainability following consultation with the relevant cabinet portfolio holders, to make any final decision to close Perivale Park Golf Course following consideration of the representations received as part of the consultation.
- The Cabinet decision was called in and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which met on 5 October 2023; the decision was upheld.

4. Financial

4.1. Cabinet authorised the expenditure of £0.075m over the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the closure of Perivale Golf Course and for the rewilding and transformation of the golf course to park land which would be funded from the existing parks capital programme budget, s106 and grant funding. The existing approved tree planting capital budget will support any plan to increase tree canopy.

4.2. A scheme has been designed for the re-purposing of the golf course as a publicly accessible park with associated costs as follows:

Year 1

- Meadow creation - £20,000 (seeding about 25% of area and letting rest rewild)
- Filling bunkers - £10,000
- Total Year 1 - £30,000

Year 2

- Removing golf course watering infrastructure etc - £10,000

Total capital for both years - £40,000

4.3. As set out above at 3.11, as the Council will no longer pay a subsidy to GLL for managing the golf course, there will be a saving of £61,188 per annum on the contract cost. These funds will be re-directed to the future management and maintenance of the park. This will include expected costs of £5,000 per annum

for maintenance of grass paths and one-off costs of temporary signage £1,000 and the introduction of 5 seats £3,000.

4.4. Keeping the café and toilet open, without the golf course, is expected to cost £9000 between July and September. Redundancies of workforce employed by Everyone Active are expected to cost £13,700.

4.5. Both the cost of the redundancies, and cost of keeping the café and toilet open will be covered by GLL subsidy savings.

5. Legal

5.1. In reaching a decision, the Strategic Director must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

5.2. Local authorities are subject to this general duty to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)

5.3. The duty requires local authorities to give real thought to the PSED and its requirements. This requires an analysis of all the relevant material. It should be integrated into the decision-making process. The duty is a continuing one which should be exercised with rigour and an open mind. The duty should be reconsidered if new information comes to light and adequate records should be kept of the consideration and decision-making processes undertaken to demonstrate that the equality duties have been undertaken conscientiously.

6. Value For Money

6.1. The council currently subsidises the golf course. Given the low number of users it does not provide value for money.

7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

7.1. This proposal will contribute positively to the Council's sustainability objectives as outlined in section 3.

8. Risk Management

8.1. There is a risk that the decision will have a detrimental impact on the current users. This risk is detailed in the equalities analysis assessment. The decision will therefore not have the support of all residents.

9. Community Safety

9.1. It is considered unlikely that there will be a negative impact upon community safety with increased park users providing a greater level of natural surveillance.

The council has the ability to increase park patrols based upon intelligence highlighting any concern that may arise from a decision to open the park. Consideration will need to be applied to the ongoing security of the pavilion should it cease to being occupied at any point.

10. Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough

10.1. This proposal will link to all 3 of the key priorities for the borough:

- fighting inequality
- tackling the climate crisis
- creating good jobs.

10.2. As outlined in the reason for the decision, the decision to close PPGC will address an overall inequality in access to green open space for residents and the general public.

10.3. As also outlined in the reason for the decision, this decision will have a positive impact on the Council's approach to tackling climate change.

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

11.1. An equalities analysis assessment (EAA) has been carried out following the consultation and is attached at Appendix 3.

11.2. In summary:

- The course has a high percentage of older users due to the flatness and size of the course. The closure will have a negative impact on those people. There are alternative facilities but they will not be used by all of the current older golfers. Some will stop playing as a result of the closure which will have a negative impact on their health and well-being.
- PPGC attracts less mobile users for the same reasons (size and topography). Again, some may not use another course and the closure will negatively affect them.
- The Age UK Ealing letter says that 50% of the golfers who signed a survey carried out by Perivale Park Golf Club were over 50. It emphasises the role the course plays in fostering social connections which contributes to the well-being of our older population.

The impact of the closure on people with protected characteristics are set out in full in the EAA and must be carefully considered in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

- 12.1. There are implications for the workforce employed by Everyone Active. There are 4 employees, two or three will be redeployed elsewhere. The remaining employee (s) will be made redundant.
- 12.2. There are however no direct staffing/workforce implications for Council employees.

13. Property and Assets

- 13.1. This decision relates to the repurposing of an existing Council asset.

14. Any other implications:

- 14.1. None

15. Consultation

- 15.1. Following approval by cabinet, a six-week consultation took place between 31 October 2023 and 19 December 2023 and the summary findings of this consultation are included at Appendix 2. The purpose of the consultation was to ask for views on the proposal to establish a regional park in the borough alongside inviting specific comment on the proposed closure of Perivale Park Golf Course. The consultation strategy for this survey is included at Appendix 1.
- 15.2. The consultation survey received 6,115 responses. A detailed report on the analysis is attached at Appendix 2 and in summary:
- 75% of respondents were supportive of the concept of a regional park, with 62% reacting very positively, and 13% reacting fairly positively to the council's ambition to create a new regional park.
 - 62.5% of respondents were supportive of the closure of PPGC.
- 15.3. The council has separately received a series of formal representations in the period since the cabinet decision was made. The representations which have been considered include:
- The 'Save Perivale Park Golf Course' Petition
 - Letter from Age UK (Ealing), 1 February 2024
 - Letters from the PPGC Club Captain/Secretary and the Club Vice Captain
 - Email from Sport England, 19 December 2023
- 15.4. The key themes expressed by those objecting to the proposals to close PPGC are:
- PPGC is the only 9-hole municipal golf course in the borough and is affordable relative to other courses in the borough.
 - Due to the course's topography (being relatively flat) and design (limited selection of hole types and limited hazards) PPGC is particularly suited to

older golfers and learners who would be disproportionately impacted by its closure.

- Timing of the decision and whether it should be implemented in the short term.
- PPGC is compatible with the regional park and should continue to operate within it or alternatively the course could be adapted to become an 'Eco' golf course which would allow golf to continue at this location.
- In addition to the opportunity to learn and play golf the club fulfils a community function in helping to address broader health and wellbeing issues such as loneliness and depression which would be lost if the course is to be closed.

15.5. The email from Sport England, dated 19 December 2023, made a number of comments and in particular observed:

- There should be an EAA which should reference impact older and less mobile golfers.
- The Council must be sure that other opportunities are available to support displaced users.
- The quantity, quality and accessibility of the wider provision available and what the future also holds for those facilities, which are outside local authority control, should be considered.
- The data used to show declining popularity of golf was for 20/21, a year impacted by the pandemic. The 21/22 data is available and this shows that activity is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- To create and develop a secure financial future for a world class regional park will take time and further consultation. It is recommended that the golf course is kept open until further work is undertaken that demonstrates that the park can deliver the benefits set out in the consultation, that this is the right site for the creation of a regional park and that the impact of the loss of this golf course can be mitigated

15.6. An EAA has been prepared and is included with this decision.

15.7. A preliminary assessment of golf provision is also attached and is referred to in this decision. A full Golf Needs Assessment will be completed as part of the main regional park masterplan work due to be completed in May.

16. Timetable for Implementation

16.1. If the decision is taken to close PPGC, it will close in June. There will be a report taken to Cabinet in the summer which will make recommendations as to the future use of the parkland. The immediate actions to be taken following closure are set out in the recommendations.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1	Plan for 2023 public engagement and consultation
Appendix 2	Analysis of consultation feedback
Appendix 3	Updated equalities analysis assessment

18. Background Information

18.1. Please refer to the appendices

19. Consultation

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				
Peter George	Strategic Director Economy and Sustainability	06/03/24		
Helen Harris	Director, Legal and Democratic Services	06/03/24		
Emily Hill	Strategic Director Resources	06/03/24		
Alice Rowland	Head of Legal (commercial)	06/03/24		Throughout
Cllr Deirdre Costigan	Cabinet Member for Climate Action	06/03/24		
Cllr Polly Knewstubb	Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities	06/03/24		
External				

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries: Adam Whalley, Assistant Director Major Projects

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – CALL IN REQUEST

<p>Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decision or Key Officer Decision and date of decision.</p>	<p>The Key Officer Decision relating to Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course was approved subject to call in by Peter George, Economy and Sustainability on Monday, 18 March 2024.</p>
<p>DECISION FOR CALL IN (title of report and specific decision to be called in with minute number)</p>	<p>The Key Officer Decision relating to Delivering 10 new parks: Future of Perivale Park Golf Course was approved subject to call in by Peter George, Economy and Sustainability on Monday, 18 March 2024.</p>

CALLED IN BY (List names of those calling in decision)	Cllrs Connie Hersch, Gary Malcolm, Athena Zissimos, Gary Busuttil, Jon Ball, Andrew Steed, Julian Gallant, Anthony Young, Seema Kumar, Fabio Conti and Gregory Stafford.
Which of the following principles do you believe the decision did not take into account:	<i>Please give detailed reasons in the boxes below why you believe the principles of decision making have not been taken into account</i>

Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)

The approach laid out by the Council is an either/ or approach when it could be one of coexistence enabling golfers, walkers and cyclists to co-exist. There has been no serious consideration of this approach. There is no evidence or analysis of this possible approach. Please see Annex A for a list of over 50 UK golf courses across the country which have footpaths that cross them. This option has not been explored or quantified in a meaningful way.

3 Key areas.

(1)Sustainability & Accessibility

(2)Health & Well Being

(3)Good Growth & Jobs

(1)Sustainability & Accessibility

The approach laid out by the Council is an either or approach when it could be one of coexistence, enabling golfers and walkers to coexist. There has been no serious consideration of this approach. There is no evidence or analysis of this possible approach.

Accessibility: Older / disabled golfers are able to enjoy the small and flat 9-hole course which enables participation at an affordable rate (open to pay as you go) and promotes health benefits. Where in Ealing and/or Perivale can those with mobility issues gain access to flat, green space to promote their health and well-being?

The golf course is surrounded by paths for walking and cycling and there is currently a signposted crossing through the top of the golf course.

Provision of toilet facilities: This is not only for the golfers but also other users of the park and makes the space more accessible for people with bowel or bladder issues and for older people (current costs estimate £1000 pcm to maintain the café including toilets). If there are no public toilets, this will exclude people with disabilities, older people and those with young children and babies disproportionately.

There is a disproportionate focus on tree planting over and above any access to meadows and ponds which are equally as important as Warren Farm has demonstrated. This demonstrates that the Council is not looking at a range of green strategies but has a basic tick-box approach to tree planting rather than considering the individual sites and their needs. The golf course membership has identified that there is space to plant over 200 trees on the course and so achieve a much better balance of tree canopy and open green landscape.

Note that the Brent Valley Golf Course will co-exist within the planned Regional Park, proving that a golf course can exist within a regional park. This is also the case with the Lee Valley Regional Park, used as a model, but where there are functioning golf courses.

The report cites that PPGC is flooded for several days in each year. The golf course then returns quickly to full function. This is a positive which may not be achieved by rewilding.

A more flexible and integrated co-existing approach could generate benefits for a broad range of users including those with disabilities/mobility issues. See Annex A for UK golf courses with footpaths.

Health & Wellbeing

Closure of the course will have a profound impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of the people currently using the course. This will be especially the case for the older users for whom the course is additionally a space for social engagement.

The AGE UK Letter while cited seems to be ignored: “According to a recent survey conducted by Perivale Park Golf Club, 50% of the 1000 golfers who signed the survey were over 50 years old – **this reflects the profile of the older people supported by Age UK Ealing. This statistic underscores the course's significance to our older population.**” Thus, this change will disproportionately affect this group and could be seen as indirect discrimination.

Removal of the golf course will disproportionately affect the health (physical and mental) of older people and no efforts have been made to assess this impact.

Good Growth & Jobs

The park proposal is a “sledgehammer to crack a nut” with no consideration that it is replacing 4 members of staff with a temporary interim role and as such goes against the stated aims of good growth and job creation in the borough by the Council. Rather it is actively destroying jobs at a time when residents are under significant economic hardship.

In addition, Ealing Council seems to be proposing that the private sector market for golf provision is a preferred solution to an accessible, pay as you go offering such as PPGC, which could coexist with a park.

<p>Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers</p>	<p>It seems as though the decision has already been made and that the consultation is one in name only as it has been pre-determined that the outcome will be trees and a “new” regional park. This seems somewhat undemocratic. On what basis would Ealing Council reverse the decision to rewild Perivale Golf Course?</p> <p>It is assumed by LBE that the PPGC MUST close in order to enable public access to the space encompassed within its limits. This is not necessarily the case. It is an asset owned by Ealing Council and as such it could be opened up to allow the public and users to coexist and use the space for walking to aid health benefits alongside golf. This proposal has not been articulated or put forward for consultation, which seems to be a substantial oversight.</p> <p>Community assets are very limited in the current challenging financial climate. They should be cherished and augmented rather than simply replaced in order to release cash from a pre-existing contract with GLL.</p> <p>.</p>
<p>Respect for human rights and equalities</p>	<p>There is indirect discrimination taking place here against hard to reach groups such as older users and those with mobility issues, who use the site to improve their health on a pay and play basis as well as a season ticket holders and or use the café and associated facilities. In addition, the pay and play function enables low income users access to public golf course (1 of only 2) in Ealing. They are effectively excluded from private clubs on the basis of cost.</p> <p>Further analysis of such specific populations could be undertaken within a specific distance of the Golf Course.</p> <p>The flat topography of the 9-hole facility at PPGC cannot be replaced by an improvised 9-hole option at the much more undulating 18-hole Brent Valley course.</p>

<p>A presumption in favour of openness</p>	<p>This decision was introduced suddenly and at short notice. The planning for a regional park is in the early stages and no concrete options for the park have been assessed yet.</p> <p>On what basis would Ealing Council be able to reverse the decision to rewild Perivale Golf Course? What are the associated costs in year and whole life costs for such a potential reversal?</p> <p>Thus, the Council is not being open about what happens if the park implementation proves to be more expensive than expected? How is the Council managing this risk? Risk management seems barely developed. Where is the risk management strategy and associated risk register? The opposition have been asking for this for months and it has not been revealed or emerged. Perhaps it does not exist, with risk therefore not being managed?</p> <p>We question whether a reported 62% of Borough residents being in favour of closure of PPGC is a genuine sample. We also question whether approval of plans to create a regional park should have been directly linked to closure of a small golf course.</p> <p>Why was golf omitted from the list of sports that might be included in the regional park? Might respondents not have been asked specifically whether they would have liked to see a 9-hole affordable flat golf course facility as part of the Regional Park?</p> <p>The report maintains that golf facilities abound in Ealing and surrounding areas. The reality is that there are only two municipal (therefore affordable) facilities in the area, and only one flat 9-hole facility i.e. PPGC. Private driving ranges and mini golf facilities should not have been cited as comparable facilities.</p>
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Clarity of aims and desired outcomes (i.e. link between corporate strategy and implementation)

The links between Corporate Strategy and implementation appear to be loose and vague. There are generally stated themes and figures without any clear mechanisms to measure or assess benefits. There is no overarching strategy across the borough, instead it is a piecemeal scattergun approach.

Benefits realisation is vague and non-specific with no quantitation other than nominal hectares per head of population which is not directly linked to health outcomes!

It seems that once the decision is made and the contract with GLL broken there is no long term view looking at whole life costs over a period of 5 to 10 years. Instead, it is “salami sliced” into short windows of 3- to 6-month decisions, each releasing funds and inching forward toward policy goals with no proper options appraisal or longer term analysis of evidence taking place. There is no exit strategy that can roll this back once it has been started, if benefits are not realised and whole life costs are not clear. How can this be value for money?

Moreover, the option of a coexisting approach of golf course and park seems to have been ignored. It has not been reviewed and costed in options. Rather, very cursory short term indicative costings have been used. For example, the café is expected to stay open for 3m July to Sept approx. at £1k pcm and no consideration of a longer-term approach. What if slippage occurs there is no allowance for this?

Cllr Costigan stated in an article in the Evening Standard on 19 Mar 2024 that “We also want to explore the potential to continue to provide a cafe as we know that’s something residents would like to see in a regional park.” There are no transparent costings for this and yet it seems to be part of the implied longer-term plan.

There has been minimal targeted data collection or analysis rather than recourse to headline figures without any consideration of detailed populations such as elderly demographics or exclusion of the vulnerable from access to the golf course.

The report does not make a clear evidence-based case for including Perivale Golf Course in the Regional Park. A cross-borough strategic approach and case could be made, but has not been considered.

Consistency with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, Contract, Financial and other Procedure Rules, legislative requirements and any other requirements set out in this Constitution.

We question whether replacing Perivale Park Golf Course with parkland will improve health outcomes.

The consultation covered only about 1.5% of Ealing's population and thus is unrepresentative.

For example, how long is the contract with GLL and what date does it expire on? Could a delay be beneficial if looking at whole life costs?

Options appraisal does not cover all the options. It has excluded the option for coexistence of a park and a golf course.

Benefits realisation is vague and non-specific with no quantitation other than nominal hectares per head of population which cannot be directly linked to health outcomes!

Thus, the basis for decision making is flawed.

Notes:

Cabinet decisions may be called in for further consideration upon receipt by the proper officer, within *five* clear days of the publication of a decision, of a requisition:

- i) signed by five members of the council, from more than one political group*, who are not members of the cabinet or:
- ii) signed by all the members representing a ward where the decision affects that ward only (unless a pecuniary interest exists in the matter in which case action may be initiated by the remaining ward member{s}); or.
- iii) Signed by the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**A member sitting independently from political group arrangements being included on a call-in would also satisfy this requirement.*

Cabinet decisions may also be called in by Overview and Scrutiny Committee or by any Standing Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with Article 6 of the Council constitution.

A decision may only be the subject of one call in.

All requisitions for call in shall refer to a specific decision (or decisions) within a report and provide a detailed reason. A decision may only be the subject of one call in. A decision may only be called in if, when taking the decision, the decision maker didn't follow the principles of decision making as outlined above. The signatories to the call-in must give a clear explanation as to how these principles were not followed when the decision was taken:

*Please return this signed form to Democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk
(copy in Sam Bailey baileysa@ealing.gov.uk Head of Democratic Services and
Linda Zimmerman zimmermal@ealing.gov.uk Committee Team Manager)*

Annex A: List of UK Golf Courses with Footpaths

Aberdovey
Aldeburgh
Alderley Edge
Alwoodley
Bamburgh Castle is out on the rocks below the castle. There is little to prevent public access.
Belfry
Berkhamsted roads and paths - someone posted photos on GCA within living memory
Birkdale
Brancaster
Caldy
Cleeve Hill
Conwy
Crowborough
Delamere Forest
Denham
East Berkshire
Felixstowe
Formby
Goswick
Hallamshire
Hartlepool
Hillside
Holinwell
Hunstanton
Ilkley
Isle of Purbeck
Liphook
Llanymynech
Ludlow
Lytham
Millride
Moor Park
Nefyn
Painswick
Prestbury
Ringway
Royal Liverpool
Royal Worlington
Seacroft
Seaton Carew
Stockley Park
Stranahan
Sunningdale
The Buckinghamshire
West Byfleet
West Cornwall
West Sussex
Wilmslow
Wisley
Yelverton