



## Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee

27<sup>th</sup> July 2021

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>FUTURE OF GOLF PROVISION - UPDATE REPORT</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee with an update on the current position of municipal golf in Wirral and the programme of work currently being undertaken to deliver on the Executive Member Decision on the future of golf (18 October 2019).

The focus of the report is to highlight the current challenges and opportunities relating to Wirral's golf service and seeks approval to explore future options for all sites.

The key aim is for municipal golf in Wirral is to positively contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the forthcoming Sports and Physical Activity Strategy, and key health priorities and outcomes. Any future options will aim to partially or fully mitigate the current golf net subsidy of c.£270k whilst providing an improved and quality golf offer in Wirral.

### ***Executive Member Decision***

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019, The Cabinet Member for Community Services made the following decision:

- That officers commission a ground survey for all sites.
- That capital monies are re-aligned and to provide appropriate equipment, building and storage areas.
- That officers establish a regular consultative user group with recognised Golf Clubs at the sites.
- That there is an operational restructure
- Staff qualifications/Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are developed and volunteer opportunities explored
- Identify and develop income generation opportunities

This report details the progress made by officers on each of these recommendations and makes the following further recommendations to Members, based on the development and outcome of these findings.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to:

1. to note the work being progressed on the Arrowe Park Sports Village feasibility study with FMG Consulting Ltd.
2. to note the work and outcomes of the full drainage assessment undertaken by consultant STRI (sports turf agronomists).
3. establish a member working group to develop options for the future of municipal golf. Outcomes and recommendations to be presented back to this committee in November 2021.
4. request the Director of Neighbourhoods to undertake a full review of the current pricing and membership structure relating to golf to enable recommendations for a new membership/’pay and play’ structure for the 2022/23 financial year to be presented back to the committee in November 2021.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

#### Medium Term Financial Plan – Budget Pressures

- 1.1 The Council is required to provide a balanced, sustainable and legal budget as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP supports the delivery of the Wirral Plan and is key to ensuring the Council is financially sustainable. To support the setting of a balanced budget, the Council has applied to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a capitalisation directive also known as ‘Exceptional Financial Support’. In response, all services recognise the requirement and have provided the commitment to identify and realise significant savings over the next plan period.
- 1.2 Within the MTFP over the next three years Leisure Services will be expected to make significant savings over the plan period. Given the current financial position of the Council, it is imperative that the future of municipal golf provision in Wirral is considerate of these pressures and seeks to positively contribute to overarching commitments and targets through identifying net savings and opportunities to generate income.

#### Municipal Golf Landscape

- 1.3 In recent years demand has reached a plateau across the courses in Wirral, averaging 77k rounds per year (see **Table 1**). At this rate and with very little secondary spend options, current financial sustainability cannot be achieved in terms of attaining a low or no financial subsidy. Whilst it is not uncommon for a municipal golf course to run at a subsidy, the future capital requirements and the financial pressures on the authority must be considered in the long term.

**Table 1: Wirral’s Participation Figures for all Municipal Golf Courses**

<b>Wirral Participation Figures – All Courses</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>User Figures (Golf Rounds)</b>
2016-17	80851
2017-18	76259
2018-19	79953
2019-20	72635

- 1.4 Even with progressing the Executive Member Decision 2019, the golf service faces difficult financial challenges. The current net subsidy for golf is c.£270k and even though addressing the decision will have an impact on improving the sites playability, the long-term landscape for golf remains uncertain.
- 1.5 Despite a recent upturn in the sport nationally, largely due to the pandemic's restrictive measures, the trend remains uncertain, and the authority must look at the viability of retaining the current golf offer. This includes exploring options and reviewing the portfolio to firstly ensure that golf remains accessible to residents, and secondly, to ensure the Council is making best use of their assets and avoids sinking further investment into sites with low capacity/footfall with no guarantee of future upturn. Overall, the current poor playing conditions across all sites and the significant capital investment required to get them fit for purpose must remain a material consideration in maintaining the current provision as is.

### **Arrowe Park Sports Village Concept**

- 1.6 To deliver on the Executive Members Decision, officers are developing outline proposals for a 'Sports Village' destination at Arrowe Park Golf Club. Consultants FMG Consulting Ltd have been commissioned to undertake a full feasibility study with the aim of outlining a sustainable and deliverable plan. The vision for the project is to create diverse facilities mix, driving footfall and secondary spend, mitigating sole reliance on golf course fees and ultimately removing subsidy requirements for the site. The commission will see the consultant assess the current and likely future demand for a mix of leisure and outdoor activities as well as venue and hospitality facilities. Scope of work includes:
  - Understand and determine the market potential for various outdoor/indoor activities based on current and likely future demand developing an appropriate facility mix and proposals for the site.
  - Determine potential co-location and co-benefit opportunities across services on site (Leisure and Parks & Countryside)
  - Full financial assessment.
  - Identify potential funding opportunities to help finance the proposals (e.g. match funding, recovery grants etc.)
  - Produce a masterplan drawing outlining future development opportunities, layout, and footprint.
- 1.7 Following a successful site visit to Arrowe Park (13<sup>th</sup> May 2021), FMG Consulting have been engaging positively with Golf Clubs and key Council officers, representing a broad range of services across the Council. A members workshop also took place on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to discuss current thinking and direction for the project. This identified opportunities to align with broad strategic priorities across the Council and gain local insight, to help shape options for the site. In addition, a high-level constraints and opportunities exercise has been undertaken for the site which scopes potential options based on various geographic, spatial and environmental factors.

- 1.8 The next steps are to progress with design and masterplan development once the facilities mix and activities for the site have been defined based on market research and engagement. Critical to success, the consultant will produce a comprehensive, risk assessed and auditable financial model which will include capital cost and funding, revenue income, operating costs, lifecycle costs and tax calculations. The key requirement is to understand the level of net investment and financial viability and sustainability for any proposals. A 20-year financial model will set out the net position for any proposed facility or activity type.
- 1.9 It is the intention to fully consult on any proposals or set of options emerging from this piece of work. Should a mandate be agreed in November, consultation will be established with the appropriate groups to help shape the future of the site. This may include (but is not limited to) local communities, ward members, and partners.

### **STRI Full Drainage Report**

- 1.10 STRI were commissioned by Wirral Council to undertake detailed drainage and agronomy assessments of the four municipal golf sites (see Appendix 1). All sites, except for the Warren due to its sand-soil profile, were found to have inadequate drainage and a legacy of ongoing drainage issues. This meant that some sites were slow to recover from any environmental impacts with some areas completely unplayable as a result.
- 1.11 Historic networks of drains, usually leading to ditches or ponds have aged over time and are not robust enough to meet current demands. In addition, drainage capacity of the soils in lower lying sections of the courses need to be improved by installing primary pipe drainage and intensifying the surface connection, ideally through installation of secondary drainage in the most vulnerable areas.
- 1.12 The report identifies significant impact on the putting surfaces (greens) at Brackenwood golf course due to historic and sustained drainage impediment. This was observed on all but two putting surfaces that had received investment in more recent years. Complete green reconstruction was offered as the appropriate course of remedial action at additional cost.
- 1.13 The extent of the findings and proposed mitigating measures require significant capital investment as outlined in the following table:

**Table 2: Drainage – Capital Investment**

	<b>Arrowe Park</b>	<b>Brackenwood</b>	<b>Hoylake</b>	<b>All Sites</b>
<b>Drainage</b>	£815,657	£795,118	£782,617	£2,393,392
<b>Putting Surfaces</b>		£720,000		£720,000
<b>Total</b>	£815,657	£1,515,118	£782,617	<b>£3,113,392</b>

- 1.14 A Minimum Revenue Provision has been provided in Appendix 2 detailing revenue repayments over the lifetime of the asset if the above Capital was to be spent. Based on full spend, this would carry an average revenue repayment of c.£103k per year over 30 years (+ interest at c.2%). This would have to be factored into any future proposals as it will increase the income required to mitigate the subsidy.

## **Pricing Structure Review**

- 1.15 This recommendation seeks to approve a review of the current 'pay and play' and Invigor8 membership pricing structure. In 2015 the Invigor8 scheme was introduced which combined gym/swim access with golf and replaced the stand-alone golf membership. This allowed customers to purchase the membership on a monthly, non-committal basis as well as annually, something that was quite 'forward thinking' in the golf industry. With no change to this pricing structure in 6 years, the membership package requires a review.
- 1.16 A recent benchmarking exercise with other north-west municipal golf courses found that Wirral councils golf membership (Invigor8) is approximately 42% cheaper than other comparable golf course fees (based on annual fees). A review of 'pay and play' fees is also required to simplify the fees and charges and align with the membership packages. Early indicative modelling has estimated that a full review, with courses in their current condition, could deliver £88k additional annual income across all sites (based on average usage year). A formal review would test these findings.

## **Member Working Group**

- 1.17 A Member Working Group would comprise a number of members of this Committee and key Council officers involved. The scope of the group would be to review and assess the findings and outcomes of a number of workstreams undertaken in house and through external commissions to develop a set of options and proposals for the future of all golf sites. This will include the work as described above as well as performance and operational data, where available. This collaborative and transparent approach would aim to address and mitigate any perceived threats and concerns around the future of golf sites. The key aim is to develop a long term 'roadmap' for golf that would both address the ongoing subsidy requirements whilst providing a platform for growth and development. It is the intention to present this work back to this Committee in November 2021.
- 1.18 Any changes that are proposed by the Committee would then be the subject of public consultation as explained in Section 5 (Legal Implications) below before any decisions could be taken by the Committee. Any budget savings would therefore have to await the outcome of that consultation as would the implementation of capital investment in any of the courses thereby complicating the setting of a budget for 2022/23.

## **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

### **Do Nothing Option**

- 2.1 Continuing to operate golf as if will result in ongoing subsidy requirements. In addition, as highlighted in commissioned operational and drainage assessments, the courses require significant amounts of capital investment to bring them up to an acceptable and playable standard. Even with this investment, the national golf landscape has proven that a golf course of high standard is not necessarily enough on its own to operate sustainably, particularly when there are no supplementary revenue streams other than course fees. This could leave the Council in a similar net financial position, potentially unable to realise or recover the value of any capital investment with an ongoing subsidy burden. Without an alternative delivery model for golf provision, there is a risk to the long-term sustainability of an in-house golf provision with potentially significant operational impacts.
- 2.2 Furthermore, given the residual budget pressures placed upon the Council, compounded by the capitalisation directive, there is an expectation that the service will seek to contribute to the overall Leisure Service savings over the next three years.

### **Transfer of Golf Provision to External Provider**

- 2.3 This option was extensively developed and reviewed in 2019. After a call-in, the Cabinet Member for Community Services made the decision to reject this proposal in favour of retaining control of all four golf courses in house.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding the Executive Members Decision 2019, driven by more recent financial pressures, a transfer of Wirral's golf service remains an option unless a viable and sustainable roadmap for Wirral's golf service can be achieved. This will include developing alternative options and proposals as outlined in this report.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Wirral benefits from 19 private and public golf facilities in Wirral, made up of a number of 18 hole and 9 hole courses, pitch and putt facilities, and a driving range. This level of provision represents significant competition in the golf market locally. The Council runs three 18-hole golf courses, one 9 nine-hole golf course and two 'fun courses' (pitch & putt and Footgolf). The provision of municipal golf is a non-statutory service.
- 3.2 Participation in municipal golf in Wirral has stalled. Some smaller private member golf clubs are suffering from the same problem and it is noticeable how some 'community' based golf clubs have responded to this problem by reducing membership/joining fees and offering 'pay and play' packages which compete favourably with our existing municipal fees and charges. Technology has made

booking golf across all courses considerably easier and less confrontational in terms of accessing private golf courses.

- 3.3 A number of reviews of Council golf provision have been undertaken in previous years. These have led to a golf staffing restructure, completed in February 2017. The service is currently in the process of recruiting a Head Greenkeeper, and following this appointment, the Parks and Countryside element of the golf team will transfer to Leisure Services to harmonise the business so that the service has overall management and control. This will enable us to respond to golfers/customers comments/complaints regarding the course in a timelier fashion and control the direction of the service.
- 3.4 Various agronomist's reports (STRI) have been commissioned across the golf courses since 2017, on the condition of each of the municipal courses and to provide a work programme of required maintenance to rectify any remedial works. Despite these reports, very little improvements have been observed across all sites as identified in more recent agronomy assessment (2021). All reports have identified the need for significant capital expenditure on maintaining the courses and changes in operational measures to improve playability.
- 3.5 The Council has previously sought to contract out the golf service on numerous occasions. In 2014, as part of a joint approach with Cheshire West and Chester Council, in January 2018, the Council carried out a soft market test to identify the level of interest from specialist golf providers in a concession contract and most recently, in March 2019, Budget Council proposed to seek alternative operators for two sites.
- 3.6 In 2019, the Delegated Decision to enter into negotiations with a preferred provider for Arrowe Park and The Warren golf courses was the subject of a 'Call-In' Notice on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019.
- 3.7 A special meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee was arranged for 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019, in order to hear evidence relating to the notice of 'Call-In'. The outcome of this Committee meeting was that the Committee requested that the Cabinet Member paused the process for the future provision of golf courses in Wirral while the Members of this Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out a fact-finding visit to all four municipal courses (Hoylake, Arrowe Park, The Warrens and Brackenwood). On conclusion of that fact-finding visit the Environment Committee will meet again to make a final recommendation to the Cabinet Member. The Cabinet Member agreed to pause the process while this activity was completed.
- 3.8 Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee visited all four municipal golf courses on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019, and had the opportunity to talk to officers, user groups and course members. A workshop was also held on 28<sup>th</sup> August to consider the results of further consultations and reflect upon the golf course visits. Options in relation to an 'In-House' golf service were also considered. A report summarising the key discussion points and finding was prepared and submitted for consideration by the next Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.9 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the scrutiny report from the golf visits and workshop at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019, and resolved:

That the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve the findings of the Municipal Golf Courses Scrutiny Workshop, and reaffirms its commitment to the four municipal golf courses and recommends to the Cabinet Member that:

1. The municipal golf courses at Arrowe Park, Brackenwood, Hoylake and The Warren courses be retained in-house;
2. The Council commission a ground survey to be carried out at each course and the capital programme be amended to carry out what comes out of the survey over the next eight years to ensure that each of the courses is brought up to standard;
3. Capital money that was frozen be used in consultation with grounds maintenance staff to provide appropriate equipment;
4. A consultative user group be set up to meet once a quarter with each of the golf courses to discuss issues and problems; and
5. There be no reduction in playing capacity on any of the courses.

3.10 In addition to these recommendations, the Executive Members Decision (EMD) highlighted the need to strive to continue to offer excellent opportunities for local people and visitors to benefit from participation in golf; but it is faced with extremely challenging financial constraints. While Elected Members have been clear that they wish municipal courses to be retained 'In House', simply maintaining the current operating model does not address the need to improve courses or deliver opportunities for increased income generation that is required to safeguard the future of an 'In-House' municipal golf offer.

3.11 Therefore, improving the long-term viability of municipal golf courses is key and the priority has been able to improve the quality of the courses to ensure continued usage. Associated with this was identifying opportunities to maximise income from 'secondary spend' from off course facilities, an area that is currently below 5% of all income generated.

3.12 A new approach to determine priorities for investment is required to ensure the course conditions can be the best quality affordable, within the limitations of the budgets available. This is challenging due to the current condition of our courses and the potential capital investment that is required to improve conditions.

## Executive Members Decision

3.13 The Executive Members Decision also highlighted some key priority areas to identify and implement changes to the golf operations:

- 1) A new approach to determine priorities for investment to ensure the course conditions can be at the best that is affordable, within the limitations of the budgets available, is required.
- 2) A new organisational structure/operating model for the delivery of a golf service is required to ensure greater cohesion at each course, improve communication and ensure that service user needs at each golf course are met. This service area will be managed by a single a 'Golf Manager' or 'Head Green Keeper' responsible for resources allocation, investment and course standards at all four courses and co-ordinate operations across all sites.
- 3) A number of income generation opportunities have been outlined to Elected Members involved in the Scrutiny Workshop in August 2019. These included exciting and creative examples for each course with the potential of developing new opportunities that meet the needs of current users and attracting new customers. Developing these opportunities through the Consultative User Group will be critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability and improvement of municipal golf but will require a fresh look at current arrangements and uses of the facilities at our golf courses while ensuring the core offer of golf is maintained.
- 4) Prepare a Capital Bid for an improved golf course machinery that is fit for purpose and aligned with the new operating model.
- 5) Profile Capital Bids to improve Grounds Maintenance buildings, workshops and machinery storage areas.
- 6) Assess workforce skill base and introduce an improved continuing professional development (CPD) offer for staff.
- 7) Introduction of a volunteer scheme to assist in delivery of low-level maintenance.

## Update on Programme of Activity

Council commission a ground survey of all sites

3.14 STRI, who are leading agronomists in the golf/sports industry, were commissioned and have completed three pieces of work for the council in terms of:

Report	Status
<b>Annual testing</b> – Annual testing was last carried out in March 2017, when STRI undertook a review of the golf courses. This testing was to review the previous recommendations and to ascertain if changes have improved the playing conditions of the sites.	<b>Awaiting clarification from consultant.</b>

<p><b>Detailed drainage report</b> – This was to review the drainage across all courses and identify capital monies required to improve the sites for the long-term, thus assisting the sites to remain open for longer periods, especially in winter months. In addition, this report will assist in determining the viability of sites and identify long term investment in retaining a competitive golf offer.</p>	<p><b>Report now complete.</b></p>
<p><b>New operating model</b> – To assist in the transferring of the ground’s maintenance from Parks and Countryside to Leisure Services, to review current processes and procedures and make recommendations to improve the service processes and subsequent course playing conditions.</p>	<p><b>Awaiting clarification from consultant.</b></p>

3.15 All three pieces of work have been completed and are currently being internally reviewed by officers and/or seeking clarifications with consultant.

3.16 As outlined in Section 1.10-13 the main report around drainage of the sites, stipulated that circa £800k capital investment is required per course (not including Warren) to improve the drainage across each of the sites, so that they could operate to a playable standard throughout longer periods of the year. In addition, the report highlights the poor putting surfaces (greens) at Brackenwood and recommends due to the extensive drainage impediment that these are replaced with United States Golf Associated (USGA) style putting surfaces at a cost of circa £45k per green (x16 greens as x2 have recently been replaced), £720k total.

Capital re-aligned for Machinery and to provide appropriate equipment, building and storage areas

3.17 Members had previously approved a capital sum of £485k be assigned to address key Health and Safety issues at the golf courses. This work has been identified and is currently being implemented:

- New maintenance sheds will be constructed at The Warren and Arrowe Park (Winter 2021/22) and upgrades to Hoylake and Brackenwood (end of 2021).
- New specialist Golf machinery has been identified through the STRI ‘New Operating Model’ report and associated costs will be aligned to the Capital programme by September 2021.

#### Establish a Consultative User group

- 3.18 A representative from each of the four courses regularly communicates with the Golf Manager to discuss issues and concerns. The Covid pandemic has been a major factor in progression of some aspects of developments, but no major concerns have been raised to date. A separate engagement session was held with Arrowe Park Golf Clubs (2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021) to discuss the Sports Village concept.

#### Operational restructure

- 3.19 Parks and Countryside Golf team are due to transfer their staff and operations to Leisure Services in the coming months. We expect this to be around July 2021, as this will align with the new Head Greenkeeper being in post. This position will assist the Golf Manager to oversee the grounds maintenance aspect of the service and to try and address the operational issues that have plagued the service in recent years. STRI were commissioned to provide a new operating model to address the service issues, this work is completed.

#### CPD of staff/Volunteers

- 3.20 It is anticipated that a new Head Greenkeeper position will implement a new CPD model for current staff and develop a volunteer strategy to assist in the golf maintenance. This aspect will be addresses as part of the review of the service operation.

#### Explore Opportunities

- 3.21 **Arrowe Park Sports Village Concept** – As outlined in Section 1.6 FMG Consulting Ltd. have been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to assess the likely current and future demand for several outdoor/indoor activities at Arrowe Park Golf Club. The proposal is a diversification away from the traditional 18-hole golf offer whilst keeping golf at its core. The aim is to create reasons for people to visit, increasing varied market footfall through a diverse offer. This serves to sustain the golf course long term, mitigating sole reliance on golf course fees and creating a greater revenue mix, with emphasis on paid for activities and secondary spend.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Wirral's Golf Service currently carries a net subsidy of c.£270k per year. In addition, as described in Section 1.14, the courses require significant capital investment to remediate historical drainage issues.
- 4.2 Continuing to operate 'as is' means Wirral's Golf Service will continue to be subsidised. Furthermore, this will not contribute to the overarching Leisure Services commitment to deliver savings over the next three years.
- 4.3 With limited investment, the courses will continue to deteriorate, suffer from legacy drainage issues, and become unplayable for longer throughout the year. In addition, delayed response to these issues may risk increasing future capital investment requirements if not addressed in the short term.

- 4.4 It is important that any activities undertaken as part of the Future of Golf programme are cognizant of financial pressures and service wide commitments to seek savings and develop income generating ideas. This will remain a material consideration in the formation of any future options or formal proposal for the service.
- 4.5 A review of the pricing structure for golf could increase revenue for the service as outlined in Section 1.15-16.
- 4.6 Capital investment will need to be targeted and appropriate. Capital incurs a revenue cost as associated principal and interest must be repaid. Therefore, a cost benefit analysis is required and any bid must meet the criteria for acceptance to be included within the Capital Programme.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on the Council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the Best Value Duty). Those functions include the discretionary power to provide leisure facilities such as golf courses.
- 5.2 In order to decide how to fulfil its Best Value Duty the Council must consult representatives of local taxpayers, users of the service in question and of persons who have an interest in the areas of the Borough likely to be affected by any proposed changes in policies and strategies underpinning the delivery of services to the public.
- 5.3 Consultation must in law be done at a formative stage of the process, must set out clearly what the proposals are and the reasons for them, must allow sufficient time for the consultees to respond. The responses must be conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker when it reaches a decision which in turn must take into account only relevant considerations, disregard irrelevant factors and be within the bounds of reasonableness and not perverse.
- 5.4 Any changes in use of the sites identified in the Report must respect the rights of any person who has a contract with the Council entitling them to play golf at a particular site until the date their contract expires.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications relevant to this report or its recommendations. All resources required to progress the future of golf programme to date have been pre-agreed and secured.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 **Financial** – As described in section 1.1 and 1.2, the Council has had to request 'Exceptional Financial Support' to support the setting of a balanced budget. It is important that the Council is seen to be proactive, making decisions that are financially and operationally prudent. The Future of Golf Programme aims to mitigate financial risk, support the MTFP and contribute to the overall Council position by developing proposals and options that identify achievable savings and by developing income generating opportunities.
- 7.2 **Health & Safety** – The future of golf programme has been addressing a number of health and safety risks associated with poor operational infrastructure and welfare facilities. The Future of Golf has been awarded capital monies to replace these facilities including new maintenance sheds and washdown facilities. This programme of work is ongoing.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Previous engagement and consultation activities have been undertaken for the 'Arrowe Park Sports Village' feasibility study and as part of the Consultative User Group established as per the Executive Members Decision. This is outlined in Section 1.6 and 3.18, respectively.
- 8.2 Should any future option or proposals progress to a defined formative stage then further consultation activities will be undertaken commensurate to the nature of the proposal (e.g. as result of the Arrowe Park Sports Village feasibility study or the outcomes of the Member Working group). This may include public consultation to consult on local level proposals and interventions. All consultation will be subject to a robust stakeholder mapping exercise to determine the key stakeholders for inclusion in any consultation activities.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Please see supporting documents for detailed EqIA.
- 9.2 <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Councils environmental and climate commitments will be a material consideration when developing any formal proposals relating to the future of golf (e.g. Cool2, Climate Emergency Action Plan, and Tree Woodland and Hedgerow Strategies).
- 10.2 It was an explicit requirement in the Arrowe Park Sports Village feasibility study tender brief that any options or proposals should aim to be an exemplar of environmental and sustainability best practice and aim to achieve high accredited standards (e.g. BREEAM 'Excellent'). In addition, Arrowe Park is a Country Park, a site of biological importance, contains tree preservation orders, and supports known protected species such as bats and great crested newts. This has been built in from inception and design, ensuring any future developments not only mitigate any potential negative impacts but aim to establish net benefits where possible. It was also stipulated that any design and construction methodology proposed must be sustainable.
- 10.3 In relation to historic drainage issues on the site, options to utilise sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) will be explored. This will include the use of soakaways, vegetated swales, attenuation ponds and/or wetland areas. This must be reconciled against the required land area vs. the needs of golf. Water harvesting may also limit the rate of discharge from the site and may provide a means of recycling water. Cost will also be a major factor when considering drainage options across the sites.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - 210429 MEB Wirral Council Golf Courses - June 2021 (Drainage)

Appendix 2 – Minimum Revenue Provision

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Executive Members Decisions Form – Leisure and Cultural Services, Future Provision of Golf Course (18<sup>th</sup> October 2019)

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Budget Council pg. 85-88</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> March 2019</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee ‘Call In’</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b>
<b>Executive Members Decision</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b>