

EXECUTIVE BOARD
30TH NOVEMBER, 2015

SUBJECT:
UPGRADE OF VELODROME AT CARMARTHEN PARK

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To consider a capital contribution of approx **£286k** towards the cost of upgrading the track at Carmarthen park in order to host regional and national cycling events in line with Welsh Cycling's strategic facility plan for West Wales.

Reasons:

Welsh Cycling has identified the historic velodrome in Carmarthen Park as the ideal location to develop a regional training and competition venue for the sport. Olympic legacy funding of £296k has been secured towards the total estimated cost of **£607k** (subject to tender) leaving a balance of **£311k** to fund. Carmarthen Town Council has earmarked £25k toward the project from next years' budget. They have also invested £10k for the preliminary works/investigations that have been undertaken to date, and will pick up all future running and maintenance costs for the facility. The capital contribution thus required from CCC is **£286k**.

Carmarthen Park is owned by CCC but managed and fully maintained on a long term lease by Carmarthen Town Council. The Town Council, local cycling club, Sport Wales, Welsh Cycling and the authority's Leisure division are fully behind the collective bid to improve the facility, which is one of only two remaining outdoor velodrome facilities in Wales.

During the past month, British Cycling have undertaken a [risk assessment/ condition survey](#) of the track and due to the nature of the risks (surfacing and inadequate safety fencing) all cycling activity has been stopped at the track with immediate effect (competitive, training and public use).

The proposed scheme involves the upgrading of the track surface and improved safety fencing. Features within the park are listed and the authority's conservation officer has been consulted throughout the process. A working group has been set up to oversee the project and consists of representatives from Carmarthen Town Council, CCC Leisure Services, Sport Wales, Welsh Cycling and We Cycle Wales.

The upgrade would see the return and development of high class cycle racing to the facility, driving up visitor numbers to the town and the area, whilst building on the huge increases in participation that have been seen in cycling over recent years, on the back of the Commonwealth, Olympic and Tour de France successes of Welsh riders.

Events and races returning and coming to this fantastic, historic venue would include:

- Individual regional and National track meetings
- Elite, 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Category (adult racing categories), including ladies only Categories
- Track leagues for all categories and ages
- Fixed wheel track coaching and racing.
- Paracycling
- Leagues set up for the Spring, Summer, Autumn & Winter months

- Potential duathlons and triathlons, similar to Maindy track.
- Use by private coaches for cycling based group fitness sessions

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted: NO

Exec Board Decision Required YES – 30th November, 2015

Council Decision Required TBC

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr. M. Gravell (Regeneration & Leisure Portfolio Holder)

Directorate: - Communities

Name of Head of Service:

Ian Jones

Report Author: - Ian Jones

Designations:

Head of Leisure & Sport

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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30TH NOVEMBER, 2015

UPGRADE OF VELODROME AT CARMARTHEN PARK

1. Background

The project aims to restore into use and sustainable condition an integral element of Carmarthen's Victorian Park.

The velodrome is 405.38 metres long, and is the centre piece of Carmarthen Park. Officially opened on Easter Monday in 1900, it has been in continuous use ever since, and is believed to be one of the oldest outdoor concrete velodromes in continuous use in Britain.

Key to securing the long term future of the velodrome cycle track is to bring it up to regulation standard and to maintain its heritage as a venue for competitive cycling. Without significant works to the surface and perimeter fencing the velodrome will eventually become a monument to be looked at rather than a functional cycling facility.

Carmarthen Cycle Track was brought back into significant and formal use in 2008 following a period of limited usage, when Welsh Cycling employed a part time coach to create and support a club and bring on young riders at the facility. The Tywi Riders now have over 200 members on their books with numbers increasing every year. The velodrome in Carmarthen was identified by the governing body as a priority venue given its geographic location and the existing infrastructure.

Since 2008, a number of riders have progressed through the Welsh & British Cycling ranks including Amy Roberts (Commonwealth Games selection for Wales, 2014), Scott Davies (National U23 Time Trial Champion, 2014) and Manon Lloyd (World Junior Team Pursuit Champion, 2013)

Unfortunately, the venue cannot host competitive races due to health & safety concerns (existing concrete pillar and metal rail barrier is a significant H&S risk to cyclists travelling at speed and the concrete surface becomes very dangerous during wet weather), with the nearest facilities for racing & competition at Cardiff and Newport.

As a result there are now inequalities in provision for riders in West Wales as they have to travel to Newport, and it is notable that in some of the NGB's sessions in Newport, there are youngsters from West Wales who have to leave school early in order to attend. Due to the growing number of clubs in the west, both youth and senior, there is a critical need for a suitable track that would cater for training, competition and talent development, a view fully endorsed by Welsh Cycling.

2. Proposals & Costs

There are two proposals currently being investigated. Both include the installation of a must have health and safety fence around the perimeter of the velodrome.

The safety fencing ([linked drawings](#)) has been designed to comply with British Cycling regulations as well as design guidelines set out by CCC Conservation Officer. The safety fencing has been designed to stand alone from the existing railings (as advised by the CCC Conservation Officer) and will be able to take the impact of a rider travelling at speed and ensure that they are brought to a gradual stop.

A stepped terraced area (for spectators) has also been incorporated into the designs to replace an existing grass banked area as well as remedial works to the steps leading onto the velodrome.

The difference between both proposals is the track re-surfacing solution being proposed i.e. a traditional tarmac re-surface or a coating system applied over the existing concrete track surface. Two companies have been sourced and their respective systems have been investigated: - [Courtsol](#) and [Diasen](#)

Carmarthen Town Council has engaged a Conservation Building Surveyor to oversee the work to the velodrome and develop preliminary cost schedules for both solutions. Costings are still very much estimates at present.

[Tarmac](#) cost schedule – this is the more expensive of the two options and would raise issues in terms of planning from a conservation viewpoint. It would also require a longer project timescale, with possible disruption to the rugby pitch timetable.

[Coating](#) System cost schedule – by far the cheaper solution and initial conversations with colleagues in Conservation would suggest that they are more supportive of this as a solution as it can be supplied in a range of colours making it more palatable than the black of tarmac. It also takes less time to apply and would not disrupt the rugby timetable.

In terms of robustness the coating system has been designed for application to cycle paths and skate parks where surface impacts and traffic levels are high. Consequently it should withstand general foot traffic by members of the public however further detail on the surface durability will be obtained from the supplier. To aid with protection of the surface, as part of the project, protective matting will be purchased for use during the rugby season to minimise stud damage where players cross the track from the changing rooms.

The Conservation Building Surveyor produced a [report](#) justifying to British Cycling the use of a coating system. British Cycling have provided feedback on the coating system as a surface and their [report](#) confirmed that they agree the coating system meets their skid resistance values however they cannot yet endorse or specify the product because it is a new system of surfacing and there is no facility in the UK to evaluate/compare against (the coating system is the preferred of the two surface options, based on cost and initial feedback from planning officers in terms of appearance).

3. Partnerships & benefits

This facility development was initially identified through the National Governing Body, in order to assist with the development of young performance riders in the West Wales region. However, it should also be noted that the development would have a wider impact on regional club developments, the quality of coaches, and the competitions that could be attracted to the

area.

Cycling is very much seen as a dynamic, family sport, and attracting local, regional and national races to the town would bring huge benefits from a visitor, tourist perspective, increasing the profile of the town and the County as a, healthy, vibrant, sporting hub for the region.

The aim of the project, is to work alongside partners such as Sport Wales, British/Welsh Cycling as well as Carmarthen Town Council and local/regional cycling clubs to ensure that the track is regenerated to a standard which enables it to support the development of talented riders, coaches and clubs in West Wales, acting as a hub within the region. This will directly feed the Wales Performance program, with a view to increasing the potential talent pool, and development of riders for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games & beyond.

Carmarthen Track, if upgraded, would also be invaluable in providing competition opportunities. At present the regional Youth Omnium Series can only be promoted at Newport and Maindy (Cardiff). This series is a qualifying opportunity for youths wanting to contest the National Omnium Championships - it would be a significant benefit to Welsh youths if they could participate at another facility for experience rather than 'double up', with multiple events at one of the existing tracks.

Currently the project 2018 programme at Welsh Cycling cannot use the track in Carmarthen, due to the Health and Safety concerns. However, were the track to be upgraded, the programme would run a weekly SQT session, and use the session to develop local club coaches, which can ultimately ensure sustainable local development of talent.

The Project 2018 initiative will shortly embark on a Talent ID initiative to identify Track Sprinters - a discipline that is under represented at CWG level by Wales. The NGB's aspiration on facilities would be to have a regional hub, whereby potential athletes could be developed at Carmarthen given the location and regional population and catchment area.

Welsh Cycling / We Cycle Wales would also look to develop regular Go Ride club cluster sessions, whereby they would develop the clubs to be an active part of feeding into the grass root level of the pathway, and develop the club coaches to be skilled and ready to develop riders into the talent pathways.

In addition to enhancing the performance pathway of able bodied riders, the track has also been identified as a proposed location for a regional disability hub. This would increase the opportunity for riders to enter the performance pathway, and access the appropriate facilities. The facility would also be integral to the NGB's plans to develop the workforce within the region, currently we have a very limited number of L2 track coaches, and part of the plan for the development of the site would be to train more coaches, and offer CPD and mentoring opportunities for the development of local talent.

The project would link well to the recent investment of 'QE High School, Carmarthen'. This project has enabled the school to be adapted into a 'Closed Circuit' (traffic free) to be used for training and competition. This would make Carmarthen a 'Cycling hub' and centre of excellence for cycling within the area.

In terms of the participation agenda, the facility could also be used to develop and increase sessions across a number of areas:

- Youth fixed wheel track coaching and racing. This would include track leagues for all categories
- Elite, 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Category (adult racing categories)
- Ladies only Category
- Paracycling
- Youth Categories – Under 8's, Under 10's, Under 12's, Under 14's & Under 16's.
- Leagues could be set up for the Spring, Summer, Autumn & Winter months if appropriate surface was used. Also, Individual regional and National track meetings would be held.
- Youth clubs using it for freewheel sessions or coached sessions.
- Female only taster sessions and skill development linking into club structures.
- Novice adult group skill development, prior to group road rides.
- Potential link to duathlons and triathlons, similar to what has happened at Maindy track.
- Potential use by private coaches for cycling based group fitness sessions

4. Current and Proposed usage:-

Towy Riders (136 members) and TRCC (73 members) are the main users of the velodrome currently and train two nights a week.

West Wales RT (60 members) utilise the track on a quarterly basis for training purposes.

As part of the project development, initial consultation has taken place with local/regional clubs to gauge potential interest in utilising the velodrome on completion, below is some feedback received: -

Name Of Club	Current Membership No	Their Response
Towy Riders & TRCC	136 & 73	Towy Riders & TRCC use it twice a week and support competitions
West Wales RT		West Wales RT use for training quarterly – support any competitions
Swansea University RT	80	Swansea University RT would probably use the facility bi-monthly or quarterly. Support competitions. Also promote inter Club Championships Or between Local Teams/Varsity Competitions.
Tenby Aces	130	Tenby Aces have indicated they are keen to use facility on a weekly or fortnightly basis throughout the Winter for training. Support Competitions.
Bynea CC	226	Bynea CC would use it fortnightly for training and support competitions.
Gower Riders	60	Would probably use the facility bi-monthly or quarterly. Support competitions. Also Club Championships

5. Alternative solutions

Alternative options in the region are very limited due to the initial capital cost of creating a velodrome facility.

6. Recommendations

To allocate £286k from the CCC capital programme towards this local / regional / national scheme

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	NO
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: - Ian Jones

Head of Leisure & Sport

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Track is a strategic facility and only one of two outdoor velodromes across Wales. Its upkeep and usage contributes towards the authority's outcomes in terms of economic development, leisure, and health.

2. Legal

Potential issues with regard to listed status of the park, however, Carmarthen Town Council have engaged a Conservation Building Surveyor to oversee the project who is in regular contact with Conservation Officers from the Authority.

3. Finance

The approx scheme cost is approx £607k

Total external funding secured to date: £296k (Sport Wales – confirmed)

Carmarthen Town Council have in principle allocated £25k towards the cost of the scheme

Shortfall: £286k

6. Physical Assets

Park is owned by CCC but leased to Carmarthen Town Council on a full repair and maintenance basis.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Ian Jones

Head of Leisure & Sport

1. Scrutiny Committee

N/A

2. Local Member(s)

Both Cllr Alun Lenny and Cllr Jeff Thomas have been consulted. Cllr. Lenny has responded and is in full support of the project.

3. Community / Town Council

Carmarthen Town Council are fully supportive of the project as key partners and lead applicant on the Sport Wales funding bid. They have funded the specialist conservation planning consultant costs this year (10k), and committed in principle to a £25k contribution from next year's budget.

4. Relevant Partners

Sport Wales
British Cycling
Welsh Cycling
We Cycle Wales

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE LISTED BELOW.

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• British Cycling Velodrome Risk Assessment• Sport Wales / Welsh Cycling Proposal• Welsh Cycling Letter of Support• Site Plan/Pictures of Carmarthen Park Velodrome• Sport Wales initial Offer Letter• Tywi Riders Letter of Support• Regional club feedback• Conservation Building Surveyor – Surface Justification Report• British Cycling Review of Coating Surface System• Coating System Preliminary Cost Schedule• Project Programme		Papers available from Leisure Office, 3, Spilman Street