

TENNIS IN THE BOROUGH

Head of Service: Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Appendices (attached):

Summary

To present a non-repayable grant funding opportunity from the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish and upgrade all tennis courts in the borough.

To seek approval for £10,330 to be released from capital reserves to provide a 10% match funding contribution.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Note the details of the grant funding opportunity from the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish and upgrade all tennis courts in the borough.**
- (2) Release £10,330 from capital reserves for a 10% match funding contribution from S106 funds.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 This is a time critical opportunity to bid for a non-repayable grant to refurbish and upgrade all twelve tennis courts in the borough.
- 1.2 The grant funding opportunity offers a sustainable way to maintain good quality tennis provision in the borough, mitigating budget pressures for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in the future.

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2 Background

- 2.1 A report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee was considered on 17 March 2022 and outlined a proposal to bid for £103,300 from the Lawn Tennis Association Park Fund, to refurbish all twelve tennis courts and install gate access technology at each of the five sites across the borough. The Community and Wellbeing Committee resolved to support this bid.
- 2.2 The ethos of the LTA Park Fund is not only to provide funding for local authorities to upgrade their current facilities but to offer free assistance from industry experts to help local authorities build a sustainable operating model to increase participation in tennis on park courts through improved facilities and to open tennis up to more people.
- 2.3 A key driver for the LTA is that tennis facilities should be relevant, accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable to anyone, and park facilities are one of the most important ways to deliver this. A sustainable operating model can be tailored to suit each court's demographic and will ensure that there are sessions to suit everyone, including pay to play, tennis for free, coaching, and competitive sessions.
- 2.4 The two main operating models are outsourcing the tennis operation to an external provider or keeping the operation in-house. Experts will work with the local authority to help decide which operating model will work best for the borough and achieve the income required to contribute to the annual sinking fund which is a condition of the grant.
- 2.5 The sinking fund will ensure that funds are available to pay for any future repairs to the courts and provides for an annual maintenance contribution to the LTA's online booking system – ClubSpark.
- 2.6 If members of this committee agree to release the 10% match funding requirement, a bid will be submitted to the LTA Park Fund and if successful, a detailed proposal will be presented to Community and Wellbeing Committee in June 2022, to discuss the preferred operating model and structure of sessions.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 The LTA is committed to ensuring that any investment is supported by sustainable community tennis programmes, to ensure that park tennis is accessible to all sections of the community.

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3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 Engaging people, especially young people, in physical activity and organised sports is an effective tool to help reduce boredom, improve mental health, and create a diversion from anti-social behaviour, violence, crime and drug use.

3.2.2 Well-maintained and well-used sporting facilities promotes a vibrancy in our parks and outdoor spaces which helps to reduce the fear of crime and disorder.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None for the purpose of this report

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 This initiative can only progress if members agree to the release of Section 106 funds to provide match funding.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None

4 Financial Implications

4.1 A 10% (£10,330) match funding contribution is required to support this grant application. It is proposed to draw these funds from the S106 balance within Parks and Open Spaces.

4.2 Charging will need to be introduced for all courts to generate sufficient income to meet the sinking fund requirement detailed in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5. There is a risk that should the cost to improve the courts exceed the estimated £103.3k, then the sum expected to be ringfenced will exceed the £16.5k currently assumed.

4.3 The income received for tennis court hire in the financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2020/21 was £341, £189, and £429 respectively.

4.4 The current charges for 2022/23 for adults, as agreed by Community & Wellbeing Committee in January 2022, are £10.20 per hour for one court, or £15.50 if floodlights are required. The charge for 2022/23 for juniors is £5.30.

4.5 Other local tennis courts linked to the Lawn Tennis Association charge £8 per hour. Should we adopt this charge, and assuming all courts were used equally, each court would need to make in the region of £1.4k per annum to achieve the income required for the sinking fund. This would equate to 175 hours per court per year.

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- 4.6 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The current available balance of the S106 balances within Parks and Open Spaces is £15,987.
- 4.7 Consideration will need to be given to the sinking fund requirement, as should income levels not exceed the annual sum expected, this could result in an unbudgeted revenue cost to the Council, which would need to be funded from elsewhere within the Community & Wellbeing budget.
- 4.8 The full revenue costs of the proposal will need to be understood before entering into any agreement. This includes the conditions surrounding the sinking fund and costs related to having the courts externally managed and maintained.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 At this stage of the funding application process there are no legal implications to consider as the Council is not committed to accepting any funds awarded.
- 5.2 If the application is successful, legal assistance will be required to assess the terms and conditions of the funding agreement and provide the advice necessary to proceed.
- 5.3 Legal advice will also be required at a later stage in the process if the Council chooses to enter into an agreement with an external Tennis provider to manage and maintain the renovated courts on our behalf.
- 5.4 **Legal Officer's comments:** none for the purpose of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Safe and Well
 - Opportunity and Prosperity
 - Smart and Connected
 - Effective Council
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** none for the purpose of this report
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** none for the purpose of this report

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6.5 **Partnerships:** This proposal builds a partnership with the LTA to secure a long-term vision for tennis in the borough.

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Tennis in the Borough report to Community and Wellbeing Committee 17 March 2022. Please click link to view:

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/g1102/Public%20reports%20pack%2017th-Mar-2022%2019.30%20Community%20and%20Wellbeing%20Committee.pdf?T=10>