

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