

COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Update of Review of Provision of Bowling Greens		
Date of Meeting:	20th September 2013		
Report of:	Strategic Director: Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gillian Marston	Tel: 29-4701
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE/ EXEMPTIONS

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 During the budget process for 2012/13, indicative proposals for budget savings for 2013/14 were presented at Budget Council on the 23rd February 2012. An indicative saving of £93.8k was highlighted in relation to bowling greens with the intention that this would be achieved by reducing the level of subsidy to the sport. Consultation with the bowling clubs commenced and this report provides an update on the current position.
- 1.2 The provision of bowling in the city has not been reviewed recently. Some clubs have closed (Carlton and Queens Park) and the numbers of greens have been reducing in Preston Park. This would indicate that it is time for provision to be assessed.
- 1.3 In addition, Full Council on the 19th July received a petition signed by 1,627 people concerning a proposed reduction in subsidies to bowling clubs which was debated, and a Notice of Motion was also presented and agreed. The petition and the Notice of Motion (i) called for a withdrawal of proposals to cut support to the bowling clubs, (ii) sought a compromise whereby clubs can become more autonomous and less reliant on council funding, (iii) requested a report to this committee meeting setting out the options for the future support of bowls clubs for consideration in advance of the council budget setting, and (iv) requested that a representative of the city's bowls clubs be invited to address the committee.
- 1.4 The draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2012 highlights that physical health and outdoor activity contributes to the overall health and well being of people. Further, it states that older people undertake less activity and are more susceptible to social isolation. Bowling is an important outdoor physical activity which is primarily enjoyed by older people and as such contributes to the health and well being of this group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes that consultation with the bowling clubs has been taking place and that when this has been concluded a proposal on a way forward will be brought to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Consultation commenced with the clubs some months ago and they have been asked to provide a formal response to the initial proposals by the 20th August. Those responses will need to be analysed and it is likely that further discussions will need to be held with the clubs before a full service, financial and equalities impact assessment is made to feed into the formulation of final proposals for presentation to the committee.. The initial proposals are set out in part 3 of this report.

National perspective

- 3.2 Bowling is a mainly club based sport with the majority of players being a member of club. This makes it a social sport.
- 3.3 Sport England's Active People Survey from April 2011/12 shows that 80% of bowlers were over 65 years old, with 16% between 45-64 years old, and the remaining between 35-54 years old. 60% of players are men.
- 3.4 The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation Fact Sheet for March 2011 shows that bowling is the 12th most popular participation sport for all women generally and is the 5th most popular for women over 55 years old. The sport has experienced a significant decrease in female participation between 2008-09 and 2009-10.
- 3.5 With a higher age profile and a high number of retirees playing, the majority of players have a low income and bowls has a larger profile of low income players than in other sports. In addition, the number of players with a limiting disability is higher than in other sports (the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation Fact Sheet for March 2011).
- 3.6 Overall bowling has been declining nationally although there have been marginal increases in bowling in the South East for the period from April 2011 to April 2012 (Sport England's Active People Survey from October 2007/08 to April 2011/12). The South East region has the highest number of active players in Sport England's area.

Local perspective

- 3.7 In terms of encouraging older people to become involved in sport there are initiatives such as the 'Active Forever' programme delivered by the council's Active for Life team which focus on increasing participation by older people with activity sessions across the city. There is also an annual Older Persons Sports Day which provides taster sessions and links to existing clubs and groups to encourage regular participation in sport.
- 3.8 There are 15 active bowling clubs in the city using public facilities. This has recently reduced from 16 as the Carlton Club folded earlier this year. There are in the region of 741 season ticket club players. A map of the location of the clubs is included in Appendix 1.

- 3.9 Over a period of time incremental changes have occurred to the bowling facilities in the city, including the closure of Queens Park green and a reduction in the number of greens at both Preston Park and Hove, Kingsway . However, a full review of bowling facilities in the city has not been undertaken for sometime.
- 3.10 In the main, all costs associated with the maintenance of the greens and pavilions for the clubs are incurred by the council and the council receives the income from season tickets and casual play.

3.11 The exceptions to this arrangement are;

a) Woodingdean, where there has been a 25 year full repairing lease in place since 1995 and;

b) Hove & Kingsway Bowls where a 15 year, internal repairing lease has been in place since 2000.

Both clubs pay an annual rent to the council and are responsible for water and electricity charges and all other outgoings in relation to their use of the buildings.

The presence of formal leases has enabled the two clubs concerned to diversify their activities and generate additional income and at the same time reduce costs to the council.

3.12 Public play on the bowling greens is permitted and a Park Attendant collects the monies from casual play from Kingsway, St Anne's and Preston Park. Where public takes place elsewhere the fees are collected by the clubs and play is not possible unless club members are present.

3.13 The number of regular players is usually indicated by the number of season tickets issued, which is in the region of 695 and compares to 605 in 2004. This increase has taken place in some clubs and not across the board. Figures show that some clubs' number of season ticket allocation (an indication of membership) has declined. For example Dyke Road Park had a membership of 35 which has declined to 24, Hollingbury had a membership of 120 which has declined to 93 and British Rail Bowling Club (Preston Park) had a membership of 50 which has declined to 33. Saltdean used to have 70 members but by 2010 this had reduced to 41. Hangleton had 80 but by 2010, 46 members. In addition, Queens Park had a membership of 90 but was closed a few years ago and its members may have joined other clubs.

3.14 A season ticket currently costs £85 for a green with an attendant and £74 for an unattended green. Casual play costs £2.75 per hour. Fees have only been subject to inflationary increases in the past few years.

Current Local Provision

3.15 Details of the clubs, the number of greens, pavilions and members are set out below:

Club	No. of Greens	No. of Pavilions	No. of members
Woodingdean	1	1	68
Dyke Road Bowls Club	1	shed	24
Hangleton and Hangleton Ladies Bowling club	1	1	46
Hollingbury Park Bowling	1	1	46
Hove / Kingsway Club (includes Kingsway Ladies)	4	2	51
Hove Park	1	1	26
Mackie Bowls Club	1	1	78
Portslade Bowls Club	1	1	40
British Rail Bowling Club (Preston Park)	2	1	33
Rottingdean	1	1	70
Saltdean	1	1	41
St Anns Wells	1	1	35
Brighton Bowling club	1	1	47
Vicarage Bowling club	1	2	40

3.16 The largest clubs are Mackie Bowls Club at 78 members, Rottingdean Club at 70 members and Woodingdean at 68. Each of these clubs has one green and one pavilion.

3.17 The smallest clubs are Dyke Road Bowls Club with 24 members, Hove Park with 26 members, and Kingsway Ladies which currently has 9 season ticket holders and 3 members which pay the Park Attendant on an occasional basis. Each club uses a green and one pavilion like the larger clubs. British Rail Bowling Club (Preston Park) has 33 members with 2 greens although only 1 green is used and a pavilion.

3.18 If each club had 68 members, the total number of club members would be 1,020, not the estimated 741 players. Alternatively, with 741 players and 68 players per club the number of clubs would be 11 as opposed to the current 15 clubs.

The Proposals

- 3.19 Discussions with clubs have explored the options of the clubs taking greater control over and responsibility for the bowling facilities, including the greens. This means determining and managing the maintenance regimes and incurring all the costs associated with maintaining the greens and buildings. Income received from season ticket holders and casual players would be kept by the club rather than the current arrangement whereby it is passed to the council. The council would also provide a financial subsidy of £4,000 for each bowling facility.
- 3.20 This means that nearly all clubs will be left with an average shortfall of funds of £5,000 (Appendix 2). Woodingdean Bowls Club and Mackie Bowls Club would have the lowest financial shortfall at £7.78 and £650.39 per annum, respectively. It is possible that these clubs, and perhaps some others, would wish to have more control and responsibility for their bowling facilities.
- 3.21 However, there are a 6 clubs out of 14 which will have a shortfall of more than £5,000 per annum (Hove/Kingsway, Hove Park, Portslade, Rottingdean, Saltdean and St Anns) and the financial impact on them of the initial proposals maybe too great for them to survive.
- 3.22 The ability of clubs to meet the shortfall depends on either increasing members, which is unlikely by April 2013, or reducing costs. For some clubs there is the possibility of reducing maintenance costs, but not significantly, and this is not an option for all clubs.
- 3.23 It is unlikely that the clubs will be able to make up the shortfall through increased charges to club members as the average increase would be in the region of £120 per member for a sport which is only played part of the year.
- 3.24 In addition, some clubs have stated that they do not wish to manage their bowling facilities and take on the risks and liabilities which will arise from operating outside of the council's umbrella.
- 3.25 Given the differing financial positions of the clubs, another proposal has also been put forward to the clubs which is to reduce the number of greens at Preston Park to 1 where the British Rail Club has confirmed it uses one green and at Hove/Kingsway from 4 to 2, and Hollingbury Park from 2 to 1. In addition, all clubs have been written to asking if there are smaller clubs which would consider sharing a green and pavilion to reduce costs. At the time of writing the report the outcome of the consultations with the clubs is not known as the deadline for responses is the 20th August.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A meeting was held with each bowling club during May, June and July this year, with the exception of Carlton Club which has folded. The financial costs associated with the maintenance of the greens and buildings were shared and amendments made following further information from the clubs.

- 4.2 All the clubs were written to in July requesting a formal response to a number of proposals as set out in the report and those responses are expected by 20th August. These responses will need to be analysed, and may prompt further discussions with the clubs, so that a full service, financial and equalities impact assessment can be made. Following, this a further report will be presented to the committee.
- 4.3 In addition, a petition of 1,429 signatures was presented at Full Council on the 19th July and subject to the debate referred to at paragraph 1.3 of this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The provisional budget figures for 2013-14 include estimated savings of £93,800 in respect of bowls subsidies. The option of reducing the subsidy to each club to £4,000 would allow the council to generate savings of £93,800. The proposal of closing 4 underused greens, (Preston Park where the British Rail Club has confirmed it uses one green, Hove/Kingsway, and Hollingbury Park), will save £32,000. If two clubs share the facilities of other club(s) an additional saving of £11,000 could be achieved.

If it is not possible to achieve the indicative savings figure of £93,800 then alternative savings will need to be found as part of the overall Council Budget setting exercise for 2013/14.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 13/08/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The Committee will need to consider the legal implications of any proposals for change to the funding or support for bowling greens, including any equalities implications, when those proposals come forward.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce Date: 15/08/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 In considering the proposals consideration has been given to the need to ensure that bowling continues to be played in the city by a primarily older group. The intention is to limit the impact on this group to ensure they can enjoy a social and healthy, outdoor activity. This means that maintaining the sport and the location of play as far as possible is important. An equalities impact assessment on the initial proposals is set out in Appendix 3.

- 5.4 Sustainability Implications:

With the exception of the treatment of Brown Tail moth, the only place where Cityparks uses insecticides and fungicides is on bowling greens and pitch and putt greens. These treatments are used as they are essential to the maintenance. If clubs become more autonomous and manage the maintenance of the bowling facilities it will be important for the council to encourage sustainable practices where possible and this will form part of the discussions with clubs. If greens become available for other uses, sustainable practices for their maintenance will be undertaken.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

None

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Currently consultations and discussions with the bowling clubs are taking place with the intention of reaching an agreed position and reducing the risks to both the council and the clubs. Passing control for the greens and buildings to the clubs will mean that the council and the clubs will need to carefully consider the financial and legal risks to both parties. Advice from legal and property services will be critical. It will be important that clubs are financially sustainable in the longer term and have degree of security to allow them to develop their clubs and membership. Thus any agreement on a subsidy level will need to include a commitment over a number of years to allow clubs to plan for the future.

The council will need to consider with Friends of Groups what to do with greens which are no longer needed and there is the opportunity to develop community gardens, should groups come forward on a voluntary basis to fund and maintain the areas themselves. Otherwise greens will be converted to general amenity grass, which is a low cost maintenance and allows the council to deliver financial savings. In Preston Park an old green has been converted to a Petanque area and in Queens Park the green has been left, although it is used by young people for ball sports.

5.7 Public Health Implications:

Bowling is an outdoor sport typically played by an older group of people. The Draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2012 which is agreed by the Council provides a high level overview of Brighton & Hove's population, and its health & wellbeing needs. It refers to the high causal relationship between the amount of physical activity people do and their health and that there is solid evidence that promoting physical & mental health in older people (aged 65 & over) prevents or delays the onset of disability. The assessment identifies that only 7% of adults aged over 55 years participate in at least three 30 minute sessions of sport per week.

5.8 It also recognises that being physically active outside is good for health, reducing the risk of developing conditions such as diabetes & heart disease, tackling obesity and supporting recovery after illness. It also supports good mental health & emotional wellbeing.

6. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Full Council on the 19th July received a petition signed by 1,627 people concerning a proposed reduction in subsidies to bowling clubs which was debated, and a Notice of Motion was also presented and agreed. Both the petition and the Notice of Motion called for a report to the Economic Development and Culture Committee, and the notice of motion requested a report for the 20th September meeting setting out the options for the future support of bowls clubs for consideration in advance of the council budget setting, and that a representative of the city's bowls clubs be invited to address the meeting.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Map of bowling clubs
2. Summary of the financial position of club facilities 2010
3. Equalities Impact Assessment

Documents in Members' Rooms

- 1.
- 2.

Background Documents

1. Draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2012
2. Sport England Active People Survey results for Bowls Oct 2007/8 to April 2011/12
3. Women's Sport and Fitness and Foundation Bowls factsheet March 2011

Appendix 1 Map of Bowling Greens

Bowls Clubs in Brighton & Hove



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Appendix 2 Summary of the financial position of club facilities 2010

Club	No. of Greens	Attended green is £80.50 unattended is £70.03	No. of members	Total cost of maintenance (greens & buildings)	Total income from ticket sales	Difference	2010 total subsidy per player	Additional cost per club	Additional cost per member
Woodingdean	1	£70.00	68	£10,267.78	£6,260.00	£4,007.78	£58.94	£7.78	£0.11
Dyke Road Bowls Club	1	£70.00	24	£7,682.84	£1,680.00	£6,002.84	£250.12	£2,002.84	£83.45
Hangleton and Hangleton Ladies Bowling club	1	£70.03	46	£10,158.51	£3,221.38	£6,937.13	£150.81	£2,937.13	£63.85
Hollingbury Park Bowling	2	£70.00	46	£23,147.34	£3,220.00	£16,707.34	£363.2	£8707.34	£189.29
Hove / Kingsway Club	4	£80.50	51	£43,111.12	£17,693.25	£25,417.87	£498.39	£21,417.87	£419.96
Hove Park	1	£70.00	26	£14,199.02	£4,439.03	£9,759.99	£375.38	£5,759.99	£221.54
Mackie Bowls Club	1	£70.03	78	£10,112.73	£5,462.34	£4,650.39	£59.62	£650.39	£8.34
Portslade Bowls Club	1	£70.00	40	£12,466.43	£2,231.20	£10,235.23	£255.88	£6,235.23	£155.88
British Rail Bowling Club	2 (but use 1)	£73.20	33	£12,310.29	£3,831.09	£8,479.20	£256.95	£4,479.20	£135.73
Rottingdean	1	£70.00	70	£14,558.45	£4,900.00	£9,658.45	£137.98	£5,658.45	£80.84
Saltdean	1	£70.00	41	£13,134.45	£2,870.00	£10,264.45	£250.35	£6,264.45	£152.79
St Anns Wells	1	£80.50	35	£13,964.59	£4,527.95	£9,436.64	£269.62	£5,436.64	£155.33
Brighton Bowling club	1	2700 pa	47	£10,937.78	£2,700.00	£8,237.78	£175.27	£4,237.78	£90.17
Vicarage Bowling club	1	1900 pa	40	£10,450.44	£3,800.00	£6,650.44	£166.26	£2,650.44	£66.26

Appendix 3 Equalities Impact Screening

Title of EIA Screening	Review of Bowling Provision		
Delivery / Resource / Finance Unit or Intelligent Commissioning name	Infrastructure		
Aim of policy or scope of service	A review of the provision of bowling facilities has been underway and the potential impact on different groups must be assessed to inform the proposals and the outcome of the review.		

2. Record of data/engagement; impacts identified; and potential actions to meet the Duties.

	Data that you have	Community engagement exercises or mechanisms	Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential)	Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations
Community Cohesion	<p>Discussions from clubs and response to formal consultation.</p> <p>Sport England's Active People Survey April 2011/12 shows</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place and is on going with the clubs. A meeting with each club has taken place, a letter outlining the proposals has been issued and further discussions will take place as needed with individual clubs.</p>	<p>Bowling has been declining nationally and the trend locally is decline. This reflects either a communities knowledge of and/or level of interest in bowling</p> <p>Bowling Clubs are very proud of their history and their individual club, forming strong social groups. It is also important that clubs develop the good relationships that exist between each other to promote the sport across the city, and share information and advice, and resources</p>	<p>The Council's Sports Development team aims to encourage participation, through the development of high quality sport and physical activity opportunities across the city, and raise community awareness of local clubs. A range of activities such as Active for Life, TAKEPART Festival aim to encourage activity amongst local residents.</p> <p>Consultation with clubs needs to be completed</p>
Age (people of all ages)	<p>Sport England's Active People Survey from April 2011/12 shows that 80% of bowlers were over 65 years old, with 16% between 45-64 years old.</p>	<p>There are initiatives such as the 'Active Forever' programme delivered by the council's Active for Life team which focus on increasing participation by older people with activity sessions across the city. There is also an annual</p>	<p>Reducing subsidies for bowling greens will have a greater impact on older people. This is group of people also have a high proportion of retirees on lower incomes and changes in fees to play bowls will have a greater</p>	<p>Consultation with bowling clubs has been taking to place to determine the impact of proposed changes and these are being considered in the review. As Increasing fees to players is unlikely options to reduce costs is the most likely option</p>

		Older Persons Sports Day which provides taster sessions and links to existing clubs and groups to encourage regular participation in sport.		
Disability (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities ¹)	The number of players with a limiting disability is higher than in other sports (the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation Fact Sheet for March 2011).		impact and may adversely effect the number of players able to take part in the sport.	
Sex (both men and women are covered under the Act)	Sport England's Active People Survey from April 2011/12 shows that 60% of players are men. The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation Fact Sheet for March 2011 shows that bowling is the 12 th most popular participation sport for all women generally and is the 5 th most popular for women over 55 years old. The sport has experienced a significant decrease in female participation between 2008-09 and 2009-10.			There is a potential role for the Sports Development Team to help clubs promote and encourage active participation in bowling across groups that are less active in other sporting activities

Gender reassignment	No data			Collating this data needs to be considered alongside qualitative data to understand the barriers to the sport. Recognising and addressing these will be important to actively promoting the sport amongst underrepresented groups and to increase
Pregnancy and maternity	Sport England's Active People Survey from April 2011/12 shows that 80% of bowlers were over 65 years old, with 16% between 45-64 years old Sport England's Active People Survey from April 2011/12 shows that 60%			The sport needs to broaden its appeal and the nature of the sport makes it physically easier to take part.
Race	No data			Collating this data needs to be considered alongside qualitative data to understand the barriers to the sport. Recognising and addressing these will be important to actively promoting the sport amongst underrepresented groups and to increase participation
Religion or belief	No data			
Sexual orientation	No data			
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)	No data		No impact foreseen	

Other relevant groups	No data			Collating this data needs to be considered alongside qualitative data to understand the barriers to the sport. Recognising and addressing these will be important to actively promoting the sport amongst underrepresented groups and to increase participation
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