

TO: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 22 MARCH 05

SUBJECT: AUDIT REPORT ON NEWBOLD COMYN GOLF COURSE

FROM: LEISURE AND AMENITIES

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 At its meeting in December, Audit & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt it would be helpful for this committee to see the internal audit report on the Newbold Comyn Golf Course for consideration and monitoring of the proposed actions.

2. Background

2.1 The Internal Audit Report (Appendix A) is a fair one and outlines some of the problems the course has been facing over the past few years.

2.2 Throughput has dropped due to the number of courses that have opened recently and at time when there is no noticeable increase in the number of golfers nationally. Unfortunately, this has coincided with a period when long standing drainage problems and fusarium disease on the course was at their height. However, as the report also details, (1.7/1.8), a great deal of work has since been carried out on the course and it is now in much better shape, particularly the greens. There are also plans to spend a further £50,000 on the course in the next financial year improving drainage on the back nine holes, which would not be advantageous at this stage of the courses recovery and ways to try and reduce the closure period are currently being explored.

2.3 The audit report outlines the specific recommendations and the actions taken by us to implement these, which in all cases have been resolved or are on-going.

2.4 Member may also wish to note in more detail the specific arrangements with regards to the golf professional.

2.5 When the course opened in 1973 we were lucky to obtain the services of Don Knight, who was replaced by Ricky Carvell about 5 years ago when Mr Knight retired

2.6 Mr Carvell's contract was initially until September 2004 but following a meeting between Cllr Flanagan, Mary Hawkins and Dale Best, was extended for six months initially and could be extended to April 2008 provided that a satisfactory marketing plan can be agreed.

2.7 An initial meeting was held in January 2005, and a proposed marketing strategy has been agreed (see report to Executive March 2005). It is felt that the marketing of the course has not been aggressive enough lately and an example of the higher profile that it is hoped to obtain for the course is as promoted through a recent edition of the Heart of England Magazine (Appendix B).

2.8 Another development members may be interested to note is that the Newbold Comyn Arms has passed into new management as from January of this year. The new lessee, Mr Nick Wormald, would like to work closely with the golf club and golf course users and it is expected that this development will be a major boost for the course. It is likely that the facility will be closed for a complete refurbishment but be open again in time for the peak golfing season.

3. Policy and Budget Framework

3.1 The operation of a golf course at Newbold Comyn assists with the priority targets in the community plan (2003-2007) to promote sport and other physical activities by increasing the number of residents taking part in sport or active exercise using facilities supported or run by the Council to 65%.

3.2 Key Actions for the portfolio holder for 2005/06 include to complete the drainage project for the back nine holes and increase attendances at Newbold Comyn Golf Course.

3.3 The Golf Course contributes to environmental policies to promote healthier life styles and maintain green belt / open space.

4. Outcome Required

4.1 Members are asked for comments on the report and suggestions for any additional actions that can be taken.

**DALE G. BEST
HEAD OF LEISURE AND AMENITIES**

Background Papers

Report to Audit and Resource Overview & Scrutiny Committee 15th December 2004
Newbold Comyn Golf Lease 9th December 2002.

Areas in District Affected

All, but principally Leamington Clarendon.

Executive Portfolio Area and Holder

Cultural Services, Cllr Ms Cheryl Flanagan

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