

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: 2 NOVEMBER 2010
title: INDOOR TENNIS CENTRE - EDISFORD
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: COLIN WINTERBOTTOM
LEISURE & SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform you of circumstances relating to the lease arrangement for the operation of Ribble Valley Indoor Tennis Centre.
- 1.2 To decide upon the terms upon which a lease should be renewed.
- 1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Council Ambitions – To be a well-managed Council providing services based on identified customer needs.
 - Community Objectives – To increase opportunities for people to access cultural activities.
 - Corporate Priorities – To reduce the level of crime and disorder.
 - Other Considerations – To improve outcomes for children and young people.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Tennis Centre at Edisford has been operated by John Schofield as Managing Director of Ribble Valley Tennis Centre Ltd since an operational lease was established in 1992.
- 2.2 The term of the lease was for 15 years and, whilst this lapsed in 2007, the operation has, in effect, remained unchanged up to the present day. According to the Landlord and Tenant Act (1954), either party must make out grounds for a change to the terms of the lease if there is to be any change to the current terms otherwise, even though the lease has lapsed, the existing terms remain in place.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 One of the terms identified within the lease stipulates that premises must only be used for indoor tennis.
- 3.2 The centre has experienced a decline in casual tennis bookings in recent years, and would like greater flexibility built into the new lease to accommodate other activities.
- 3.3 The current arrangement between the Tennis Centre and Ribble Valley Borough Council is that the Council retains 10% of the income received from bookings made at Ribblesdale Pool. There has never been a rental charge levied to Ribble Valley Tennis Centre Ltd, and the 10% share of income has been the only source of income to Ribble Valley Borough Council for the letting

of this land to tennis provision. This amounted to £995 during the financial year 2009/10, £1158 during 2008/09 and £1170 during 2007/08.

- 3.4 The Tennis Centre comprising of two indoor courts has delivered quality tennis coaching programmes and caters for new starters through to county and national standard players. It is an LTA governing body Accredited Performance Centre and is club mark accredited.
- 3.5 It is the only indoor tennis facility in Ribble Valley with the nearest similar facilities being at Blackburn Northern; (also operated by Mr Schofield as an indoor and outdoor tennis business venture), and South Ribble Tennis Centre which is a larger facility near Bamber Bridge and operated by Serco Leisure.
- 3.6 Over the duration of the lease, there has been a mutually supportive on site association between the Tennis Centre and Ribblesdale Pool from an operational perspective, and the Tennis Centre has become established for delivering quality coaching programmes and a reliable pay and play service for the community to access. If Ribble Valley Tennis Centre Ltd were to withdraw from their delivery of tennis, then it is highly unlikely that this provision would continue, as in its present form the asset is an unattractive business prospect for either the Council or private contractor.
- 3.7 As identified by Mr Schofield, considerable investment is needed in the centre to maintain it and he has indicated a commitment to continuing to extend their operation and consider a 15-year lease necessary to justifying this investment.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – The current financial arrangements are detailed in 3.6 of this report. Committee may wish to consider alternative financial arrangements in the new lease.
- **Technical, Environmental and Legal** – A new lease agreement needs to be drawn up reflecting the operational terms and identifying the lease period you decide upon.
- **Political** – None
- **Reputation** – If Ribble Valley Tennis Centre Ltd does not wish to accept the terms available to them and tennis provision was not continued, then the current junior and adult participation base would be disappointed in losing the facility.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Notes the contents of the report.
- 5.2 Instructs the Director of Community Services to re-negotiate a further 15-year lease for the tennis centre.



JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



RIBBLE VALLEY TENNIS CENTRE LTD

www.tennis-centre.co.uk

LTA Accredited Performance Centre

LTA Accredited Mini Tennis Centre

Clubmark Accredited

Mr Chris Hughes
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe BB7 2RA

John Schofield
Managing Director
Ribble Valley Tennis Centre Ltd
42 Chapman Road
Hoddlesden
Darwen BB3 3LU
14th October 10

Dear Chris

Further to our recent meeting, I write regarding the renewal of the Tennis Centre lease. As you know the lease is currently for tennis only. Whilst our coaching business remains steady, there has been a sharp decline in casual pay and play bookings from adults, particularly in later evenings and weekends. We have arrived at a point where some diversification into other sports becomes necessary.

I have had interest for winter use of the Centre from the Ribble Valley Netball League and Ribble Valley Netball Club. Winter netball usage is highly desirable to these two organisations considerably strengthening their programmes, and also important to us in terms of increasing court revenue.

Additionally considerable investment in the Centre is necessary --

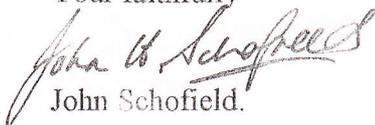
- Improvements to the cladding are required to prevent raining in at ground level.
- The heating system is old and will need to be replaced sooner rather than later.
- The courts are overdue for resurfacing.

We therefore feel that a 15 year lease is necessary to justify the investment.

The tennis programmes that we run provide excellent sports development delivery within the Borough. As you are aware many Boroughs with a large population run Tennis Centres which require large subsidies, whereas we provide this service at no cost to the Council. Our junior programmes are very popular running on many levels from the youngest mini tennis player through to County and National standard players. We currently have 400 players on our programmes. Demand for our programmes tends to be for the after school / early evening period and Saturday morning slots with many hours being left unfilled.

We would request a renewal of the lease under these terms to ensure the future viability of the Centre.

Your faithfully


John Schofield.