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**Report of the Acting Director of City Development**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 22 June 2011**

**Subject: Response to Deputation to Council on Roundhay Grass Cycling Track**

**Electoral Wards Affected:** Roundhay

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

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 responds to a deputation to Council on 6 April by representatives of the West Riding Track Cycling League.

Minor administrative changes are proposed in response to the requests by the League, and no key or other formal decision is requested of Executive Board.

Executive Board is asked to note and endorse the response in this report to the West Riding Track League's deputation.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

1.1 To respond to a deputation to Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011 by the West Riding Track League.

## **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Track Cycling is a form of bicycle racing that takes place on a banked track or velodrome. While the elite level of this sport takes place in purpose built indoor facilities, grass track racing provides an entry point for those interested in this form of cycling, as well as “grass roots” competition opportunities. To compete in this form of cycling participants need an active British Cycling membership and race licence, as well as suitable specialist cycles.

2.2 The grass cycling track round the cricket oval at Roundhay Park dates from 1894, and has been used by the West Riding Track League since it was formed in 1945. Currently, the league provides opportunities for adults and juniors to participate in track racing at beginners and competitive levels. The league charges a joining fee and entry fees for each race, with juniors benefiting from a subsidised rate. The UK’s cycling success at the Beijing Olympics has reversed a long term decline in participation in the league.

2.3 The League’s use of the site is regulated by a seasonal allocation agreement which allows use of the grass track and access to the Cricket Pavilion to assist in the organisation of each race meet. The current charge for the agreement is £307.50 per annum.

2.4 The deputation asked the Council to consider the following requests:-

- To use the Roundhay park facilities at no cost each year as well as allowing use to use the pavilion for storage during the summer season. The pavilion is little used during the year as there is no resident cricket club. This would release £300 per annum to put towards additional bikes for the use of Leeds children;
- To ensure the League’s right to race on the historic track which was built for this purpose together with the maintenance required to keep the track up to racing standard and continue to allow its use for training purposes;
- Any funding that may be available to help us achieve our aims.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

3.1 Funding

The West Riding Track League operates on a not for profit basis and provides valuable sporting and social benefits. Its aspiration to develop these benefits for school aged children is commendable. There is an established mechanism for sports funding via Leeds Sports Grants. The system is administered by the Leeds Sports Federation through its Grants Panel on behalf of Leeds City Council, and voluntary sporting organisations, clubs and individuals are able to apply for grants of between £100 and £500 for kit and equipment. It would be inconsistent and unfair for the Council to agree funding outside this framework, but the League should be encouraged to submit an application.

### 3.2 Use the facilities at no cost

It is estimated that in 2011 the Parks and Countryside Service will incur costs of £1,800 cutting and marking the circuit and opening and closing the pavilion, so the £307.50 charge leaves the sport with a substantial subsidy. The level of subsidy is comparable to or better than, subsidies for other sports licences, and the current charge is low spread over the number of participants. Although the amount is small, it would be inconsistent with the broad need to reduce net costs of the service in response to the Council's financial pressures. Agreeing the request would also be inconsistent with the general approach to user charges. This commentary should be considered in conjunction with the previous paragraph; the suggestion is that League would operate in the same charging and funding framework as other sports users.

### 3.3 Use the pavilion for storage during the summer season

The cricket pitch must be among the most attractive sites in the region, and the pavilion has benefited from significant investment following the receipt of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for park restoration. Therefore Parks and Countryside officers aim to promote cricket use and would not wish to make long term commitments to alternative uses of the pavilion if this constrained the development of a full cricket programme, nor in the short term to give it over wholly to cycle storage. However there is scope for limited cycle storage and officers plan to progress this with the League, subject to any comments from Executive Board. The pavilion is used from time to time to support management of events in the park and officers will aim to agree flexible arrangements so that this could continue too.

### 3.4 Right to use the circuit and commitment to maintenance

There is a long standing tradition of track cycling in Roundhay Park, and the West Riding Track League has made an important contribution towards establishing that legacy. Furthermore, the league continues to provide the local community with a valued opportunity to participate in competitive cycling. Recreation officers agree with the principle that this use should continue and flourish. It is therefore reasonable to work with the League to agree a licence which provides it with clear and reasonable terms for the use of the site and which would be expected to last into the future. However this must not excessively constrain Roundhay's capacity to continue to host its extraordinary number and range of events and activities. Moreover, as with all recreation licences and leases, the Council does not grant occupation as a right but in recognition of the community benefits the organisation delivers, and the continuation of the licence must depend on the League's continuing to provide these. In practice, Officers do not believe there is a problem with the continuing use of the site by the League.

## 4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

### 4.1 Risk management

The responses proposed do not create material risks.

### 4.2 Public Interest Test

No part of this report is exempt.

#### 4.3 Forward Plan

This report is a response to the Deputation to Council on 6 April 2011 by the West Riding Track League and therefore is not required to be on the forward plan.

#### 4.4 Scrutiny process: Call-In

This report is eligible for call-in.

#### 4.5 Equality and Diversity and Cohesion and Integration

Due regard to equality has been given when considering our response to the delegation. No significant equality issues were identified. An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed and is referenced as a background paper.

#### 4.6 Council policies and City priorities

4.6.1 The Parks and Greenspace Strategy for Leeds highlights the importance of Parks and greenspaces as places for people to improve their health and well-being and therefore prevent disease through physical activity, play, relaxation and contemplation. The Parks and Countryside service have identified this as a key strategic aim.

4.6.2 To achieve this aim the Parks and Countryside service recognises the importance of providing opportunities for active recreation within parks and greenspaces. Facilitating the continued use of Roundhay Park by the West Riding Track is in keeping with this aim.

4.6.3 The provision of a range of outdoor sports facilities is essential if Leeds is to increase participation in physical activity. Active Leeds 'A Healthy City'- A Physical Activity Strategy for Leeds 2008-1012, supports this view whilst also highlighting the importance of being able to provide multiple opportunities for participation if Leeds is to meet target of increasing adult participation in physical activity by 1% annually.

#### 4.7 Consultation

4.7.1 Roundhay Ward Councillors and the Friends of Roundhay Park have been consulted on the contents of this report.

4.7.2 The Friends of Roundhay Park concur with the views taken in this report whilst also highlighting their support for the activities undertaken by the Track Cycling League.

4.7.3 All 3 Roundhay ward members have been consulted on the draft contents of this report. Their responses are detailed individually below.

- One member has responded and endorsed the views presented in this report;
- A second member has not commented;
- A third member has indicated their support for the activities of the league and has lobbied officers to waive the present fee charged to the club.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 This report is in response to a deputation to Council. No key or major decision is involved.

5.2 There are no specific proposals with material financial or resource implications.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 Conclusions to each individual issue raised in the deputation are imbedded in section 3 of this report.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Executive Board is asked to note and endorse the response in this report to the West Riding Track League's deputation to Council of 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

8.1 EDCI screening paper entitled Response to Deputation to Council on Roundhay Grass Cycling Track.