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## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND LEISURE

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Date: 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006

Subject: THE FRIENDS OF WOODHOUSE MOOR DEPUTATION TO COUNCIL ON  
APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup> 2006

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**Electoral wards affected:**  
Hyde Park and Woodhouse

**Specific implications for:**

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the gap

Eligible for call In

Not eligible for call in  
(details contained in the report)

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report has been prepared at the request of Council following the deputation by the Friends of Woodhouse Moor (FOWM) and provides information on the background to the proposal to introduce a pay and display car park on existing hard standing located on Monument Moor. It also sets out the context for reaching the decision to establish the car park and provides appropriate responses to questions raised by the deputation. The report recommends that the car park will meet parking needs for park users, reduce friction that is endemic between visitors and local residents and enable the full recreational potential of Woodhouse Moor Park to be realised without the loss of any existing greenspace. The report takes into account the views of the Friends Group and shows how the development of the car park will alleviate their concerns.

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 The report provides contextual information for Members in response to the deputation made to full Council on the April 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 by the FOWM.
- 1.2 This report seeks to inform Members of :
- the background to the proposal for a car park on Monument Moor (See Appendix 2 for location of the Car Park).
  - the benefits that will accrue from establishing the car park.
  - the fact that the proposal will not lead to the loss of existing greenspace or increased traffic congestion.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the issues involved in the points raised by the deputation from the FOWM and the appropriate responses in terms of work undertaken by the service.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Located adjacent to the University of Leeds, Woodhouse Moor is one of the busiest parks owned by Leeds City Council. The Park benefits from a wide range of facilities which include playgrounds, allotments, skateboard and BMX park, formal gardens, extensive amenity grassland areas for relaxation, passive and sporting activities. In addition the grassland and hard standing on Cinder and Monument Moors are used extensively for events attracting visitors from a wide area. The site is used extensively by the local communities and university students alike. The attractiveness of the site for visitors is likely to increase with forthcoming planned improvements and additions to the existing recreational facilities that include refurbishment of the tennis courts and the establishment of a Multi Use Games Area.
- 2.2 Due to the Park's locality in relation to the centre of the City and the surrounding residential areas of Burley, Headingley and Woodhouse, together with the popularity of the site for recreational purposes, parking has always been at a premium and tensions intermittently arise between local residents and park users. This is not surprising in view of the estimated 1,072,482 visits made by the public of which 15.27% came by car (163,768 car visits per annum) as determined by data accrued from the Parks & Greenspace Household Survey 2004. In addition this survey ascertained that of the 1million + visits, 26,812 of those local resident visits complained of car parking problems when visiting the Park.
- 2.3 Cinder Moor in particular and Monument Moor on occasions are used for car parking and this occurred on 81 days in 2004 and 186 days in 2005. The car parking was required for events organized by the University of Leeds, L.C.C Arts, Events and Tourism Service, New World Circus Ltd., Yorkshire Television, Terry Atha & Son funfair, Hyde Park Unity Day, Sure Start Mellow Valley Activity day, Leeds City Athletics Club, Gateway Yorkshire. In addition Cinder Moor was used as a temporary Park & Ride facility for Christmas shoppers.

2.4 Representatives of the FOWM made a deputation to full Council meeting on the April 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 seeking answers to various aspects of the proposed car park on Monument Moor. In particular, the deputation raised key concerns about: -

- Lack of consultation
- Loss of designated greenspace for public recreation
- Traffic congestion
- Users of the car park
- Environmental issues connected with establishing a car park

2.5 A full copy of the deputation speech by the FOWM is attached at Appendix1.

2.6 FOWM represents an amalgamation of various community groups in the vicinity of Woodhouse Moor that have come together in this instance to question the suitability of the car park proposal.

### **3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 With regard to the questions posed by the FOWM deputation:

3.1.1 *"none of the established groups mentioned was consulted even though every one of them borders Woodhouse Moor"*

Opportunities were provided in the 2004 Household Survey and the face to face consultation on the Park Management Plan to comment on all concerns relating to the use of the Park. Questionnaires used for the face to face consultation were also sent to the following resident associations: -

- South Headingley Community Association
- North Hyde Park Neighbourhood Association
- Little Woodhouse Community Association
- Moorlands Residents Association

The paucity of car parking places was a concern raised from both surveys.

In view of the concerns raised by FOWM about the proposed car park on Monument Moor the service is running two consultative sessions at Woodhouse Community Centre on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May. Any comments raised will be forwarded to Planning for inclusion in the report when it is considered by the Plans Panel.

3.1.2 *“ We also object to Parks Renaissance money of £170,341 being used to tarmac over Monument Moor”*

The decision to use Parks Renaissance money was based on the information provided by the surveys mentioned above and complaints submitted over the years. In addition the construction works will include substantial shrub borders (2000 shrubs in 450msq of borders) and tree planting (20 trees) to improve the aesthetics of the rather bleak site that is extensively amenity grass and gravel and of limited value to wildlife.

3.1.3 *“The car park would be primarily for people using the universities and city centre”*

We intend to implement a pay and display system which will operate during the main part of the working week, Monday to Friday and then parking will be free during the evenings of Monday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday. The free periods represent the peak times when visitors use Woodhouse Moor Park for recreational purposes.

3.1.4 *“For those who visit the Moor from other areas, there is an excellent bus service on the A660 which runs across the Moor”*

Although there may be an excellent bus service through the Woodhouse Moor Park area, the majority of all bus services are based on routes that run from the City Centre to outlying urban areas like spokes of a wheel. There are few services that traverse Leeds outside the City Centre. Thus for a large percentage of visitors a car trip to Woodhouse Moor Park is quicker and more convenient than utilizing two or more bus services to reach the Park.

3.1.5 *“Motorists wanting to use the car park would cause tailbacks on to the already frequently congested A660”*

There will be no tailbacks of motorists wishing to park their cars on Monument Moor as the Pay and Display system involves pay meters within the car park. Thus motorists will drive straight in to the car park and not be waiting to pay or obtain a ticket to release a barrier gate giving access to the car park. The Pay and Display system will be enforced by City Services.

3.1.6 *“Car parks are not eco-friendly. Tarmac increases run-off”*

Although tarmac increases water run-off during periods of rain a sustainable drainage system will be established as part of the car park development. This means that the water will not be taken by the existing city drainage system but used to keep the proposed planted areas watered. Therefore the presence and retention of existing amenity grassland around the car park along with the projected introduction of shrubbery beds will help to absorb the expected run-off. The ecology of the site will be improved with the extensive tree and shrub planting mentioned in 3.1.2. that will provide cover and food for wildlife.

3.1.7 *"It is currently designated as green space on the Unitary Development Plan and as such cannot be built on"*

A car park can be developed on Monument Moor since there is existing hard standing already on the site which is used for authorised car parking during events. The proposed car park will be specifically sited on the hard standing and there is to be no encroachment into the surrounding green areas. Following this approach ensures that all existing greenspace on Monument Moor remains secure and does not infringe Unitary Development Plan guidelines. It should also be recognised that almost all of the City Council's other Parks have car parking areas incorporated either within them or adjacent to them.

3.1.8 *"The proposed scheme has too many consequences for local people for it to go forward on delegated powers and not to go to full Planning"*

The planning application for the car parking scheme will go to a full Plans Panel for consideration. The application was submitted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April and Planning Officers have asked for further information and plans. When these are supplied it is anticipated that the process will take 8 weeks from that point.

#### **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 The car park project complies with Council Policies, Strategies and Initiatives and the Council's Corporate Plan.

4.2 **Creating safer and stronger communities** by delivering improved recreational facilities for local communities within local parks and open spaces and through the provision of an off road parking area to help reduce the number of vehicles blocking and obscuring paths, access points and residential areas.

4.3 **Raising standards across parks** through the provision of improved facilities in line with the Green Flag standards, providing much needed facilities and so raising visitors expectations.

#### **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 Expenditure of £154,000 on construction and £16,341.44 on fees utilising Parks Renaissance funding

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The various surveys have shown the need for car parking to enable visitors to access the various recreational facilities at Woodhouse Moor Park
- 6.2 The various concerns raised by FOWM about the detrimental effects the car park would have to the Park and surrounding area have been constructively answered. There will be no loss of greenspace, no resulting traffic congestion, nor any unacceptable runoff of rainwater. On the positive side, there will be improved access for park users and the aesthetics of the site will be improved through the planting and landscaping.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Members are requested to note the benefits of establishing a car park on Monument Moor and that the concerns raised by the various local community groups have been addressed and will be further addressed through the Planning process.