



*Knowsley Council*

**Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council**

**The Bowring Park Managing Agent Project**

**The procurement of a Managing Agent for Bowring Park using**

**The Concession Contract Regulations 2016**

**Project Information Memorandum**

**Schedule 6: Bowring Park Golf Course**

11 December 2019

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Bowring Park is situated in Roby Village, Huyton in Merseyside and is owned by the Bowring Park Trust. Knowsley Council (the Council) are its corporate trustees. The Park's open space comprises of an 18-hole golf course, historic gardens and a collection of historic buildings (comprising an 18<sup>th</sup> Century two-storey building, known as the Stables Building and another which is an amalgamation of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, known as the Coach House)
- 1.2 The total area of the Park is 53.6 ha, with the golf course taking up 45.8 ha and the rest of the Park covering the remaining 7.8 ha.
- 1.3 Bowring Park demonstrates important long term social processes, comprising its evolution from medieval deer park to private Georgian estate, its philanthropic donation as one of the first public parks in 1907, and then becoming one of the first municipal golf courses in the country in 1913. This move was seen as providing access for people from different social backgrounds without having to belong to an expensive or elite club. This is a characteristic that must be sustained.

## **2. Bowring Golf Club and Ladies Golf Club**

These Groups are long-standing users of the golf course and have informally occupied and maintained the upper floor of the Stables Building as their Clubroom. The Groups have a long association with the Park and are themselves part of the heritage of the site. Their interests in the Park focus firmly on the effective facility management and development of the golf course, although they recognise the historic value and importance of the setting and the need for its conservation.

### 3. Information on the Golf Course

3.1 Approximately 15,600 rounds of golf are played annually (based on data for the period 1 January 2014 to 16 April 2015). Over this period, 28% of this use was undertaken at weekends with 72% on weekdays. Tuesday is the busiest day of the week, followed by Wednesday and then Saturday (marginally busier than Thursday). Sunday is the fifth busiest day of the week.

3.2 The current course fees are as follows:-

- All players on a Saturday up to 1pm £16.00
- Adults (weekday) £14.50
- Adults (weekend) £16.00
- Juniors £7.00
- Concessions (weekday) £11.00
- Concessions (weekend) £11.00

3.3 Dog use and fouling on the Golf Course is an issue of conflict that needs to be resolved. Dog walkers have been advised to keep dogs on leads and to avoid walking on fairways and greens, though this is not adhered with. Defined paths will help manage access if investment can be secured for this, though further surveillance is required to enforce / advise members of the public on responsible use of the Park's facilities.

3.4 Bowring Golf Course Measurements are provided in Table 1 below.

3.5 The design of the golf course and each of its 18-holes is provided as Appendix A.

**Table 1: Bowring Park Golf Course**

Hole	White Tees (Metres)	White Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index	Yellow Tees (Metres)	Yellow Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index	Red Tees (Metres)	Red Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index
<b>1</b>	377	412	4	5	347	379	4	5	273	299	4	13
<b>2</b>	136	149	3	15	113	124	3	15	101	111	3	17
<b>3</b>	401	438	4	4	390	427	4	4	375	410	5	9
<b>4</b>	327	358	4	8	320	350	4	8	309	338	4	7
<b>5</b>	410	448	4	2	385	421	4	2	381	417	5	15
<b>6</b>	341	373	4	10	337	369	4	10	338	370	4	5
<b>7</b>	375	410	4	3	348	381	4	3	371	406	4	1
<b>8</b>	304	332	4	12	293	320	4	12	282	308	4	11
<b>9</b>	433	473	5	6	419	458	5	6	342	374	4	3
<b>Out</b>	<b>3,104</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>2,952</b>	<b>3,229</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>2,772</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>37</b>	
Hole	White Tees (Metres)	White Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index	Yellow Tees (Metres)	Yellow Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index	Red Tees (Metres)	Red Tees (Yards)	Par	Stroke Index
<b>10</b>	270	295	4	16	229	250	4	16	204	223	4	16
<b>11</b>	401	438	4	1	387	423	4	1	377	412	5	2
<b>12</b>	254	278	4	18	238	260	4	18	236	258	4	10
<b>13</b>	151	165	3	17	122	133	3	17	105	115	3	18
<b>14</b>	319	349	4	11	303	331	4	11	284	311	4	6
<b>15</b>	280	306	4	13	264	289	4	13	243	266	4	14
<b>16</b>	318	348	4	7	248	271	4	7	196	214	3	4
<b>17</b>	294	321	4	14	289	316	4	14	282	308	4	12
<b>18</b>	318	348	4	9	304	333	4	9	287	314	4	8
<b>In</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>2,848</b>	<b>35</b>		<b>2,384</b>	<b>2,606</b>	<b>35</b>		<b>2,214</b>	<b>2,421</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,709</b>	<b>6,241</b>	<b>71</b>		<b>5,336</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>71</b>		<b>4,986</b>	<b>5,454</b>	<b>72</b>	

Measured to the requirements of The Council of National Golf Unions - Unified Handicapping System 2016 - 19 by Eagle Promotions Ltd on 12th September 2019. □

Both Metres and Yards have been adjusted to the nearest whole number.

There is a traditional standard that a hole from 260-475 yards should be a par 4. Less would be a 3, more would be a 5.

#### **4. Management and maintenance arrangements**

- 4.1 On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 Mack Trading (Mack), the company who the Council had commissioned to operate Bowring Park Golf Course in 2011 (under a 20 year lease), closed for business with immediate effect as a result of Creditors Voluntary Liquidation.
- 4.2 Given these circumstances the Council agreed to step-in and manage the golf course in the short-term. It did this also to protect the Council's municipal golf course asset from deterioration and to sustain the employment of the five permanent specialist golf course staff that were employed by Mack. Therefore, these staff transferred to the Council's employment under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) based on the terms of employment that they were employed by Mack. They have been managed within the Council's Department for Communities and Neighbourhoods since then, the current managing agent of the Park.
- 4.3 This course of action was taken on the understanding that the Council would be undertaking a procurement exercise to select a new golf course management entity (which will be part of the Managing Agent's role) and the staff would then transfer under TUPE to this new provider i.e. the Managing Agent that this Procedure has been designed to identify.
- 4.4 The maintenance of the golf course is being managed adequately. The staff have been working hard to maintain its horticultural standard and the informal feedback from golfers is very complementary. However the circumstances that led Mack to close, the implications arising from the Council's sudden take-over of the course, and the extensive restoration works since October 2018 are impacted negatively on the financial performance of the course. Current projections for 2019/20 identify that the Council is subsidising the course by £0.118m.

- 4.5 Therefore under the current arrangements the Council is running the golf course at a significant financial loss. The income it is receiving does not cover its costs of keeping the golf course open. This situation cannot continue as it will start to damage the Council's ability to provide other public services to Knowsley. Hence, the Council must look at all of the available options to sustain the golf course in a more affordable way. The alternative would be to cut the funding for key Council services (e.g. social care services) in order to keep the golf course open, which is unacceptable.
- 4.6 There is a great opportunity to improve the quality, design and facilities of the golf course to make it more interesting and challenging to meet the expectations and abilities of today's golfers. This will necessitate new investment in the golf course to professionally re-design its layout and undertake the necessary infrastructure changes. This requires new investment in the golf course to professionally re-design its layout and undertake the necessary infrastructure changes.
- 4.7 The Council does not have the expertise, experience or funds to do this. Therefore, ideally the Council needs to find a means of mobilising the capital investment and expertise of the private or social enterprise golf management market in Bowring Park for the public interest of Knowsley.
- 4.8 The Council has particular objectives from the Managing Agent that relate to the Park's municipal golf course:-
- Securing new investment, re-modelling, new golf-related facilities / activities and accreditation based on the Managing Agent's sound commercial business model to enable the facility to flourish with a municipal 'pay and play' ethos.
  - No payment of an annual revenue subsidy to the appointed Managing Agent for running the golf course i.e. the removal of the Council's on-going financial liability for the course.
  - Utilising the golf course to deliver outcomes identified in the Bowring Park Activity Plan (see Schedule 4).
  - Generating a new income stream for the Council.

**5. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE)**

The staff working at the Golf Course who will be the subject of a TUPE Transfer to the Managing Agent are identified in Table 2 below.

<b>Table 2: Staff working at the Golf Course who will be the subject of a TUPE Transfer to the Managing Agent</b>		
<b>Post</b>	<b>Salary per annum</b>	<b>Hours per week</b>
General Manager	£24,480.00*	36
Head Greenkeeper	£23,571.88*	36
Greenkeeper	£20,544.64*	36
Greenkeeper	£19,300.08*	36
Customer Services Assistant	£17,457.48*	40

\*Salaries will reflect the Local Government pay award in April 2020.

## 6. Maintenance equipment

The following fleet list is deployed to maintaining the Golf Course. It will be available to transfer to the appointed Managing Agent (at no charge).

<b>Table 3: Serviced by the Council's Fleet and Logistics Management Service</b>				
<b>Machine - Make / Model</b>	<b>Type of Plant</b>	<b>Year of Manufacture</b>	<b>Date of Last Service</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>
Jacobsen Tri King - Serial No 704305483	Triple cylinder mower (cuts the surrounds of the greens and tees)	Unknown as purchased by MAC trading - Spoke to Jacobsen and they couldn't provide a date of manufacture from the serial number	Unknown - this machine was at the golf course and being used for spare parts for the other Tri King.	Cutting units missing - beyond economical repair (located in Stretton Way depot)
Jacobsen Tri King	Triple cylinder mower (cuts the surrounds of the greens and tees)	2009	Inspected and repaired by FLMS March 2019. Cutting units overhauled in May 2019.	Machine needs to be inspected to provide condition report.
John Deere 8800 - Serial no. TC8800X010339	Rough cut mower (5 rotary deck units)	Unknown (maybe an ID plate on machine)	Serviced and repaired by FLMS March 2019	Machine needs to be inspected to provide condition report.
Jacobsen G Plex III - Serial no. FH000803Serial	Greens mower (3 cylinder units)	2007	Unknown	Machine needs to be inspected to provide condition report.
Jacobsen AR3 - Serial no. 1FH1769	Utility mower (3 rotary decks)	2016	Inspected and repaired by FLMS December 2018	Machine needs to be inspected to provide condition report.

Jacobsen LF3400 Serial no. 6794602285	Fairway mower (5 cylinder units)	2009	Serviced and repaired by FLMS March 2019	Machine needs to be inspected to provide condition report.
EZ GO - Golf Cart	Battery powered golf cart	Unknown	Unknown	Located in Stretton Way depot - Beyond Economical Repair
EZ GO - Golf Cart	Battery powered golf cart / utility vehicle	Unknown	Unknown	Located in Stretton Way depot - Beyond Economical Repair

**Table 4: Not Serviced by the Council's Fleet and Logistics Management Service**

<b>Machine - Make / Model</b>		<b>Year of Manufacture</b>	<b>Date of Last Service</b>	<b>Comments</b>
John Deere Pro Gator model 3010D002 - Serial no. CH301D161199	Diesel utility vehicle - being used for spraying (with unknown attachment)	Unknown	Unknown	Never serviced by Fleet and Logistics Management Service
Jacobsen Greens King IV Plus - Serial no. 6862109967	Greens mower / scarifier	2009	Unknown	Never serviced by Fleet and Logistics Management Service
Iseki Tractor - Serial no. TH4335000946	Small compact tractor complete with bucket	2015	Unknown	Never serviced by Fleet and Logistics Management Service
Charterhouse Verti Drain 7316	For use with tractor	2015	Unknown	Never serviced by Fleet and Logistics Management Service

## 7. **Bowring Golf Course expected maintenance standards**

### 7.1 Greens

7.1.1 The objective is a putting surface with smoothness, firmness, limited grain and with an overall uniformity. The greens will be closely mowed with good to excellent speed.

#### 7.1.2 *Green standards*

- Greens will be mowed daily during the growing season. Spring and late summer heights of cut will be 5mm with smooth rollers. Health conditions permitting, the height will be lowered to 4mm and will remain throughout July and August.
- Greens will be mowed weekdays and after heavy rainfall. They may be cut on weekends to maintain relative speed objectives. Grooming and / or verti-cutting will be used periodically to control lateral growth & thatch levels.
- Greens may be rolled on Saturdays and Sundays, if needed, to maintain minimum speed objectives.
- Growth regulator will be applied as an aid to increase green speed, reduce excessive growth and increase turf density.
- Greens will be irrigated as little as possible to promote deep rooting, drought tolerance, and minimal disease problems. Greens will be firm and the soil dry whenever possible.
- Greens will be checked daily with hole-cups being changed twice a week or as required.
- Greens will be monitored throughout the winter months (November to March) to determine if they can remain open for play.

Greens will be aerated as follows:-

- All eighteen holes will be aerated in the spring using 10mm hollow tines and will be completed within a three day period (weather permitting).

- Late autumn aeration will consist of 5 x 250mm deep drill tines covering all eighteen holes over a three day period (weather permitting).
- Topdressing sand will be fully and carefully incorporated into the aerification holes.

All efforts will be taken to ensure a minimum of nine holes will be open for play during the winter months (weather permitting). The greens will remain open whenever possible, where not possible a winter green will be introduced.

## 7.2 Tees

7.2.1 The objective is a teeing surface that is smooth, firm, level and without weeds. Tees will be closely mowed and consist of predominately bent grass. Ryegrass will be introduced in high wear areas. A conscientious effort will be taken to maintain tees to resemble greens only cut slightly higher.

### 7.2.2 *Tee standards:-*

- Tees will be mowed at 10mm during the spring and lowered to 8mm during the summer.
- Tees will generally be mowed four days a week depending on growth.
- The turf quality will take priority over competition from tree roots, shade and restricted air circulation.
- Trees will be thinned and pruned on an as needed basis to ensure the highest quality of turf.
- Divots will be attended to daily; accessories will be checked daily for service.
- Tees will be aggressively aerated in the spring and autumn. Topdressing sand will be incorporated into aeration holes.
- Tee markers will be checked daily and changed as needed to utilise the greatest amount of teeing space.

### 7.3 Preparation for daily play / golf course set-up

7.3.1 The objective is to use various flagsticks and tee block placements that challenge the golfers thinking and maintains quality of turf by spreading wear and reducing stress over various cupping and tee block areas.

#### 7.3.2 *Course setup:-*

- Greens will be checked with cups being changed regularly in-season and off-season as needed.
- The course will be setup with an overall balance between the cups and tee position to maintain appropriate yardage.
- Tee blocks will be checked daily and changed as needed to utilize the greatest amount of teeing space.
- A balance between the tee blocks and flagstick / hole-cup positions will be maintained.

### 7.4 Fairways

7.4.1 The objective is fairway turf predominately populated with bent grass with good density, uniformity, smoothness, firmness with a minimum of thatch while exhibiting good drought tolerance; and, play 'summer rules' at all times (excluding the immediate scheduled aeration recovery periods).

#### 7.4.2 *Fairway standards:-*

- Fairways will be mowed at 14mm during the spring months and will be lowered to 12mm during summer.
- Clippings will be collected during June, July and August.
- Fairways will be aerated aggressively in the late autumn at a 75mm depth removing a soil core of not less than 10mm.
- Growth regulators will be used in the summer and fall months to enhance bent grass density and to reduce irrigation and clippings.

- Fairways will be irrigated for turf grass health only, not for colour.
- Fairways may be dormant throughout the summer months.
- Fairway divots will be maintained throughout the season from at least 200m and into the green.
- Sand topdressing will be applied to fairways to improve firmness, drainage and aid in thatch reduction.
- All necessary chemical applications will be applied as early as possible so as to cause as little interference with play as possible. (Noting the Green Flag expectation to minimise or exclude use of pesticides and peat in the management of the Park).
- All chemical applications will be applied as per Health and Safety requirements, noting every effort will be made to apply the most effective and safe products into the disease suppression and control program.

## 7.5 Rough

7.5.1 The main objective of the rough is to maintain at minimal levels while not compromising the aesthetics, severity of penalty, and speed of play.

### 7.5.2 *Rough standards:-*

- The rough will be maintained at a height between 25mm – 30mm with rotary mowers.
- The primary or intermediate cut of rough (area roughly 7.2m around fairway) will be maintained at 45mm and be mowed two times a week.
- The rough bordering fairway bunkers will be maintained regularly to maintain proper turf buffer between the bunker and fairway.
- The rough will be mowed at least once a week when actively growing with perimeters of fairways cut a second time if needed.
- Growth regulators will be used in the spring and fall, to slow the growth rate of the grass around the fairway perimeter. (Noting the Green Flag expectation to minimise or exclude use of pesticides and peat in the management of the Park).

- Large remote areas of rough will be cut monthly.
- Broadleaf weeds will be controlled as needed to promote aesthetics, playability and uniformity.
- Edges and out of bounds areas of course will be mowed monthly: these areas include wooded areas with turf, fence edges, and out of the way native / meadow areas.

## 7.6 Bunkers

7.6.1 The objective is to have bunkers with the proper amount of sand and be well distributed without rocks or other loose impediments. The bunkers should aesthetically complement the architect's original design and vision.

### 7.6.2 *Bunker standards:-*

- The bunkers will be checked daily for smoothness.
- Raking will consist of hand raking when needed depending on amount of play.
- Mechanical raking machine will be used periodically (weekly) to loosen compacted sand and to control weeds.
- Fairway bunkers will be hand-raked at all times to ensure sand firmness.
- The bunker edges facing the green will be maintained with a crisp edge consisting of a 50mm to 75mm lip.
- The rear edges will be maintained with the sand reasonably flush with the turf.
- Stone and debris removal will be tended to daily with regular maintenance.
- The sand depth will be maintained at no less than 100mm.
- The bunkers will have adequate rakes around them.
- The edges of bunkers will be over-seeded annually with drought tolerant turf or re-sodded as needed in the autumn.
- The edges of bunkers will be regularly fertilized with organic products in addition to the regular rough fertilization program.

- A preventive insecticide will be used along with fairway spray applications.

## 7.7 Trees

7.7.1 Trees will be managed in accordance with the Bowring Park Woodland Management Plan (see Appendix A of **Schedule 3** – Maintenance Plan).

### 7.7.2 *Tree maintenance standards:-*

- Trees in high traffic areas (roads, walk ways paths, etc.) will be checked regularly for weak limbs, and hanging limbs and maintained as necessary.
- Key trees will be fertilized and or mulched annually.
- Evergreen trees will be limbed up for aesthetics, maintenance, and ease play and finding lost golf balls.
- Trees will be pruned as time permits.
- Large areas of woods will be thinned to enhance turf quality, aesthetics and the overall health of the other trees in the area.
- Most tree work will occur in the winter months.

## 7.8 Irrigation System and Water

- The turf watering system will be maintained in like new condition.
- The system will be programmed to operate during non-play hours as weather dictates.
- All leaks will be repair as soon as possible.
- The systems pump station will be inspected by trained professionals prior to season activation.
- Sprinkler heads will be inspected and adjusted to maintain proper watering patterns.

- Irrigation audits will be performed systematically on portions of the golf course each year to assure system efficiency.
- Every effort will be made not to overwater and cause wet areas on the course.

#### 7.7 Drainage / winter works

- Drainage pipes will be checked and cleared with drain rods during winter works.
- Any areas holding water will have drainage pipe installed if necessary.
- All ditches and ponds will be sprayed with Roundup (aquatic use) and cleared to allow all surface water to escape as efficiently as possible. (Noting the Green Flag expectation to minimise or exclude use of pesticides and peat in the management of the Park).
- All pathways will be cleared and topped up with material where required to prevent any slips/falls.
- All perimeter fencing checked and repaired as required.
- Construction of winter tee markers and yardage posts.
- Planting any new trees/shrubs.

Knowsley Council

11 December 2019