

Chief Officer Decision Notice

Notice is hereby given that the following Chief Officer Decision has been made, as delegated by the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or under their delegated authority in the Council's Constitution.

1. NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

Title of decision	Temporary Closure of Uxbridge Golf Course
Name and Title of Chief Officer(s) making the decision	Karrie Whelan – Corporate Director of Place
Directorate	Place
Reference No.	0125
Date of decision	7 January 2025
Relevant Ward	Ickenham and South Harefield

Details of Decision Taken

Decision	The Chief Officer agrees to: 1. The temporary closure to the public of Uxbridge Golf Course from Tuesday 14th February 2025
Reason for decision	<p>A decline in player numbers during the past year, further hampered by consistently wet weather has resulted in the Uxbridge & Haste Hill Golf Courses operating at a financial loss to the Council. Further to this, a number of vacancies within the service has resulted in an over-spend of non-staffing costs as suppliers have been relied upon to carry out a shortfall in maintenance works to enable the courses to remain operational.</p> <p>The temporary closure of Uxbridge Golf Course is required in order to redeploy available staff to Haste Hill Course in order to avoid additional maintenance costs.</p> <p>Officers continue to work with advisors to seek a specialist golf operator for the courses.</p>
Alternative options considered and rejected	<p>The return on investment to carry out improvement works at the courses is considered high risk given the number of competitor courses within close proximity and the income from the courses over a three-year period. However, a specialist operator would have the relevant experience to deliver the required improvements and therefore advisors have been appointed to progress this work.</p>

Factors taking into account	<p>The provision of golf courses is a non-statutory duty.</p> <p>A staff consultation has been initiated and employees are being supported by Human Resources.</p> <p>The course operates a Pay as you Play model, and therefore no memberships will be affected by this decision.</p> <p>The food and beverage outlet is currently leased to a private operator and access will not be restricted through the closure of the course.</p>
Report Author & Directorate	Nicola Herbert – Director of Environment - Place

Legal and Finance Comments

Finance comments	<p>There is currently a projected overspend on the budget of £388k for this financial year</p> <p>This includes an underspend in staffing costs which relates to a number of vacant positions. However, this has resulted in an overspend in non-staffing costs as contractors have been utilised to enable vital course maintenance works to take place.</p> <p>Further overspends within the non-staffing budget primarily relate to the cost of machinery repairs as the current assets are reaching the point that they are beyond economic repair.</p> <p>The income pressure relates mainly to green fees. However, income from catering sales and equipment hire are also forecast below target due to the reduced number of customers.</p>
Finance Officer name and Title	Rhys Harries – Finance Business Partner - Place
Legal Comments	<p>The current Cabinet and Cabinet Member level decisions in this matter date from 9 November 2023 and 19 March 2024 and are concerned with appointing a private operator to run the coursed at a net nil cost (at worst) to the council. Officers are still in the process of seeking to implement those decisions, however provision of golf courses is not a statutory duty. As a discretionary service it is prudent to take steps to mitigate losses being incurred by the Council in the circumstances described.</p> <p>As a temporary operational expedient, the proposed action is within the authority of the Chief Officer's delegations to ensure the effective day to day management of the services and budgets that she is responsible for, relevant cabinet members having been fully consulted.</p> <p>Legal considerations at this point include ensuring any impacts on staff and/or leaseholders are appropriately managed.</p>

	If, by the end of 31 March 2025, the Chief Officer is of the view that she will be unable to implement the previous Cabinet decisions in this matter within a reasonably foreseeable period from that time, the matter should be returned to Cabinet for further consideration.
Legal Officer Name and Title	Daniel Dickinson – Head of Legal Services

Appendices / report attached

List here any appendices / reports e.g. tender evaluations or other documentation to be included in support of this decision	Informal Cabinet Briefing – December 2024
Exempt Classification	<p>Not for Publication: The appendix report contains exempt information and is strictly not for public release</p> <p>That this report be declared as exempt from publication as it involves the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.</p>

Cabinet Member & other Chief Officer consultation

Name and Title of any other Chief Officer(s) you have consulted with and as per any delegation.	<p>Daniel Dickinson – Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)</p> <p>Richard Ennis – Corporate Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)</p>
Name and Title of the Cabinet Member you have consulted, and as per any delegation	Councillor Lavery – Cabinet Member for Community & Environment

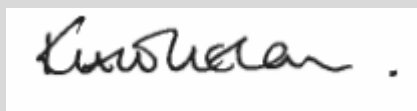
Any conflicts of interest declared by the Chief Officer making this decision and/or Cabinet Member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision - or if dispensation by the CEO was granted to them.	N/A
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Authority for this decision

Detail authority from Cabinet or under delegated authority in the Constitution / Officer Scheme of Delegations	<p>Paragraphs 1 and 3 of the General Delegations to the Chief Executive and Corporate/Executive Directors, Constitution, Chapter 12:-</p> <p><i>“To take any steps necessary for the day-to-day management and administration of any matters within the designated area of responsibility and to take overall responsibility for the performance of their service area.”</i></p> <p><i>“To manage any budget for which [they] have lead responsibility...”</i></p>
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2. APPROVAL

Formal approval by Chief Officer making the decision



SignedDate 07.01.2025.....

Karrie Whelan – Corporate Director of Place