

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 9 May 2017	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Petition from Be Active Social Enterprise – Tennis in Southwark	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet consider a petition from Be Active Social Enterprise relating to tennis in Southwark.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. A petition containing 500 signatures or more maybe presented to the cabinet. A petition can be submitted by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Southwark. Petitions must relate to matters which the council has powers or duties or which affects Southwark.
3. At the meeting, the spokesperson for the petition will be invited to speak up to five minutes on the subject matter. The cabinet will debate the petition for a period of up to 15 minutes and may decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. A petition containing 686 signatures (as at 27 April 2017) has been received from Be Active Social Enterprise. The web link for this petition is set out in the background documents section of this report.
5. The petition requests “Southwark Council to change its current approach and develop a long-term tennis strategy.”
6. The petition states:
“Tennis in our area is important because it encourages fitness; a sense of community and is beneficial for a wide range of age groups. Southwark Council has invested heavily in resurfacing public park courts in recent years and we would very much like to thank them for this. The council has a legitimate need to reduce its operating expenditure on tennis but it simply makes no sense to contract out public tennis in the way proposed. The current tender process lacks a strategic context and does not provide a mechanism for tennis to achieve its full social impact which would require:
 1. Delivering the Burgess Park Masterplan of October 2015 with additional courts and a redesign of the pavilion building
 2. Providing consistent year-round access for teaching children living near park courts the game at an affordable cost to improve their health and wellbeing
 3. Providing a pathway for children to develop as players and as the next generation of coaches and volunteers thus generating a sustainable community of players

4. Incorporating insights such as the Southwark Women Can report to make parks more welcoming for women to exercise in - this is important given the lower uptake of exercise by women and the benefits to their health and outlook
5. Making the game welcoming for new adult players and encouraging a sense of community
6. Presenting an inspiring vision to the Lawn Tennis Association and outside funding bodies to rectify years of external underinvestment in tennis in the borough
7. To inspire and encourage volunteering and community involvement in tennis.

Given there is only one dedicated public tennis venue in the borough this has to be the hub for any meaningful long-term commitment to develop the game and the social benefits that follow. A long-term strategy is needed before any contracting takes place.”

Community impact statement

7. The Southwark constitution allows for petitions to be presented by members of the public and can be submitted by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Southwark.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Environment and Social Regeneration

8. The council is committed to the delivery of the master plan for the park which is evidenced by the allocation of a further £6million of capital to deliver phase 3 of this master plan. £3million of this funding has been prioritised to enhance and extend the facilities at the sports centre hub and also to refurbish the six tennis courts at the tennis centre. The council is currently delivering the resurfacing works to the six courts which includes new fencing. The value of the works including design consultancy is £103,427. The new refurbished courts are due to be open mid May 2017. The council continue to support the development of the tennis centre where funding is available. The procurement of a tennis operator does not hinder this as the council is looking for an operator who can deliver a tennis development plan to encourage participation at all levels and from all target groups.
9. The council is very supportive of providing consistent year-round access for teaching children living near park courts at an affordable cost to improve their health and wellbeing. We have consulted Southwark City Tennis Club (SCTC), with a view to producing a specification, which has a set of outcomes which include delivering a varied coaching programme for children and all ages at an affordable level for all people to pay. This specification requirement will mean that the operator of the tennis centre will need to deliver this throughout the length of any contract. This will be covered by a tennis development plan for the centre.
10. Again the council are very clear on the importance of providing a pathway for children to develop as players and as the next generation of coaches and volunteers. We have ensured that within the specification there is a need for the future operator to provide opportunities for a clear pathway for players from junior to elite level. There is also a requirement for volunteering opportunities for teenagers to allow them to put something back in the game and to produce coaches for the future.

11. 'Southwark Women can' is a key priority for the council and as such there is a requirement for the future operator to encourage and increase participation in certain key target groups in the borough. This includes women and girls which is very important to the council.
12. Making the game welcoming for new adult players and encouraging a sense of community is the key to the success of the centre and Southwark City Tennis Club is a key partner in delivering this. Therefore the times that they use and how they work with an operator is defined in the specification which includes regular meetings and delivery of a tennis development plan. Southwark City Tennis Club is the host club based at the tennis centre and Be Active (the operator of the centre on behalf of the council) facilitate the club access to the courts. The council briefed the club in advance of the procurement and also invited the club to participate in the tender process with a view to protecting current hours of use and also to gain valuable input into developing the tennis development element of the specification.
13. We will continue to work with the LTA and other key partners in improving tennis within the borough. The council has worked in partnership with lawn tennis association whom see the tennis centre as the hub for community tennis in the borough and the LTA are very supportive of the latest investment in the refurbishment of the tennis courts.
14. Inspiring and encouraging volunteering and community involvement in tennis is very important to the council and we have ensured that the specification reflects the importance of volunteering and that Southwark City Tennis Club is the key in ensuring community involvement in tennis.
15. Southwark City Tennis Club submitted a deputation at cabinet in March regarding the intended procurement approach. One of the concerns of the deputation was the proposed requirement for the operator to pay a minimum annual fee to the council. Officers have considered this further and removed this requirement from the tender process. Officers have also invited the member of the club whom presented the deputation to engage with developing the tennis development element of the specification.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Petition from Be Active Social Enterprise (link below for petition, which also includes comments received in support of petition)	Online	
Link: (copy and paste into browser) https://www.change.org/p/southwark-council-cabinet-southwark-council-to-replace-current-approach-and-develop-a-long-term-tennis-strategy		
Cabinet procedure rule 2.13 on petitions	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Link: (copy and paste into browser) http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s67579/Committee%20Procedure%20Rules%20March%202017.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Principal Constitutional Officer	
Report Author	Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	27 April 2017	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Environment and Social Regeneration	Yes	Yes
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		27 April 2017