



Statement of Utilisation and Community Benefit – Powerleague Bury

The Need for Padel Tennis Facilities

Padel tennis, which originated in Mexico in 1969, is a form of tennis that is easy to play, fun, and extremely sociable. It is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court and can be enjoyed by mixed ages and abilities. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve underhand and the walls are used as part of the game, with the ball allowed to bounce off them.

Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports in the UK, experiencing a remarkable surge in popularity over the past few years. With its unique blend of accessibility, social engagement, and health benefits, padel has quickly become a sought-after recreational activity for players of all ages and skill levels. However, the existing infrastructure is struggling to keep up with the ever-growing demand. This application seeks to address this issue by demonstrating the numerous benefits of padel and the pressing need for further court development.

Padel has experienced record-breaking growth in the UK, with the number of courts increasing from 50 in 2019 to over 1800 today, according to the LTA. At the end of 2025, just over 860,000 adults and juniors in Great Britain played padel at least once in the preceding 12 months. Up from 15,000 in 2019, 89,000 in 2021, and 129,000 at the end of 2023.

Despite this growth, demand continues to outstrip supply, with courts across the country consistently booked at peak times. The sport is also the fastest growing in Europe, and its continued expansion in the UK is dependent on having the necessary infrastructure in place. This highlights an urgent need for further investment in padel facilities to meet the rising participation levels and provide adequate playing opportunities for enthusiasts.

One of padel's key advantages is its accessibility. Unlike traditional tennis, padel is easier to learn and play, making it an attractive sport for people of all ages and abilities. The enclosed court design and underhand serve remove some of the technical barriers associated with other racket sports, allowing beginners to quickly pick up the game. Beginners can rally and enjoy the game almost immediately. As a result, they are more likely to continue playing rather than becoming frustrated and quitting early.

Padel also provides inclusive opportunities in sport for a wider range of participants. Over 35% of padel players in the UK are women, demonstrating the sport's appeal across genders and fostering greater participation in physical activity. This aligns with national objectives to encourage more people to engage in sports and maintain an active lifestyle.

Since padel is a social sport played in doubles, the game encourages teamwork, communication, and interaction, creating a strong sense of community among players. Padel clubs and facilities have become social hubs where individuals and families gather to enjoy the sport in a welcoming



environment. The social nature of padel helps to combat isolation and promote mental well-being, making it an invaluable addition to community sports infrastructure.

In addition to its social benefits, padel provides an excellent cardiovascular workout. The sport improves agility, reflexes, and coordination while being less physically demanding than other high-impact racket sports. The enclosed court and fast-paced rallies ensure an engaging workout that enhances physical fitness without placing excessive strain on the body.

In November 2020, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) was confirmed as the national governing body (NGB) for padel. Since then, the LTA has developed a strategic plan to grow the sport and has already made significant investments in infrastructure. In 2024 the LTA launched its new strategy for padel in Britain, focusing on growing the infrastructure, increasing and diversifying the coaching workforce, building a performance pathway, and driving participation.

Since becoming the NGB, the LTA and the LTA Tennis Foundation have invested £6 million into 40 padel facility projects, funding a total of 75 new courts. This investment, alongside private funding, has significantly expanded the sport's reach and infrastructure, ensuring that padel continues to develop as a key component of Britain's sporting landscape.

All padel courts built by the Applicant are constructed in full accordance with the LTA's official Padel Court Construction Guidance Note (2025) and the SAPCA Code of Practice - the recognised standards for padel in the UK. From court dimensions and toughened glass specifications to drainage, synthetic surfacing, corrosion-resistant steelwork, and floodlighting, every detail meets LTA requirements. All courts carry a minimum 10-year warranty, are wheelchair accessible, and designed by qualified structural engineers - ensuring every court we build is LTA-recognised and built to the highest possible standard.

Since the launch of our first padel courts, we have witnessed a remarkable response, with near 100% peak-time utilisation and rapid growth in off-peak participation. This strong uptake underlines the sport's popularity and reinforces the need for further expansion. By investing in additional courts, we can ensure that more individuals have the opportunity to experience the benefits of padel while alleviating the strain on existing facilities.

The Applicant is passionate about improving facilities across its estate and promoting inclusivity of opportunities for all. Padel courts at this site will allow the Applicant to offer enhanced opportunities in sport for a wider audience, including women who are making up an increasingly growing proportion of the players in the sport.

We consider that great weight should be given to the provision of new padel court facilities in the planning balance, on the grounds that they would contribute significantly to an identified growing demand for these types of facilities, addressing a shortfall of such facilities in this area. The new padel courts would provide enhanced opportunities for sport and inclusion on this site.

The Application Site



The existing Powerleague Bury facility comprises eight artificial grass pitches (AGPs), with six 5-a-side and two 7-a-side synthetic pitches. All pitches benefit from enclosure boards, fencing and floodlighting. The facility also has a clubhouse building which provides changing facilities, a café/bar, function room, and there is a dedicated access and surface-level car park.

The proposal is for the addition of standard padel courts and one touch padel court to the area directly east of the clubhouse. Like traditional padel, Touch Padel is played by four players, but on a smaller court measuring 6m x 12m, compared with the standard 10m x 20m court.

All four courts would be canopied and replace two 5-a-side football pitches. The location for the padel courts has been selected due to proximity to the clubhouse and recognition of the benefits of housing all built forms in close proximity on the site.

Powerleague Bury is situated adjacent to Bury College, a further education college offering A Level, vocational and apprenticeship pathways for school leavers. Under an existing arrangement, the college uses Powerleague's pitches between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, during term time.

As joint applicants, Bury College is fully supportive of this application. The existing agreement would be extended to include the proposed padel courts, giving students access to the courts between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, alongside continued use of the football pitches.

Needs Assessment

Analysis of booking data for the five-a-side artificial grass pitches (AGPs) at the site over 2026 shows that at peak times, utilisation is at 65%. The data indicates that reducing the number of five-a-side pitches from six to four would result in a new peak-time utilisation rate of approximately 98%.

Peak periods are when demand is at its highest and are defined as 7pm to 9pm Monday to Thursday, across all six pitches. Outside of these periods, utilisation falls.

With four remaining 5-a-side pitches, total peak-time capacity equates to 32 pitch-hours per week. Applying the observed utilisation rate of 98% results in approximately 31 hours of peak-time bookings per week, leaving 1 hour of residual peak-time capacity.

This demonstrates that all existing peak-time bookings can be comfortably accommodated within the four remaining five-a-side AGPs, with no requirement to reallocate bookings to off-peak periods. Given there will be no lost bookings as a result of the reduction in pitches, the Applicant considers that two of the six 5-a-side AGPs are surplus to operational and commercial requirements for football use at this site.

These areas can instead be used to facilitate padel, in response to growing demand within the locality. The provision of four new padel courts, including one touch padel court, represents an efficient use of underutilised pitches, generating £3.7 million in social value and expanding the site's sporting offering.



Padel courts would enhance and diversify the sporting provision at the site, broadening access to sport and recreation for a wider audience. Demand for padel is explained in further detail in the following section.

Community and Social Benefit

1. Bury College - Joint Applicant

Bury College is a further education college located adjacent to Powerleague Bury, offering A Level, vocational and apprenticeship pathways for students. The college is a joint applicant and fully supports the proposal for padel courts at the site.

Under an established partnership, the college has use of Powerleague Bury's football pitches between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, during term time. This access is flexible and is used for timetabled PE lessons, coaching sessions and recreational activity during breaks. The college also uses the pitches to play competitive fixtures and host tournaments for other local schools and colleges, extending the benefit of the facility well beyond its own student body. The arrangement gives students regular access to high-quality sports facilities that the college could not otherwise provide on its own site.

The proposed canopied padel courts would be incorporated into this existing agreement, with students able to use them during the same hours alongside the football pitches. The courts would support both structured coaching and supervised free play, allowing the college to broaden its sports curriculum and introduce students to a sport they may not otherwise have the opportunity to try. Padel is a fast-growing sport, but access remains limited and often costly. Through this partnership, hundreds of young people would be able to take up padel, many for the first time, at no cost to the college or to students and their families.

Like football, padel is a highly social sport. It is played in pairs, is easy to pick up, and allows players of differing ability to enjoy competitive games from the outset. These qualities make it particularly inclusive and attractive to young people who may not engage with traditional team sports. In particular, padel has strong appeal and participation among women and girls, and its introduction would help the college encourage more female students to take part in regular physical activity. The canopy is an important element of the proposal. Covering the courts ensures that scheduled sessions can go ahead regardless of the weather, allowing padel to become a year-round feature on the curriculum and ensuring students don't lose any court time. Canopies also are a key safety feature, reducing the risk of injury from wet or slippery playing surfaces.

Regular access to quality sports facilities supports young people's physical health, wellbeing and confidence. By integrating padel into the college's daily sporting provision, the development would deliver clear and lasting community benefit, strengthening local sports provision and promoting active lifestyles for young people in Bury.

2. Community Need & Local Demand



Powerleague Bury is a local sports facility created to serve the residents of Bury and the neighbouring areas.

Across our estate of 42 courts in 10 locations, Powerleague has welcomed over 72,000 unique players, demonstrating strong and growing community engagement with our facilities. Importantly, this figure represents individual participants, not repeat visits, highlighting the breadth of our reach.

Our courts collectively delivered over 150,000 hours of active usage, reflecting the consistently high demand for accessible, high-quality sports facilities.

Based on the average number of unique players per court across Powerleague's existing padel estate, a new four-court (including one touch padel court) canopied padel facility at Powerleague Bury is expected to attract approximately 6,850 new players, strengthening local access to sport and physical activity.

3. Accessibility, Inclusion & Health

Providing covered padel courts at this site will enable the facility to operate more consistently throughout the year, reducing the impact of rain and poor weather on participation. This will help maintain reliable levels of use and ensure that the courts remain a valuable community sporting facility throughout all seasons.

The weather-protected environment will also support wider participation, particularly among disabled users, older people and those who may find outdoor activity in poor weather more challenging. The consistent playing conditions will further benefit coaching, school use, community sessions and disability sport, helping to create a more inclusive facility and support wider objectives around physical activity, health and participation.

Padel is a highly accessible sport: it is for all ages, all backgrounds and all abilities. In line with this, our padel centres are open to all and are wheelchair accessible. We are committed to creating open spaces for all members of the community, regardless of disability.

Every Powerleague site offers bespoke coaching programmes tailored to all abilities, from complete beginners to advanced players. Coaching is available both privately and in group settings, ensuring inclusivity and providing clear pathways for progression.

We've included a touch padel court to further our mission of accessibility and inclusion. A touch padel court retains the same angles and playing principles as a traditional padel court but reduces the overall size. This allows players to experience and practise the same techniques, shots and movements in a more accessible and manageable environment. The court is particularly suited to children, beginners and less experienced players, while also providing an ideal setting for introductory coaching, school sessions and community activities.

4. Community and Youth Engagement



As part of launching any new club, we host a free community open day. Residents are invited to experience padel under the guidance of certified coaches, with all equipment - including balls, rackets and court time - provided at no cost. We also supply food and beverages to create a welcoming, family-friendly environment that encourages participation.

Loop Social Value

Loop is a social value measurement and management platform built in line with HM Treasury's Green Book guidance. It helps organisations understand, quantify, and report the social, economic, and environmental impact generated by their activities in a consistent, robust, and transparent way.

A range of economic valuation techniques are used to create monetised metrics, selected on a case-by-case basis according to the nature of the impact and its context. Depending on the metric, methodologies sit within Social Cost-Benefit Analysis (SCBA) and/or Social Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (SCEA) and may draw on approaches such as economic/fiscal cost savings, wellbeing valuation, and productivity impacts.

Evidence sources vary by valuation and typically include a combination of academic literature, government and public sector reports, sector and non-profit research, and (where appropriate) internal regression analysis or modelling. Standard economic treatments are then applied to ensure the Green Book monetisation process is followed. This supports conservative, defensible estimates of social value and return on investment.

Loop enables organisations to demonstrate the tangible outcomes of their activities and clearly communicate their contribution to people, places, and the environment.

Loop's methodology is independently reviewed and periodically updated to reflect new evidence and policy guidance. This provides users with confidence in the credibility, reliability, and defensibility of the figures it produces.

Powerleague's Social Value Measurement

Powerleague's commitment to community wellbeing has been independently recognised through its use of Loop Social Value software.

For the proposed addition of four new canopied padel courts (including one touch padel) at Powerleague Bury, 12 relevant social value metrics have been applied. These metrics measure the positive impact of our proposed activity on society and the economy, going beyond financial performance to capture social, community and wellbeing outcomes and assign them a quantitative value.



The metrics we've used are:

→ Community Engagement & Supply Chain

- Stakeholder engagement: Staff hours involved in stakeholder engagement, events and meetings.
- Supply chain spend: Total paid to external suppliers and vendors for raw materials, components, services, and shipping required to create and deliver products.

→ Skills, Training & Economic Value

- Training: Hours of training delivered to staff.
- Gross operating surplus: Economic value generated beyond wages.
- Job creation: Number of FTE roles created or supported by the development.

→ Education & Youth Engagement

- Youth group engagement: Number of young people regularly engaging in youth support groups and activities.
- School outreach: Engagement with primary and secondary schools.

→ Community Safety & Social Cohesion

- People feeling safer: Number of people reporting an improved perception of safety within their neighbourhood.
- Neighbours getting on better: Number reporting improved relationships with people in their neighbourhood.

→ Health, Wellbeing & Physical Activity

- Physical activity: Number of people exercising regularly as a result of the development.
- Reduced loneliness: Number of people experiencing a reduction in loneliness.
- Team sport participation: Number of people participating in team sports.

Loop works out the social value of a project by connecting its activities to proven social, health, and economic benefits, then uses widely accepted estimates to put a monetary value on those benefits.

In the case of padel, regular participation delivers measurable physical and mental health benefits, reduces loneliness through social interaction, and improves overall wellbeing due to its accessible and enjoyable format. These outcomes reduce pressure on public services, particularly the NHS, while enhancing community cohesion and happiness.

The development and operation of the facility generate economic value through local employment, supply chain spend and tax contributions, all of which are captured and monetised within Loop's robust social value framework.



Loop has used these metrics to calculate the social value generated by the proposed development. For the purposes of this assessment, social value has been calculated over a 12-month period commencing at the scheduled start of works and extending for one full year thereafter. The social value generated would continue to accrue and increase over the lifetime of the development.

**TOTAL SOCIAL VALUE FOR THE ADDITION OF THREE CANOPIED PADEL COURTS AND ONE
CANOPIED TOUCH PADEL COURT AT POWERLEAGUE BURY**

£3.7 MILLION

Loop has calculated that the development of four new canopied padel courts (including one touch padel court) at Powerleague Bury will generate £3.7 million of social value in one year.

This represents a substantial boost to the local community and surrounding areas, delivering benefits that go beyond financial investment. By providing accessible and enjoyable opportunities for physical activity, promoting social interaction, reducing loneliness, and supporting local employment and supply chains, the proposal will have a lasting positive impact on wellbeing, community cohesion, and the local economy. The software confirms this is a significant contribution to the social and economic vitality of the area.

Summary:

This proposal responds to strong demand for the growing sport of padel. The proposed facility will serve the local community and deliver a wide range of benefits.

