

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

Directorate: Environment and Housing	Service area: Parks and Countryside
Lead person: Joanne Clough	Contact number: 0113 3957400
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: 23 July 2014	

1. Title: Proposed Closure of Gotts and Middleton Park Golf Courses
Is this a:
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Is this:
<input type="checkbox"/> New/ proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already exists and is being reviewed <input type="checkbox"/> Is changing

2. Members of the assessment team

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g. service user, manager of service, specialist
Joanne Clough	Leeds City Council, Parks and Countryside	Trading and Operations Manager
Linda Gunn	Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside	Commercial Development Manager
Allan Cooper	Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside	Golf Manager
Simon Frosdick	Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside	Business Development Manager
Geoff Turnbull	Leeds City Council, Equality Team	Senior Project Officer

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

As part of the City Council's budget strategy, this equality impact assessment seeks to examine a planned revision to reduce the number of municipal golf courses that are currently managed by Leeds City Council from 5 to 3 and converting the land back into semi natural parkland thereby making a collective saving of £168k.

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

4a. Strategy, policy or plan

The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail: N/A see below

4b. Service, function, event

The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant) (please see equality assurance in procurement)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail: This assessment considers the proposed closure of both Gotts and Middleton Park Golf Courses from 30th September 2014.

5. Fact finding – what do we already know

In November 2012, and as part of the Council's long term financial plan, Executive Board gave an in principle agreement to the proposed closure of two of the five municipal golf courses. Namely Gotts and Middleton Park and revert the land back into semi natural parkland.

The Council continues to face serious budget pressures and between 2010/11 and 2015/16 will have experienced cash funding cuts in the region of £175m from central government with further reductions expected in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

This has also impacted on the Parks and Countryside service, with a £2.7 million budget reduction between 2010/11 and 2014/15. This equates to a reduction of 23% with further reductions expected to be required in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Leeds City Council provides 4 golf sites with 5 courses, namely Gotts Park Golf Course in Armley (18 holes), Middleton Park Golf Course (18 holes), Roundhay Park Golf Course (9 holes) and Temple Newsam Golf Course (two 18 hole courses). It is recognised that participating in golf has many benefits – to health and wellbeing, social interaction, education and learning as well as fostering sporting talent.

Over the last 7 years, there is evidence of a decline in adult golf participation at a national level. The Sport England active people survey conducted over a number of years demonstrates that adult participation has declined from 948,300 in 2007/8 to 772,800 in 2012/13 – a reduction of nearly 19%, as shown in the following graph:

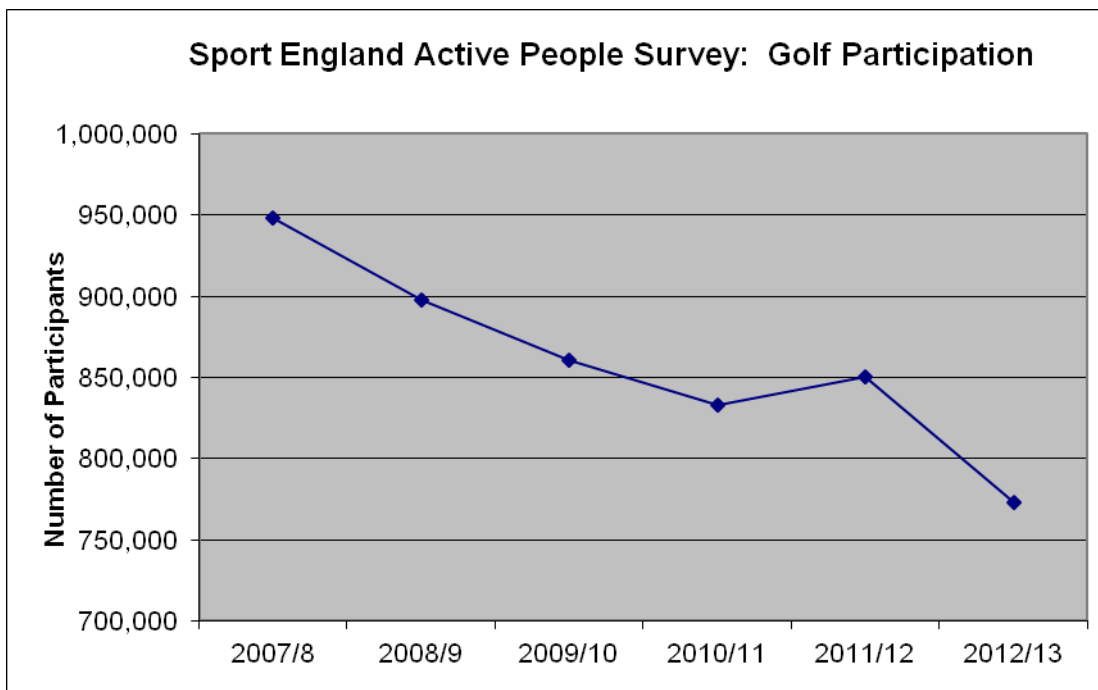


Figure 1: National golf participation 2007/8 to 2012/13

Over the years, Golf has become a more competitive market with over 24 golf courses available within or close to the Leeds boundary. This downward trend is also reflected across the Council managed courses despite attempts at introducing various golfing promotional offers. Resulting in a net operating loss at Middleton Park Golf Course of

£103k and £114k at Gotts Park Golf Course. It is acknowledged that the other two remaining golf course locations at Temple Newsam and Roundhay Park were also operating at a loss, but was considered to be insufficient to warrant further work to develop proposals on closing these courses. The details of this is set out in section 3 within the Executive Board report.

Should a decision be made to close both golf courses, it is further proposed to convert the land back into semi natural parkland by creating Leeds' first park arboretum with a 42 hectares site containing interesting and diverse tree species along with educational and interpretation information at Middleton Park and for Gotts Park to create the Benjamin Gott's Country Park that would be free and open to the public with 37 hectares of interesting and diverse habitats along with educational and interpretation information on the flora, fauna and history of the site.

From experience, knowledge and feedback from staff at the point of ticket sale, the majority of people who play golf do not tend to use public transport as a means to getting to and from their golf course. This is mainly due to the fact that golf equipment can be quite bulky and heavy to carry. Similarly not unless someone lives adjacent to a golf course golfers tend not to walk to their choice of golf course to play golf.

Season ticket holders may play at all five of the Council golf courses and green fees are available at each golf course location for those who prefer to just turn up, pay and play. A golf survey was undertaken in 2012, which demonstrated that whilst golfers may play at any of the Council golf courses, their preference is to play at the course where they are also members of the golf club.

From the 175 respondents, 159 completed the equality questionnaire section. This demonstrated that 90% of those who played golf were white British males and less than 6% were women with less than 8% from ethnic minority groups. 70% were also aged 50 years or over with less than 4% under the age of 21 years and 94% did not have a disability. The proposed closure of the two golf courses would not adversely affect those with disabilities.

From those who responded there was an equitable split across each of the four golf course locations with perhaps slightly more who played at Roundhay Park Golf Course.

In terms of age profile across all of the courses, Temple Newsam and Roundhay Park had a higher percentage of young golfers in comparison to both Gotts and Middleton. With Gotts seeing a higher proportion of those aged over 60 years.

In terms of golf course terrain Gotts Park Golf Course is perhaps the steepest of all of the Council's golf course terrains.

A wide range of consultation has been undertaken on the Council's proposals to close both Gotts and Middleton Park Golf Courses including the citizen's panel, all ward members, Middleton Park Municipal Golf Club, Gotts Park Golf Club, Wades Trust, the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum and the Friends of Middleton Park. The consultation was included on the 'Talking Point' website and paper copies of consultation documents were also displayed and distributed at each golf course. Together with the draft landscape proposals to revert to the golf course back into semi natural parkland.

The results from this consultation process is clearly set out within the Executive Board report. However, a summary of the results is as follows:

The citizen's panel were consulted and based on around 1,200 who responded, 87% were in favour of closing the courses and establishing semi-natural parkland, including around 73% of those who stated that they play golf. The Leeds Parks and Green Space Forum offered no objection and welcomed the potential new use for the sites as they would benefit wildlife and allow more visitors to access. Consultation undertaken at the point of play at each course demonstrated around 95% opposed to the proposal to close each course.

Core Cities Comparators

The proposed closure of both Gotts and Middleton Park Golf Courses is not based on other local authorities as each local authority will work towards different financial strategies. However, Leeds is the only Core City who manage 5 municipal courses with Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, Nottingham, Sheffield and Birmingham all having different types of golf management in place. Sheffield have placed their golf provision into a trust working with SIV(Sheffield International venues); Birmingham's golf provision is run by mytime active on a long term lease; Manchester have a company called Mack Trading Amenity Management running a lease until 2018. Liverpool Council is going through a similar exercise as LCC and had hoped that a third party provider would run the golf provision however, this has fallen through due to the demands of the contractor. Bristol council operate an 18 hole par 3 course that is managed in-house with other activities using the facilities as well. Nottingham and Newcastle don't have any direct golf provisions.

Given that each of the core cities operates differently, there are no direct comparables that can be made.

Financial Support

For those who may not be able to afford to purchase golf equipment. This is available for golfers to hire at each of the municipal golf course locations, . Discounted season tickets and green fees are also available to those who are on job seekers allowance, students, pensioners etc.

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail: None identified

Action required: N/A

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

During 2013, Officers from the Parks and Countryside service, have met each month with the respective golf clubs who are directly affected and with representatives from the Friends of Middleton Park, Wades Trust and Ward Members to try and establish a business case to keep both golf courses open. Unfortunately Middleton Park have been unable to make a business case whilst in comparison, Gotts Park Municipal Golf Club have submitted a business case for the Council to consider.

In addition to working closely with key stakeholders, Public Consultation has also occurred and the details of this may be found within the Executive Board Report. In summary, the citizen's panel were consulted and based on around 1,200 who responded, 87% were in favour of closing the courses and establishing semi-natural parkland, including around

73% of those who stated that they play golf. The Leeds Parks and Green Space Forum offered no objection and welcomed the potential new use for the sites as they would benefit wildlife and allow more visitors to access. Consultation undertaken at the point of play at each course demonstrated around 95% opposed to the proposal to close each course.

Action required: Inform key stakeholders of the results of the consultation undertaken and ensure that they are aware of the Executive Boards decision on the future of both Middleton Park and Gotts Park Golf Courses.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?

Equality characteristics

Age

Carers

Disability

Gender reassignment

Race

Religion
or Belief

Sex (male or female)

Sexual orientation

Other

Please specify: Those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.

Stakeholders

Services users

Employees

Trade Unions

Partners

Members

Suppliers

Other please specify

Potential barriers.

Built environment

Location of premises and services

Information
and communication

Customer care

Timing

Stereotypes and assumptions

Cost

Consultation and involvement

specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function

Please specify Service users can decide to use other service providers and may travel outside of the city to access these.

8. Positive and negative impact

8a. Positive impact:

The reduction in the number of municipal golf courses will enable the Council to provide municipal golf in a more sustainable way. It also has the potential to provide a wider public access if the land were to be converted back into semi natural parkland.

Action required: Should the Council decide to close any golf courses, to continue to promote the use of the remaining municipal golf provision through promotional golfing offers.

8b. Negative impact:

Should the Council close any of the golf courses and the level of activity decreases, this may in turn increase the financial pressure on the remaining golf courses. This will need to be monitored with a view to further promotional offers during the golf course season to encourage more play.

Action required: To monitor the levels of activity and to further consider the charging / promotional offer arrangements during the next golfing season 2015 / 2016.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?

Yes

No

Please provide detail: Should the Council decide to close Gotts / Middleton park golf courses, it will allow for the continuation of a municipal golf service provision at two other golf course locations across the city. It also has the potential to involve the local community in the laying out of the details for the new landscape proposals bringing local communities closer together for the enjoyment of providing a wider access for recreational use for all.

Action required: The details of the layout for the semi natural parkland, will be subject to further public consultation.

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)?

Yes

No

Please provide detail: It will be important to continue with the promotional golfing offers to encourage more people to play golf with a focus on encouraging more young people, women and those from ethnic minority groups to play golf.

Action required: Offer open days and have a go sessions including the promotion of golf equipment hire.

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another?

Yes

No

Please provide detail: Should a decision be made to close the golf courses, the golf club directly affected may cease and members could join other golf clubs. Whilst this may well be a possibility, it would not prevent golfers from joining another golf club within the Leeds boundary.

Action required: To promote the use of other municipal golf courses and maintain close communication with each club to offer support where possible..

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
To monitor the levels of activity during the main golfing season.	Between April and September 2015	Comparison with previous years	Allan Cooper
To further consider the charging and promotional golfing offers to encourage more take up of golf players.	April 2015	Comparison with existing data	Allan Cooper / Linda Gunn
Promote the use of golf equipment hire	April 2015	Take up of use	Allan Cooper
To liaise with local schools to encourage more young people to take up the enjoyment of golf	April 2015	Awareness increased and co-ordinate open days at each golf course location	Allan Cooper
To keep key stakeholders informed of the Council's Executive Board decision on the future of both Middleton Park and Gotts Park Golf Courses.	September / October 2014	Evidence feedback via letter, email, minutes of meetings.	Joanne Clough
Should the Council decide to close the golf courses, to begin preparatory work to convert the land back into semi natural parkland.	September / October 2014	Parks Operational team begin work to dismantle the golf course, secure the land in preparation for implementation of the new landscape proposals.	Kris Nenadic

13. Governance, ownership and approval		
State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment		
Name	Job Title	Date
Sean flesher	Chief Parks and Countryside Officer	23 July 2014

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	As part of Service Planning performance monitoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	As part of Project monitoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board Please specify which board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

15. Publishing	
Date sent to Equality Team	July 2014
Date published	

