

Appendix 3 – Tennis Courts Consultation Written and Verbal Feedback

Feedback	Response
<p>1. Management of the courts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How would day to day issues with the courts be notified to the tennis operator? b. How often would the tennis courts be inspected and cleaned? c. Vandalism of the tennis courts is likely to be an issue especially if access gates are installed. d. Would people leave the courts after their hour session if the court had then been booked by someone else. e. How will it be ensured that there are not duplicate bookings f. Will people be locked into the courts until the end of their session? g. Why are you privatising the tennis courts? h. It should be ensured that there is a share of any profits made by a tennis operator with the Council. i. Could the tennis courts be managed in-house? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The operator will be responsible for the operation and day to day maintenance of all the courts and will be required to ensure that regular checks of the courts are undertaken at each site. Coaching programmes will also be being delivered at the sites with coaches also checking the courts and picking up on any issues. The tennis operator will also be required to have a system in place where members of the public can notify them of any issues. b. The tender specification for a tennis operator will include the requirement for operators to detail their inspection regimes and their planned programme of cleaning on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. c. The LTA have not seen a significant increase in vandalism of the courts where access gates have been installed. The feedback from the LTA has been that there have been a few instances of vandalism of the access gates where they have been installed elsewhere however there have been improvements to the gates and they now include vandal proof features. The courts being used more including the delivery of coaching programmes will help to limit the chances of vandalism. The LTA are also aware of damage to the courts in parks that do not have access gates caused by people using the courts for non-tennis purposes. Some respondees to the public consultation felt that damage to the tennis courts was currently being caused by those using the courts not for tennis. d. The feedback from the LTA is that other authorities have not experienced issues with people not wanting to leave the courts at the end of their session if it has been booked by someone else and that it has been self-regulating. People can stay on the courts is no one has booked the court after their booked session ends. e. The LTA's online 'Clubspark' booking system would be used to manage the bookings. This is already in use in a number of other local authorities where it has worked well and will ensure that duplicate bookings cannot be made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. People who are using the tennis courts will be able to use the handle to open the access gates from the inside at any time during their booking. g. The courts would not be privatised. Under these investment plans, the courts would remain in public (council) ownership. The Council believes that an external company would be able to manage the refurbished courts more effectively and at a lower cost than if they were managed directly by the Council. h. The tennis operator will be required to provide a fixed guaranteed income per annum to the Council equivalent to the sinking fund requirement of £1,200 per court per annum. The sinking fund will be held in a ring-fenced Council account to fund future larger repairs such as resurfacing and replacing fencing. The tennis operator would be responsible for the maintenance of the access gates, access gate code generation fees, and day to day cleaning and maintenance costs. A profit share arrangement would be in place between the Council and the operator for any surpluses achieved once these operating costs have been deducted. i. An external experienced tennis operator to manage the courts is felt to be the most efficient way forward and would provide the best possible service to users of the courts. An operator would have the staffing capacity to manage the courts 7 days a week and be able to provide the required ICT and as well as maintain and clean the courts. An external operator would also have the expertise to ensure delivery of the appropriate coaching and competitive tennis play.
<p>2. Funding Application and Tennis Offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Would the investment from the LTA include funding for floodlights? b. Will the proposals mean that the basketball court at Montesole Playing Fields will not be retained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No, the funding would not include installing floodlights at any of the parks. b. The basketball court at Montesole Playing Fields will be retained. The funding application will include funding to install a fence between the two tennis courts and the basketball court with separate entrance gates to the tennis courts and the basketball courts. c. It would be planned that there would be the formation of a new local tennis league in Harrow that will provide competitive tennis opportunities. For recreational tennis there will be the opportunity to meet with others at coaching sessions including at the free coach led sessions.

<p>c. Will there be the opportunity to play competitive tennis and to connect with other people to play recreational tennis?</p>	
<p>3. Charging:</p> <p>a. Those on lower incomes would not be able to afford to pay for the hire of tennis courts especially with the cost-of-living crisis, with the minimum number of four free weekly coach led sessions across the borough not being sufficient.</p> <p>b. Would the income generated from the pay and play sessions be sufficient to ensure that the courts are maintained?</p> <p>c. How would it be ensured that the income generated from the tennis courts will be ring fenced for maintaining the courts?</p> <p>d. What would happen if the contractor did not generate sufficient income to maintain the courts? Could the agreement be terminated early?</p> <p>e. Have annual individual and family memberships been considered?</p> <p>f. Some courts should remain free of charge so that everybody can afford to play tennis.</p> <p>g. The Council should enter into a funding agreement with the LTA to renovate the courts but should</p>	<p>a. A question regarding who should be entitled to concessionary rates was included in the public questionnaire. Children under 18 was the group that the greatest number of respondees to this question felt should be offered discounted court hire charges, followed by adults over 65, disabled people, and then those claiming Universal Credit. The proposals do include a requirement for a minimum of one free weekly coach led session at 30% of the parks with equipment provided (4 parks). The Council will use the tender process to maximise the number of free coach led sessions that would be offered by prospective tennis operators at each park.</p> <p>b. The experience of other local authorities that have a booking system, access gates, and pay and play sessions in place for all their courts has been that sufficient income has been generated to ensure that the courts can be maintained. The LTA's research has also identified that there is a local demand for tennis.</p> <p>c. £1,200 per court per annum will be held in a ring-fenced Council account as part of a sinking fund. This would be a requirement of the LTA funding and the same arrangement is in place for the 3G Artificial Grass Pitch at Bannister Sports Centre which was partly funded by the Premier League and the Football Association.</p> <p>d. There would be break clauses in the contract between the Council and the tennis operator that would mean that the contract with a tennis operator could be terminated early.</p> <p>e. Tennis operators would be asked to include proposed annual family and individual season tickets charges for those who want to play more regularly as part of their pricing strategy in the tender process.</p> <p>f. The LTA does not require that play and pay sessions are introduced for all courts. If some courts were free to use at all times, however, it would mean that some of the courts would not be generating any income towards the sinking fund and day-to-day maintenance costs.</p>

<p>fund the maintenance of the courts so that the courts can remain free to use</p> <p>h. Other grants and funds to renovate and maintain the courts could be applied for meaning that the courts could remain free to use.</p> <p>i. There are several tennis clubs in Harrow that people can join if they want access to higher standard courts</p>	<p>g. The Council does not have a budget to fund the maintenance of the courts. The income generated from the introduction of pay and play sessions would fund the maintenance of the courts.</p> <p>h. The LTA's renovation fund does provide a one-off opportunity to renovate the tennis courts across all of the parks in Harrow, as well as ensuring that all courts can be maintained in the future. This will ensure that tennis courts are available locally to all residents in Harrow.</p> <p>i. The aim of the LTA's renovation fund is aimed at recreational tennis play providing accessible adhoc playing opportunities on playable courts without having to sign up for a membership as would be the case with most tennis clubs. Those who wish to develop their game further can then join a club if they wish to do so.</p>
<p>4. Current Usage of the Courts</p> <p>a. The tennis courts at many of the parks are used for a number of different uses by the community with limited use for tennis. By introducing access gates and charging access will be considerably reduced. If some of the courts were not included in the plans they could continue to be used for a variety of purposes</p> <p>b. Concerns that introducing a booking system would restrict spontaneous play</p>	<p>a. The current condition of the courts at a majority of the parks, as well as the lack of promotion and tennis programmes available, is not encouraging people to play tennis. Over time, the courts currently used for other purposes would also become unplayable in the future, as they would continue to degrade without maintenance. The LTA has agreed to reduce the number of tennis courts from 3 to 2 at Chandos Recreation Ground due to a Neighbourhood CIL application that had been submitted prior to the LTA courts renovation funding becoming available to convert two of the courts to a MUGA and basketball court. Following engagement with the LTA and Sport England the LTA agreed that one of the courts could be converted. The LTA has confirmed, however, that they would require all the other courts to be included in the funding application, with access gates and a booking system in place and to be used for playing tennis only. Of those who responded to the consultation 80% indicated that they walked to the courts showing the importance of investing in the courts across all the parks. Any change of use of the tennis courts would be subject to the approval of Sport England and the Lawn Tennis Association – the National Governing Body for tennis. The council is developing a new Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy which will support our ability to secure future funds to invest in other sporting activities in the parks.</p> <p>b. The online booking system can be used on smart phones meaning that a booking can be made by people already at the park if they see that a court</p>

	is free. The tennis operator will also be expected to have an alternative method of court bookings for those not able to make bookings online.
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