

Issue

Future indoor tennis court provision

Background

The 2023 Active Live survey from Sports England shows a big rise in adult tennis participation in England.¹ The Met Office also predict wetter winters and more extreme rainfall from now on.² Indoor tennis courts help encourage participation and grow the sport all year round.

The main types of indoor courts are:

- Traditional indoor buildings
- Air-supported structures
- Framed fabric structures

The LTA have carried out some modelling on target locations for indoor tennis centres. The LTA established the following key metrics:

- A target location must demonstrate a minimum threshold population of 70,000 within a 20 minute drive time of a target location. Of this population, at least 12,500 must identify as having an interest in playing tennis. Please note this drive time extends to 30 minutes for rural areas.
- Filtered for competition within the catchment in order to prioritise the addressing of indoor tennis provision gaps.

The LTA identifies South Yorkshire (specifically Barnsley, Rotherham & Doncaster) as a target area for indoor tennis provision, based on this modelling.³

Future expansion of indoor court provision could also help deliver Barnsley's physical activity strategic plan.⁴ This could align with ambition to improve health, well-being and develop existing and future generations of young people in the borough, whilst also complementing wider regeneration plans.

Considerations

Indoor courts can be important for membership growth and retention, beneficial to growing and retaining coaching programmes and also a significant club income generator.

There are, of course, many hurdles to overcome, not least:

- Funding, business model & overall financial viability
- Multiple agency partnership
- Planning
- Design and development
- Appetite for risk of the committee / club members

Previous examples of projects that the LTA have been involved in are provided in **Annex 1**

At previous AGMs, the committee has invited members to become more involved in the committee and specific projects. This proposal could be an opportunity for members to consider a specific issue objectively, collaboratively and transparently. A small working group is proposed. This group would report back to members at future annual general meetings (AGMs). The proposed terms of reference can be found in **Annex 2**

Members are, therefore, asked, at this AGM to:

Note that Barnsley is within one of the LTA's target locations for indoor tennis

Commit to the long term vision of indoor courts for the club, if feasible

Agree to exploring indoor court provision through a small working group

Express any interest in being part of the proposed working group

Annex 1

QUICK ACCESS LOANS

- Available to all registered venues.
- Funding targeted at growing playing hours and tennis participation.
- Venues must provide flexible pay and play opportunities alongside any membership scheme.
- Venues can apply for interest free loan funding, with a flexible repayment period depending on affordability.
- Fund priorities:-
 - Pay & Play
 - Indoor courts
 - Floodlit courts
 - Padel tennis courts

QUICK ACCESS LOANS – 2021

Approved funding for:-

- 8 indoor tennis courts
- 39 floodlit tennis courts
- 20 padel courts
- £1.35m funding approved against a total project value of £3.0m

Bishops Stortford Tennis Club

- £459k project cost with a £134k LTA loan
- 2 new build FL artificial clay courts
- 2 floodlit padel tennis courts (planning pending)

Flitwick and Ampthill Tennis Club

- £273k project cost with a £60k LTA loan
- 2 court single skin airhall
- Floodlights on 2 courts
- Court surface upgrade



CASE STUDY

Benefit of Indoor Courts

- Membership growth and retention
- Improved the coaching programme

Airhall has delivered

- 164% increase in club income
- 65% growth in membership



Shotley and Benfieldside Tennis Club, Durham



- 6 court club (1 indoor, 3 floodlit)
- Double Skin Cable Dome Airhall available year round
- Unheated
- 40,000 population within 20 minutes
- Exposed location
- 280 members
- Partnership funding – Club reserves, LTA, Sport England

CASE STUDY

Income / expenditure

- £2,650 - operating cost
- £2,000 – sinking fund
- £8,152 – income 2020 (6 months)
- Members - £8ph/£5ph
- Non members - £12ph/£8ph
- Lights additional - £4ph (evening)

Management and operation

- Clubspark and gate access
- App control to manage the airhall
- Secure entrance and plant room
- Used for other activities (5% of time – netball / parties / volleyball)



Shotley and Benfieldside Tennis Club, Durham



SINGLE SKIN TRANSPARENT MEMBRANCE AIRHALL



No. of courts	Length (m)*	Width (m)*	Cost (£)
2	37.77	34.92	£135k - £155k covering existing courts with either using new or existing lights. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.
3	37.77	49.55	£170k - £195k covering existing courts with either using new or existing lights. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.
4	37.77	64.18	£200k - £235k covering existing courts with either using new or existing lights. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.

*These are minimum dimensions that can be used for recreational play and low level competition. If possible the length and siderun should be extended by 1m to enable a better playing environment. These measurements allow for 1 m width outside of the dome for ring beam drainage and fencing. These costs do not include fees (8%), contingencies (10%) utilities or VAT.

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DOUBLE SKIN TRANSPARENT MEMBRANCE AIRHALL



No. of courts	Length (m)*	Width (m)*	Cost (£)**
2	37.77	34.92	£250k. This cost is to cover existing courts. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.
3	37.77	49.55	£330k. This cost is to cover existing courts. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.
4	37.77	64.18	£400k. This cost is to cover existing courts. To cover new macadam courts add £40k per court.

Annex 2

BLTC Indoor Working Group Draft Terms of Reference

The BLTC Indoor Working Group is tasked by its members and the committee to complete an initial review of the viability of indoor tennis court provision for the future.

The group will be comprised of up to 7 members of Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club. The group may invite external members, if deemed appropriate. One member must also sit on the BLTC committee to ensure effective liaison and oversight with the committee.

The members will be:

- 1) BLTC Committee Member
- 2) BLTC Member
- 3) BLTC Member
- 4) BLTC Member
- 5) BLTC Member
- 6) BLTC Member
- 7) BLTC Member

External Members (if required)

The scope of the working group will be:

- To examine the feasibility of indoor courts in the future
- To liaise with LTA and other bodies about possible indoor court provision
- To investigate potential funding options
- To obtain expert advice (with prior approval by the committee or members at the AGM)
- To request quotations to gauge initial costs
- To produce a business plan, if appropriate

The working group will aim to issue its findings to the annual general meeting (AGM) in December 2024 and at future meetings.

References

¹ <https://www.lta.org.uk/49830b/siteassets/about-lta/press-releases/2023/2023-new-sport-england-data-shows-big-rise-in-tennis-participation.pdf>

² <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/climate-change/climate-change-in-the-uk>

³ <https://www.lta.org.uk/roles-and-venues/venues/tennis-padel-facility-funding-advice/indoor-community-tennis-projects/>

⁴ <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/dzkdiq5e/active-in-barnsley-2022-26.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.lta.org.uk/4ad842/siteassets/generic/quick-access-loans-webinar-slides.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.lta.org.uk/4ad7ac/siteassets/generic/low-cost-indoor-structures-webinar.pdf>