

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE OWNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS OF UXBRIDGE GOLF COURSE AND HASTE HILL GOLF COURSE

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jonathan Bianco Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport Cabinet Member for Residents' Service
Officer Contact(s)	James Raven, Place Directorate
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	The report seeks Cabinet approval to commence considering options for the future ownership and operations of Uxbridge Golf Course and Haste Hill Golf Course, and for a future Cabinet report to be submitted for a decision on which option to implement.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure activities, culture and arts This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Thriving Economy
Financial Cost	Internal legal and surveying fees will also be incurred as part of the options consideration process, this work will be carried out by existing resources within the Council's Property services team.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Relevant Ward(s)	Uxbridge Golf Course - Ickenham and South Harefield Haste Hill Golf Course - Northwood

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet authorises the Corporate Director of Place to consider options for the future ownership and operations of the Uxbridge Golf Course and Haste Hill Golf Course, to be undertaken by officers of the Property Services Team, and to bring forward a report to a future Cabinet meeting to consider these and any recommendations for a decision.

Reasons for recommendation

Both Uxbridge Golf Course and Haste Hill Golf Course are currently operating at a substantial loss, despite fees having recently been increased. In the last financial year, the two golf courses combined required a subsidy of £130k. This report seeks Cabinet authority to explore and consider future options for the sites and to bring forward a future report to consider final recommendations for a decision. The options appraisal will be undertaken by Property Services Team.

Essential and Proposed Costs

There are a number of essential and further proposed costs relating to the golf courses, to ensure that standards are maintained, to continue to run in a manner expected by customers and to continue receiving customers.

Uxbridge Golf Course



UXBRIDGE GOLF COURSE – AERIAL VIEW

The following essential works would be a minimum investment to allow the course to trade to its optimum level and maintain its competitive position. These would involve irrigation and drainage improvement works at a cost of circa £530,000.

To further enhance the golf offer, the following proposed changes should be considered; construction of a new putting green, the development of a new short game area, the installation of an indoor video swing studio, extension to the car park, and relocation of the greenkeepers compound. This would require a total investment of circa £880,000.

Further down the line, in order to bring the golf course to similar levels to others, there would need to be improvements to the bunkers and tees on all twelve holes (all at further currently unquantified costs).

Haste Hill Golf Course



HASTE HILL GOLF COURSE – AERIAL VIEW

The following essential works would be a minimum investment to allow the course to trade to its optimum level and maintain its competitive position. These would involve irrigation and drainage improvement works and improvements to the greenkeepers compound at a cost of circa £700,000.

Further development and improvements are required to the irrigation system and improvements to the bunkers and tees on all 18 holes, with some new greens being constructed to resolve safety issues. These proposed additional changes would be delivered at a further cost of circa £697,000.

To further enhance the golf offer, the following proposed changes would be beneficial; a new putting green, new short game area at the installation of a Golf Pod and an extension to the car park (all at further currently unquantified costs).

Current options being explored

In 2013, the Council commissioned a feasibility study into the demand for golf at Uxbridge Golf Course. In 2021 the Council commissioned an update to the original study and included all the Council Golf facilities to inform the options.

The 2021 Feasibility Study states that the Council has a number of options:

Current Option 1

Run the golf as a division with golf course budgets, business plans and captain programmes, spending the money required to move courses to a 12-month season with appropriate conditioning, correct levels of staffing, with proper marketing and pricing.

Current Option 2

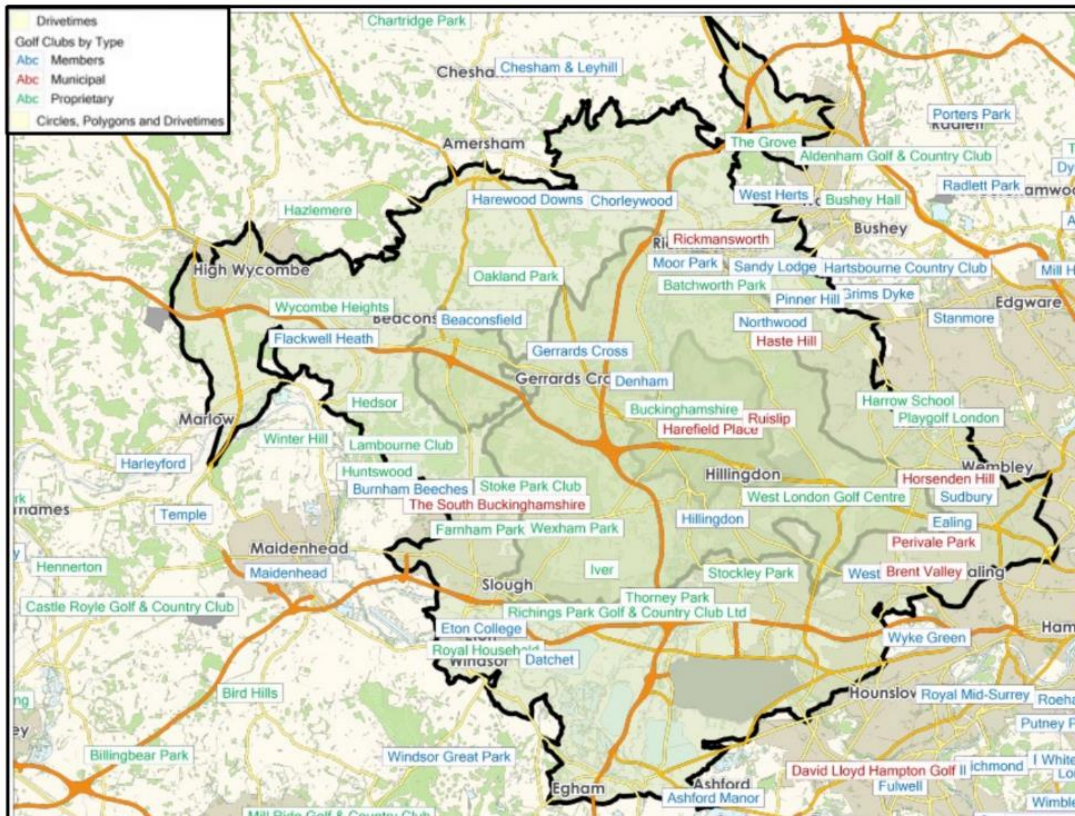
Invest significantly in the golf courses to put them in the position to compete successfully for the next 25-years. Options either to manage in-house or contractor facilities to a credible third party on a long lease or disposal, with an agreed capital investment programme and possible annual rental charge. Haste Hill Golf Course has 30-golf courses within 30-minutes' drive of its location, Uxbridge Golf Course has 32-golf courses within 30-minutes' drive of its location (*see maps below showing the competition from these alternate nearby golf courses*).

Current Option 3

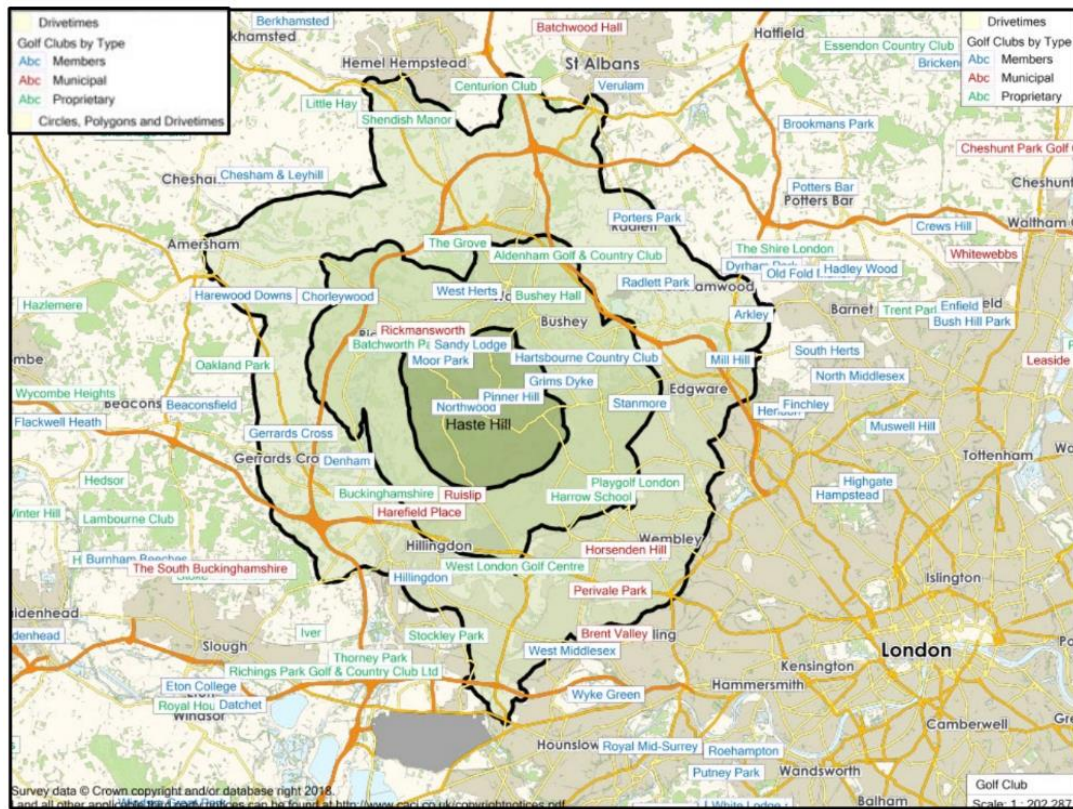
Additional to the Feasibility Study, a further option would include to again increase fees and charges at both courses to attempt to operate on a full cost recovery basis.



Uxbridge Golf Course – competition from other Golf Courses within 30-min drive



Haste Hill Golf Course – competition from other Golf Courses within 30-min drive



Future after Feasibility Study

Further work to all of the above options would need to be undertaken in order to make a clear recommendation to Cabinet, as well as explore the current market. In this regard, an outsourcing could require a procurement exercise under the Concessions Contracts Regulations 2016.

Ruislip Golf Course is leased to HS2 (High Speed 2) and therefore has not been included in the review of options.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Continue with the current approach to managing the golf assets as part of the wider leisure and amenity management and maintain the current approach to pricing and investment. It is suggested, though, this would see further deterioration in profits, poorer visitor experience and increased management turnover.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

This initial report is being considered under urgency provisions in the Constitution. The further report being recommended to Cabinet to make a decision on the future of the golf courses will be included on the Forward Plan, as a key decision.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

Financial Implications

This report seeks Cabinet approval to explore business appraisal options for the future of the Golf Courses with a view to bringing back costed options for consideration, with the potential for significant capital investment requirements above the current approved capital programme should certain options be pursued.

This review is being carried out by internal Officers within existing resources, therefore there are no immediate financial implications relating to the report at this stage.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The result of delivering a new option for the operation of running the golf courses owned by the Council, will be to ensure that there is a long-term strategy to maintain the option of the facilities running and availability for Hillingdon Residents.

The further aim is to enhance the services being offered, such that the facilities are of a higher standard, as required by Residents, and to be able to compete at an appropriate level with other

operating golf courses and possibly encourage further and additional usage by Hillingdon Residents who may not be currently using or enjoying the facilities.

Consultation carried out or required

None at this stage.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Legal

Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables the Council to provide recreational facilities including golf courses. Section 19 is a discretionary power and there is no statutory requirement for the Council to provide golf courses or to subsidise their operation.

The report seeks authority for officers to develop proposals for the future operation of both Uxbridge and Haste Hill Golf courses for future consideration by Cabinet. As explained in the report there are a number of legal issues that will need to be considered and further, more detailed legal advice will be provided to officers as they consider options and, of course, in the future Cabinet report.

Property

Property comments are in the main body of the report, as authored by the Property Services Team.

Planning

It is recommended that any planning implications are considered as part of the future options appraisal.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL