

Calderdale MBC

Wards Affected All

Cabinet 12th December 2022

8

THE FUTURE OF CALDERDALE PARKS' TENNIS PROVISION

Report of Assistant Director of Customer Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the current position in terms of tennis provision across the Council's Parks and Green Spaces.
- 1.2 To provide details of the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) Capital Parks Funding proposal for Calderdale, including operating models for future management/maintenance of courts.
- 1.3 To propose a way forward for sustainable tennis provision across Calderdale in the future.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 Cabinet are required to determine whether the funding from LTA be accepted; and
- 2.2 Cabinet are required to determine a future operating model which would ensure investment in our tennis courts in the future.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Notes the position in relation to the Council's current tennis offer.
 - 3.1.2 Accepts the LTA's Capital Parks Funding offer for Calderdale of £165,123.
 - 3.1.3 Approves the suggested way forward for tennis provision across Calderdale's Parks and Green Spaces as outlined in the 'Next Steps' section.

4. Background and/or details

4.1 Lawn Tennis Association's Capital Park Funding

In October 2021, the LTA announced that over £30 million was to be invested into public park tennis courts across Britain to bring back to life poor or unplayable courts for the benefit of their local communities.

Park tennis court facilities are owned by local authorities and are vital community assets that can help widen the impact of the physical and mental health benefits that being active through tennis can bring.

There are currently 1.7 million adults and many more children who play tennis in a local parks every year with park courts being particularly important in providing affordable, engaging and accessible opportunities for all sections of the community.

Unfortunately, there are many areas of the country where park courts remain dilapidated and unappealing with 45% of park courts categorised as being in a poor or unplayable condition. Critically, half of these are in the most socially deprived areas of the country.

The LTA's ambition is to drive participation across park tennis sites as well as ensuring the future sustainability of these facilities. Subsequently, they have committed capital funds to pay for the refurbishment of public park courts but will also assist and advise on the implementation of sustainable operating models for each facility, to ensure courts are both affordable and utilised.

4.2 The objectives of the funding are to provide a sustainable model that protects Calderdale's tennis courts for the future; to ensure the facilities are affordable and accessible for all residents and to support the Local Authority with activation and programming opportunities to engage local communities.

4.3 Calderdale Current Tennis Provision

The Council currently has 8 sites that currently provide 20 tennis courts for the public to play on year-round. These are located at:

- 4.3.1 Centre Vale Park
- 4.3.2 Crow Wood Park
- 4.3.3 Holmefield Recreation Ground
- 4.3.4 Millfold Recreation Ground
- 4.3.5 Mixenden Park
- 4.3.6 Shelf Hall Park
- 4.3.7 Northowram Recreation Ground
- 4.3.8 Wellholme Park

- 4.4 A number of other sites which previously had tennis courts are no longer deemed operational due to change of use or condition and as such are outside of the scope of the LTA funding. These are:

- 4.4.1 Bradshaw Park
- 4.4.2 Calder Holmes Park
- 4.4.3 Shroggs park
- 4.4.4 Spring Hall
- 4.4.5 Stainland Recreation Ground
- 4.4.6 Wellesay Park

- 4.5 Calderdale has been identified as an area where the LTA believes participation can be increased through a programme which aims to bring existing tennis courts back up to a good playable standard.
- 4.6 Following assessments of the tennis courts by LTA, they are proposing to invest in 6 of our 8 existing courts, with the other 2 being assessed as good quality courts already. LTA are proposing the following works in each location:

Park Name	Number of Courts	IMD	Proposed Renovation / Interventions	Intervention Costs (costs from TS visits for the work we are	Funding Committed by Local Authority	Total Cost to the LTA
<i>CENTRE VALE PARK</i>	3	4	re-surface, nets and posts, lite gate	£49,980		£49,980
<i>CROW WOOD PARK</i>	2	6	re-bind and paint, fencing, nets/posts lite gate	£17,570		£17,570
<i>Holmfild Recreation Ground</i>	2	6	re-bind and paint, fencing, nets/posts lite gate	£14,285		£14,285
<i>Millfold Recreation Ground / Soyland Tennis Club</i>	2	6	clean and paint, fence repairs, gate	11,425		£11,425
<i>Mixenden Park</i>	3	1	re-surface, reconstruction, nets/posts, fencing, lite gate	£88,013	£57,000	£31,013
<i>Shelf Hall Park</i>	2	7	re-surface, fencing, nets/posts, lite gate	£40,850		£40,850
					£57,000	£165,123

- 4.7 Capital funding has recently been approved by the LTA for the proposed works, and is a mixture of resurfacing, repainting, new posts/nets, and replacement of existing gates which will allow a new gate access system. The proposed investment is £165,123.

However, funding will only be granted on the condition that the Council agrees to a sustainable operating model with gate access in place. The operating model will include tennis programme delivery, be it internally or through an external agency/organisation, delivering a number of LTA participation

programmes. This is so that upgraded courts see a real growth in usage and local authorities can continue to invest in their courts over the long term.

4.8 LTA Programmes

LTA Rally is a nationwide tennis booking website to help people search for tennis activities in their area and make it easier for people to book a court. Acting as an aggregator, LTA Rally collects all booking and coaching information via partner venues booking pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page.

ClubSpark is an online venue management booking system that gives the general public and coaches access to book and pay for courts, classes and other resources online.

It is a funding pre-requisite from the LTA that we sign up to LTA Rally and ClubSpark for promotion and management of our tennis court sites. There is no cost associated with doing this due to it being part of the LTA funding offer.

Both systems have been developed to work hand in hand with gate access systems, where participants receive a pin code when a booking is made to access courts. New gates, with electronic keypads, will be installed at the four venues. LTA are providing funding to cover gate installation at all our sites. There is a £500 maintenance fee per annum for the gate access system.

5. Options considered

5.1 Calderdale Park Operating Models

Once the capital works have been completed and the new gate access and online booking system is in place, the Council needs to have an operating model to manage the sites. There are a number of different models that the LTA recommend dependent upon each Council's position. The models available to Calderdale are:

Model 1: Local Authority owns and operates all activities, including court booking and coaching programme

As Calderdale Council own and operate its leisure and sports centres in house, including the operation of the tennis courts at Brighouse pool, it could be an option to operate the tennis facilities in line with this, using existing staff and training them, or recruiting new staff under the same structures, to build the capacity to deliver both the on court tennis coaching opportunities and administer the operation of season tickets and Pay & Play court bookings. Although a greater commitment in terms of workforce and other resources, this option may offer the best return on investment.

Nottingham City Council were operating their parks in line with this model but have decided to look at outsourcing to a third party once their parks are upgraded next year. Doncaster Council are exploring how this model may work for them.

Model 2: Local Authority owns court booking opportunities and outsources the provision of a coaching programme

This model is in place in Manchester with Manchester Active managing bookings and working with We Do Tennis who deliver the coaching. A similar model is being discussed with Salford City Council where Salford Community Leisure will manage bookings and WDT will deliver coaching. <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/mcrparkstennis>

This is also the proposed model in Burnley where the Local Authority will manage the court bookings and work with Burnley Leisure to outsource the coaching to a local tennis club.

Option 1 – outsource to National Operator. WDT have expressed an interest in working with Calderdale Council in line with this model.

Option 2 – outsource to local tennis club. This could be possible, particularly at Centre Vale Park tennis courts where there is an opportunity with Todmorden Tennis Club. The club would have to operate the facility as a park – with no access restricted by a club membership. The club could offer coaching and club sessions such as social play, but these would have to be available to all regardless of whether they were a club member or not. There would need to be some discussion with the tennis club to explore this further. A proposal can be drafted and discussed with the club in September if Calderdale Council would like to proceed on this basis.

Model 3: Local Authority outsources the booking opportunities and the provision of a coaching programme.

This model is in place in Bury who have just confirmed an initial 12 month pilot across their 11 park sites with WDT <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/Bury>. This model is also in place in Sheffield and Rotherham with Premier Tennis, one of the LTA's other national operators.

Option 1 – As with Model 2.

Option 2 – As with Model 2

The LTA would recommend a formal tender process and consultation with other operators and clubs in Calderdale to ensure the best fit for the opportunity is secured.

5.2 Introduction of fees for Tennis and Charging Mechanism

At present, most Council managed courts in Calderdale are free to use and are not gate access controlled. The courts at Brighouse Leisure Centre and in Centre Vale Park are free for our Active Lifestyles Members, but there is a charge of £6.70 at Centre Vale and £6.40 at Brighouse.

Northowram Tennis Club have a long term lease for the tennis courts and have their own pricing/membership packages.

As such, if we were to progress with installing gate access systems at the sites outlined then this would represent a significant change in the use of tennis courts in most places across Calderdale and we would need to introduce charging at most sites. We are aware that this could be seen to be prohibitive and may put some people off playing tennis but we are proposing that we continue to have some free use (using the Clubspark online booking system) at certain times dependent upon the venue as well as charging a fee for use of

courts the rest of the time. These fees would be kept to a minimum to ensure all sections of the community can still access tennis if they so desired.

Case Studies clearly evidence that Gate Access enhances participation levels and the customer experience for residents, and provides access for more players, contributing to Burnley health and well-being objectives. It also shows that affordable pricing is not a barrier and helps to raise court quality in a sustainable way.

It will also provide some assurance to tennis players that they can book a court prior to playing safe in the knowledge that there will be a free court for them to play on when they arrive at their respective site. In the past, at peak times particularly and popular sites particularly, it has come down to potluck as to whether a court would be free. The new gate access and online booking system will make this more seamless and stop any issues.

The Council would need to have an income target per site to ensure that we cover annual maintenance costs for the gate access systems, the upkeep of the courts (and floodlights), fees for delivering LTA prescribed coaching programmes and have the requisite amount to put into a sinking fund (50% of income).

The sustainable charging mechanism will need to be flexible with all sites having times where free play is available with a proposed standard charge for pay and play of £5 per session and season tickets (that can be used at all sites) charged at £30 per annum to achieve the income target outlined above. The proposed charging mechanism assumes that Mixenden Park will be free to use, although booking will still be required.

The suggested Calderdale charging mechanism is provided in Appendix 1. This also includes details of the annual costs for each site highlighted above.

The Council will be expected to sign up to a long-term agreement, likely to be 10 years, which will detail the terms and conditions of the funding offer and an overview of expectations in terms of the operating model, sustainability plan and the rollout of the LTA tennis programmes delivery.

5.3 Next Steps

The LTA are looking to start projects in April 2023 with the programme ending in March 2024. As such, timescales are very tight so we would need to confirm that we would like to go ahead with the LTA's Park Capital Funding offer by early January 2023.

Subsequently, we are asking members to approve the following in principle:

- 5.3.1 To approve the proposed charging mechanism for Calderdale as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 5.3.2 The Council manages tennis court bookings but outsources coaching to a local or national provider to be determined (Model 2, Option 1).

- 5.3.3 The Council approves the plans for Centre Vale Park in principle subject to discussions between the CMBC Sport Services, LTA, Todmorden Tennis Club and Todmorden Town Deal Board. This will enable us to ensure that the funding streams are maximised in that area.
- 5.3.4 That we formally accept the LTA's Park Capital Funding offer for Calderdale.
- 5.3.5 Additionally, that authority be given for the Assistant Director Neighbourhoods to complete a long-term agreement with the LTA, which includes terms & conditions of the grant funding, subject to consultation with the Head of Legal.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The capital investment of £165,123 at the sites will be financed by the LTA.

Appendix 1 shows the proposed charging mechanism and the income targets for each site to ensure all operational costs are covered and 50% is added to a sinking fund for future investment purposes, e.g., surface upgrade, new fencing, etc.

If we achieve the income targets for each site, then there should be no extra cost to the Council as we are looking to be self-sufficient utilising a sustainable charging mechanism. We need to at least cover costs highlighted in Appendix 1 although if we want to ensure we have enough in each sinking fund for larger capital investment in 5-10 years then we need to be looking to reach our income targets from year 2 onwards.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 A framework approach is being used by the LTA to deliver the Park Investment Programme to deliver the following objectives:
 - 1. Enable the LA to use the framework to deliver the projects.
 - 2. Achieve value for money through a competitive procurement process.
 - 3. Make sure projects are delivered on time, budget and to the correct specifications.

8. Human Resources and Organisation Development Implications

- 8.1 There are no known HR implications.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 There have been numerous meetings with the LTA to discuss the capital investment and how Calderdale can improve our tennis offer in the future utilising the operating and income generating models suggested.

There will need to be further consultation with local tennis clubs and respective Friends Groups and general users in the short term too.

10. Environment, Health and Economic Implications

- 10.1 Case studies provided by LTA clearly evidence that Gated Access enhances participation levels and the customer experience for residents. Investment in these courts will provide access for more players, contributing to Active Calderdale objectives. They also show that affordable pricing is not a barrier and helps to raise court quality in a sustainable way.
- 10.2 The upgrade of existing tennis courts, the introduction of gate access systems and online booking, and development of operating models for public park courts through partnership working with the LTA are all objectives that are detailed in the Playing Pitch Strategy, which is currently being reviewed, specifically:
 - 10.2.1 Aim 2 Recommendation F – enhance outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites. Work in partnership with stakeholders (including NGB's) to secure funding.
 - 10.2.2 Support the LTA in working to improve accessibility to tennis in order to help delivering its Strategy. The LTA is keen to encourage parks and clubs to make use of technology solutions, which includes online court booking and fob access to courts and facilities.

11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 The Lawn tennis Association Investment Programme is designed to support communities in IMD areas 1-5.
- 11.2 The proposal provides a sustainable model that protects Calderdale park courts for the future, in a way that is affordable and accessible for all residents.
- 11.3 The operating model provides an opportunity for flexible charging, to address long term sustainability, with a % of free court time, low cost pay and play and affordable community coaching programmes. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to inform how this will work in Calderdale.
- 11.4 The introduction of gate access and charging may be seen as a barrier to participation. However, experience of other local authorities that have introduced this has shown that participation has increased significantly. In Manchester for example when they introduced gates access and charging at a pilot site, they saw participation increase from 391 unique users to 1003. Following this success they went on to introduce charging at gate access at three further sites. In 2020/21 across the four sites they saw 49,000 bookings.

12. Summary and Recommendations

- 12.1 That Cabinet:
 - 12.1.1 Notes the position in relation to the Council's current tennis offer.
 - 12.1.2 Accepts the LTA's Capital Parks Funding offer for Calderdale of £165,123.

- 12.1.3 Approves the suggested way forward for tennis provision across Calderdale's Parks and Green Spaces as outlined in the 'Next Steps' section.
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For further information on this report, contact:

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The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

1. Appendix 1 - Attached
2. Equality Impact Assessment

The documents are available for inspection at:

Princess Buildings, HX1 1TS

Appendix 1

	Year 1					Year 6									Year 15
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038
INCOME															
Starting cash position		£14,175	£28,350	£42,525	£56,700	£70,875	£18,551	£32,726	£46,901	£61,076	£75,251	£89,426	£103,601	£117,776	£131,951
Centre Vale Park	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572	£3,572
Crow Wood Park	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758	£3,758
Holmfield Recreation Ground	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341	£3,341
Millfold Recreation Ground	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510	£2,510
Mixenden Park	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Shelf Hall Park	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905	£4,905
Total	£18,086	£32,261	£46,436	£60,611	£74,786	£88,962	£36,637	£50,812	£64,987	£79,162	£93,337	£107,512	£121,687	£135,862	£150,037
COSTS															
Centre Vale Park - fees	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739	£739
Crow Wood Park- fees	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676	£676
Holmfield Recreation Ground- fees	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669	£669
Millfold Recreation Ground - fees	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654	£654
Mixenden Park- fees	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476	£476
Shelf Hall Park- fees	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697	£697
Centre Vale Park- refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£6,750	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£33,000
Crow Wood Park- refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,100
Holmfield Recreation Ground- refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,100
Millfold Recreation Ground - refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,000
Mixenden Park- refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£6,750	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£33,000
Shelf Hall Park- refurb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,000
Total	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£70,411	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£3,911	£124,111
Profit (loss)	£14,175	£28,350	£42,525	£56,700	£70,875	£18,551	£32,726	£46,901	£61,076	£75,251	£89,426	£103,601	£117,776	£131,951	£25,926