

Club Development Plan Guidance

Introduction

This guidance resource has been produced to offer support to tennis clubs in understanding how to devise an effective four year Club Development Plan. This resource provides information and guidance on how to complete the different sections of the LTA Club Development Plan template.

Why a Club Development Plan?

A Club Development Plan encourages tennis clubs to establish a more sustainable long-term vision and structure that can further support the development of the club and tennis within the local community. The Club Development Plan is an essential tool to map out the direction that the club aspires towards. It will provide the club with a clear action plan of what needs to be achieved and accomplished in order for the club to attain its goals.



What should be in a Club Development Plan?

An effective Club Development Plan should establish the club's vision and strategy over a period of time. The Club Development Plan should look at all aspects that impact upon the club and set-out a long term plan for improving the club.

Although the Club Development Plan should encourage and embrace innovative and ambitious plans, ultimately it is important that the plans are realistic and attainable. Once the long-term vision and aims for the club have been agreed, the Club Development Plan needs to establish clear identifiable objectives and tasks in an action plan that helps to set the club on the right path to achieving their goals. Typically this action plan will highlight each main objective, breaking this down into smaller tasks that will need to be delivered, specifying the individuals at the club responsible for implementing these tasks, along with the timeframe for the objectives to be completed by. Importantly costs are associated with each objective to ensure that the Club Development Plan also considers the financial implications of delivering their long-term strategy.

Every club's Development Plan should be different, as it should be specifically tailored to meet the needs and requirements of that individual club. However, there are some key themes that will be relevant for most tennis clubs when developing their plans:

- ❖ Club Structure & Governance
- ❖ Workforce Development
- ❖ Community Outreach & Development
- ❖ Club Programmes & Competition
- ❖ Facility Management & Development
- ❖ Communication & Marketing
- ❖ Financial Management



Each of these themes are explored in more detail within this guidance resource to provide explanations and how they could relate to tennis clubs.

How do we develop our Club Development Plan?

For a Club Development Plan to be workable and effectual it is important that it receives the full buy-in and acceptance from club members and officials. Delivering an ambitious and progressive Club Development Plan will require the support, cooperation and assistance of many members (and volunteers) of the club over the four years. One person will struggle to deliver an effective club plan on their own.

From the start, it is important to involve not only the club management committee but also a wide spectrum of the club membership to assist in shaping the long-term vision and aims of the club. Once agreement of the aims for the club is

attained, a small working group should be established to provide the greater detail required to deliver these goals over the four years. Once a draft version of the Club Development Plan has been drawn up, it is important to return to the club membership to discuss and inform them of the plans. Through this consultative approach, all members of the club should feel that they have had an opportunity to input into the plan and subsequently have a greater sense of shared ownership and be willing to contribute when delivering elements of this plan.

When writing the Club Development Plan, the club should consider approaching various sports development networks within the area for support and guidance. Organisations such as your County Tennis Association, County Sports Partnership and your local authority sports development team have a wealth of experience in writing and producing effective sports club development plans. These organisations will be willing to advise you as well as informing you of different opportunities that could benefit and shape your tennis club's development.

Once the Club Development Plan has been finalised and agreed, it is important to establish a committee that meets on a regular basis to review the progress that has been made against the specific actions and tasks detailed in the plan. The committee's responsibility is to ensure that the club remain focused and targeted on delivering the objectives of the Club Development Plan in the agreed timeframe. Splitting these tasks down on an annual basis using the **LTA Annual Club Action Plan** template can provide a more user-friendly and manageable approach for clubs in tackling their four year plan.



Club Development Plan Template

A template to assist tennis clubs in writing a Club Development Plan has been produced by the LTA. The template has been developed with the specific needs of tennis clubs in mind. All clubs are encouraged to use this template when writing their Club Development Plans, but if the club prefers to establish their own format and style for their plan that is fine.

The essence of the template is similar in each section of the Development Plan with the completion of the following table being required:

Your Plan				
Objective (What needs to be done?)	Tasks / Activities (How do you intend to achieve your objective? What specific actions need to be undertaken?)	Responsibility (The people responsible for delivering or who can assist)	Timescale (When will you complete your objective?)	Finance (How much is it going to cost?)

Objective:

The objective is the headline outcome that the club aims to achieve in order to complete an important step towards the club's long-term vision. These objectives should be high-level strategic outcomes that significantly contribute to establishing a core component of the club's development.

Tasks / Activities:

Each objective will need to be broken down into smaller more specific tasks that will need to be accomplished in order to complete and achieve the objective.

Responsibility:

Each task needs to have a person from the club identified as being responsible for delivering that particular activity. In some cases there maybe a number of people required to deliver a task.

Timescale:

It is important to align each objective and task to a specific timescale. Many of the objectives and tasks will be interlinked and dependent upon other elements of the plan being delivered in preparation for that particular activity. Subsequently, it is essential that the people responsible for delivering a part of the plan understand the timeframes that they need to complete their task within.

Finance:

Accurate and realistic costs need to be associated to each task of the plan to enable the club to understand the financial implications. Long-term financial planning is an integral part of the Club Development Plan.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN THEMES

As indicated earlier in this document, there will be a handful of themes that will be commonly considered and included in most tennis club plans. Most club development activities should be able to be grouped under one of these core themes:

- ❖ Club Structure & Governance
- ❖ Workforce Development
- ❖ Community Outreach & Development
- ❖ Club Programmes & Competition
- ❖ Facility Management & Development
- ❖ Communication & Marketing
- ❖ Financial Management



Below is further information and details on each of these core themes to provide tennis clubs with a greater understanding as to what they relate to and how they can be incorporated into your club's Development Plans. However, in the occasional case where a development activity may not fit under one of these headings, then please insert your own theme to accommodate your activity.

Club Structure & Governance

This section encourages the club to consider areas for improving the club foundations and mechanisms for controlling and directing the running of the club. This will involve aspects regarding some of the following elements:

- Club constitution (the articles outlining how the club is governed) – it should be open and non-discriminatory
- The structure and composition of the committee who lead the direction of the club
- The incorporation status and legal entity of the club (i.e. is it unincorporated, incorporated, a charity or a CASC?)
- Safeguarding and Inclusion policies and processes

You can find further guidance and advice here: <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-planning/>

Workforce Development

This area of the Club Development Plan looks at improving the workforce required at the club. Workforce is a broad term that encompasses all staff, officials, coaches and volunteers that help the club to operate. Initially it would be a useful task to analyse what workforce the club requires to implement the various actions of the Club Development Plan over the four years. Once this has been reviewed the club should look at how best to recruit the appropriate workforce to undertake these roles.

The club should not just focus internally when recruiting volunteers, coaches and officials, as this will significantly limit your options. Clubs could consider approaching local volunteer centres who often welcome sports clubs to place their volunteers within. Tennis clubs should also consider the transferable skills that are required to perform various duties within the club: not every volunteer will need to be an expert in tennis to be able to perform a useful role at the club.

The Marketing Officer may have no previous sporting background, but may manage significant marketing programmes for a blue-chip company; a retired accountant would be able to perform the duties of a Treasurer; a college student might be interested in developing the club's website and social media platforms to improve their experience and knowledge for CV purposes. To attract an appropriately skilled workforce is a challenge for most sports clubs, but if tennis clubs are open-minded there are various avenues to explore to find the right people to support the club.



Workforce development is not just about attracting and recruiting volunteers to support the club. The club needs to be proactive in recognising and rewarding the volunteers for their efforts. Volunteer retention strategies are just as important as recruitment plans: it will be difficult for the club to develop effectively if the new volunteer recruits leave after six months because they feel under-valued or mistreated. Simple recognition of the good work and effort that someone has carried out can sometimes be enough, a thank-you dinner or drinks at the end of the year can mean a great deal and make the club workforce feel valued and appreciated.

Establishing role descriptions for each person can help in both recruiting and retaining volunteers. Understanding what is expected of you is a large contributory factor that can persuade a person to volunteer their services to the club. Knowing that the club expects only two hours a week of your time makes a big difference when appealing for people to help the club, rather than being uncertain what you are letting yourself in for when you raise your hand to volunteer for a position. Role descriptions also help to identify a clear area of responsibility for an individual, so that the club and the volunteer both know what is expected of them. Frequently volunteers get lumbered with numerous additional duties that they don't feel comfortable with and end up leaving the club because they feel unsatisfied.

To find out more information and resource on volunteer recruitment and retention, including job description templates, visit: <https://www.lta.org.uk/officiate--volunteer/volunteering/>

This section of the Club Development Plan should also look at providing the clubs workforce with the appropriate training and support: whether that is through formal qualifications or informal mentoring and guidance. This would be the section that the tennis club will look to improve the quality of their coaches by sending them on courses and other appropriate education workshops.



Community Outreach & Development

Developing effective links with the local community to generate increased awareness of the club and to help grow the club's membership is often a key aim for many clubs. Establishing and maintaining purposeful links with local schools, colleges, universities and other community partners can be a key strand in helping to dispel erroneous myths that tennis clubs are elitist and unaffordable; it can help promote that the club is open and welcoming to all members of society.

Establishing effective links with local schools, colleges and universities will require planning and support from the club. The education sector will expect the club's coaches to be able to provide support in holding tennis sessions for the young people within the school environment. The club will need to develop a programme of activity that they can support the school in delivering that often needs to align to the school's curriculum needs.

Developing a quality school-club link requires perseverance in order for both parties (the school and the club) to feel satisfied with the relationship. But a satisfactory relationship can be extremely beneficial: more young players at the club, a higher quality school sports programme, greater interest and awareness in the club, improved sporting knowledge for teachers, club can potentially access the school's sports facilities at preferential rates, along with numerous other opportunities. A quality school – club link will vary according to the needs of the school and the capabilities and resources available to the tennis club.

The difficulty of encouraging the transference of young people from the school to a club environment to continue playing tennis should not be underestimated. The school and the club will need to put a great deal of focus in supporting the young people to feel comfortable and welcome in stepping into a brand new, often more challenging, club environment.

Developing wide community links may appear arduous and challenging for tennis clubs, but if the club is keen to grow and develop a quality club infrastructure and culture then it is an essential element of the club's Development Plan. Creating these links has the potential to help the club:

- Attract more players to the tennis club
- More players will result in greater revenue for the club through club membership fees
- Offers a potentially wider pool from which to recruit volunteers
- Increases local awareness and interest in both the club and tennis in general
- These links make it more likely that the tennis club will receive support from local sports development networks; both in terms of physical and financial support.

To find out more about how to establish effective school-club links then visit:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/drive-tennis/school-club-links/>



Club Programmes & Competition

This section considers what the club currently offers to its membership base and wider participants to encourage and support their tennis enjoyment and development. It considers the development of the coaching programme to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the times and needs of all age groups and abilities that play at the club.

There is a wealth of information to help clubs and coaches design and develop the most appropriate coaching programme for their clubs needs on the LTA website:

- <https://www.lta.org.uk/coach-teach/team--programme-development/>
- <https://www.lta.org.uk/venue-management/support-your-venue/>

However, it is not just about the coaching programme. The club needs to consider the wider needs of those that play at the club, those that just wish to play socially along with those that want different levels of competition. This will include the club's teams, but also the club may need to consider other competition elements for those that are not good enough for the team or who simply don't wish to commit to the requirements and formality of representing the club.

There is more information on competitions including different ideas of formats for various standards of players here:

<https://www.lta.org.uk/competitions/>

Some consideration of the different needs of different age-groups would be encouraged as for example teenagers often do not want to play recreational tennis with vets (and vice-versa), and so the club may feel that a Junior Club Night for example could be of benefit. Similarly the club may wish to encourage more families to play at the club and holding Great British Tennis Weekend open days might be a route to achieving this. To also make the club more appealing to the wider community the club might also consider offering pay and play options at particular points during the club's programme.



There will be a host of different considerations that a club will need to take into account when planning their club programmes and competition elements, and this section outlines some of them.

Facility Management & Development

One of the most important long-term considerations for many clubs is the development and maintenance of their facilities. Improving your facilities often

requires significant financial resource, but also takes a large amount of human resource from the club to plan and drive through any modifications to the club. This aspect of facility development is often overlooked and it should not be underestimated the time and skills required (often from club volunteers) to project manage facility development.

Modifying, improving and even maintaining your facilities often requires a long-term plan to outline the key tasks that need to be delivered; this could include elements such as securing investment, gaining planning permission, agreeing design plans, identifying contractors amongst a host of other activities. The Club Development Plan is a vital tool in helping to break down the various components of facility development into manageable and logical steps.

If you are looking to undertake facility redevelopment you may find this section of the LTA website helpful:
<https://www.lta.org.uk/venue-management/facilities-advice/>

But this section of the Club Development Plan is not just focused on grand large-scale projects and ambitions that the club may have, but also the day-to-day operations, running and maintenance of the club. It is important that the club continues to review and develop these aspects of the club as it is instrumental in providing a quality tennis environment that meets the club members' needs. The running and maintenance of the venue is also often the biggest financial cost for the club, and through continuing to improve the club operations and reviewing suppliers and service providers it can result in significant financial savings.

Communication & Marketing

Whether the tennis club is looking to grow or whether it is simply happy to retain their current membership and participation numbers there will need to be some consideration for communication and marketing activities. If the intention of the club is to grow their membership, then the club will need to focus on increasing their external presence within the local community through marketing and promotion and incentivising current members to help through word-of-mouth through their networks. But whether you are looking to grow or retain members the club needs to think about regular internal communication methods with their existing members.

This section of the Club Development Plan could look to achieve:

- Greater awareness of tennis and the tennis club in the local community
- Attract players and volunteers to join the club
- Promoting & growing the awareness of new programmes and initiatives that the club launches
- Increase the attractiveness of a commercial sponsor to financially support the club
- Establishing an effective website & social media presence for the club
- Developing regular member updates and e-newsletters



For more advice and tips on marketing and communications visit:
<http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/home/club-promotion/>

Financial Management

In many ways much of the success of the Club Development Plan is dependent on the success of implementing an effective Funding and Finance strategy. This section of the plan should look at ways the club raises funding and investment to support the club's activities. It should focus on a range of areas from internal fundraising, external investment in the club and opportunities for grant-funding support, but it should also consider ways to improve the efficiencies of the club and reduce expenditure.

The latter point of reducing outgoing expenditure can often be an area that club's overlook or choose to ignore as it can be associated with making difficult decisions about stopping things. Whilst this might sometimes be true, there can often be simple ways of reducing costs through changing suppliers and looking at whether there are better and more effective ways of delivering activities. The club may also consider any staffing costs that the club incurs.

For more advice and tips on financial management visit: <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-finances/>

Internal fundraising measures could be based around membership fees and the different categories of membership, pay & play offers, hiring out the venue for external functions, club social events and other innovative and creative approaches for making the most of the club's resources to raise investment.

External funding usually comes in the form of sponsorship. Attaining an appropriate sponsor for a sports club takes time and effort, but the club should make the most of contacts and leads that club members may have. It is important to consider what your club can offer a sponsor and what would be attractive to a commercial organisation: put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself "why would I be interested in sponsoring this club?" Always conduct yourself in a professional manner and present the club in a positive image; this means attending meetings fully prepared with a clear written proposal, using headed paper in correspondence, ensuring that all dealings with the sponsor are dealt with punctually. Invite the potential sponsor to come to the club during a busy time where possible, and ensure that they are made to feel special.

When the club has attracted a sponsor, it is important that the club does not rest on its laurels. The club need to make sure that the sponsor feels that they are getting value-for-money from their investment. All of the agreements that were established in regards to what the sponsor will be offered from their sponsorship need to be delivered to a high standard, ensuring that the sponsor is made aware and is happy. Little gestures such as inviting the sponsor to events and special occasions at the club, occasional personal emails with updates on the club's development and performance, and any other personal touches that make the sponsor feel that they are a part of the club. Building this relationship with the sponsor will mean it will be more likely that the sponsor renews their investment at the end of the deal; also if the sponsor is made to feel like a member and friend of the club it will be harder for them not to continue sponsoring the club. You may also be prepared to offer them space at the club for them to conduct occasional off-site business meetings.



To find out more tips about sponsorship visit:

- <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/venue/support-your-venue/documents/tennis-venue-sponsorship-guide.pdf>
- <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/home/club-promotion/your-options/sponsorship-partnership-marketing/>

Grant funding will require significant research to identify appropriate pots of money that the club could potentially apply for. There will be local, county, regional and national funding programmes that could present an opportunity for the tennis club to bid for. Don't limit yourself to solely tennis funding programmes, but explore all sporting and community funds to see if your club is eligible. When applying for grant funding it is important to read through all guidance and instructions provided with the application, ensuring that the club meets all criteria and provides all necessary evidence. It is recommended that the tennis club contacts local sports development officers, the County Tennis Association or the LTA Regional Team (or Tennis Wales/Scotland) before submitting the application, as in most cases these officers will have substantial experience in knowing how to successfully complete funding applications.

Direct funding would obviously be attractive for the tennis club, but it is not the only form of support that the club could attain. "In-Kind" support should always be considered by the club. Offers from companies and organisations to provide their services and assistance free-of-charge can save the club a significant amount of money.

Further handy tips on applying for funding can be found here: <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-finances/funding/>

LTA Registered Venues can take advantage of a Grant Finder Tool that helps identify funding pots that are available for your club: <http://www.i4bgrants.co.uk/lta5416t2t/Search.aspx>

Working in Partnership

Developing effective relationships with key partners is vitally important for the development of both the tennis club and the broader growth of tennis within the local community.

Outlined below are a few of the sports development networks that the LTA would encourage clubs to engage with:

Partner	Background Information
County Tennis Association	Often organise and manage competitions and events within the county. Have knowledge of local tennis and sports development networks and organise regular club forums. Understanding of implementing and delivering sports development plans – helpful for advice & suggestions. Will help to ensure that the club is aware of national and county plans. Can offer a range of support services to assist your club from funding grants, to equipment subsidies / offers.
LTA Regional Team (including Tennis Scotland / Wales)	There are five LTA regional teams and Tennis Wales and Tennis Scotland who help to support clubs and venues to grow participation in tennis. They can provide support and advice to clubs, particularly in developing their Club Development Plans. They can support on facility development guidance and can advise on funding streams that are available. They will provide training and education opportunities to coaches and club volunteers/ officers.
Local Authority Sports Development Teams	Some local authorities have a sports development officer, who looks to develop all sport in the local community. Engaging with this partner will increase awareness of tennis opportunities in the local authority. They can introduce the club to schools, local clubs and other community links. They can assist in running & promoting events & providing opportunities to the club. They can help access local funding grants.
County Sports Partnership (CSP)	Every county has a CSP who look to strategically coordinate sport across the county. CSPs are aware of all the various sports networks in the county that could assist the club. They are aware of numerous funding opportunities. They can tie the club into the larger sporting strategic picture in the county; helping to develop & promote various opportunities for the club. They are aware of national & government sports initiatives & funding.

