

Provision of outdoor recreation and community facilities in Churton Park

The Proposal

The Council has sold reserve land to the Ministry of Education to enable the construction of a new school in Churton Park. The land was sold on the basis that the school development would provide outdoor recreation and community facilities available to the wider community. The proposal is to invest \$812,500 (funds equivalent to those received from the land sale) back into the school and wider community to provide these facilities.

Proposal Costs

Project Component	Operating expenses \$000									
	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
<i>Maintenance</i>	-	-	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
<i>Depreciation & Interest</i>	-	68	135	131	125	120	114	109	103	92
<i>Total</i>	-	68	138	134	128	123	117	112	106	95

Project Component	Capital expenses \$000									
	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
<i>Capital development</i>	-	812.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>	-	812.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Funding for the capital expenditure component of this project would come from borrowings, the operating expenditure component would come from an increase in the general rate.

Discussion

The Council has received \$812,500 (plus GST) from the sale of 7,373 sq m of recreation reserve (reserve) in Churton Park to the Ministry of Education (Ministry). The land will be amalgamated with adjacent private land to enable the construction of a new primary school (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Site of new school. Sold reserve land comprises the mown area on the left. The right hand area of land was purchased from a private owner.

The reserve was vested in Council during subdivision 10 years ago and was identified through public consultation¹ as the site for a future community youth space/playground with a possible sportsfield on adjacent land. As part of the Northern Reserves Management Plan approved by Council in September 2008 there was a provision to provide a new community playground in Amesbury Drive as part of the school development, or if the new school did not proceed, Council would reassess the planned playground provision in the area. There was also a commitment to investigate the development of an artificial sports surface in conjunction with the development of the new school.

Following disclosure for land reclassification purposes by the Department of Conservation (DOC) the land had been sold by Council for the use of a new school, initial feedback from the Churton Park Residents Association centred on how this impacted on the Northern Reserves Management Plan and whether the outcomes would be consistent with the Plan. It is likely that the Churton Park Residents Association will make a detailed submission to DOC as part of the Reserves Revocation process.

Council agreed to sell the land to the Ministry through section 50 of the Public Works Act (PWA) - for another public work². As part of the sale process, officers were to ensure that the community was consulted on and had access to the future school/community playground, access to the other school facilities outside of school hours and that Council was involved in the design team for the school.

Officers discussed these issues with the Ministry and the Board of Trustees (Board) of the current school. There was an expectation from the Board and Ministry that funds from the sale would be reinvested back into the site to achieve the benefits outlined above. Development of an artificial sportsfield to be used jointly by the school and community was also discussed. Officers pursued an MOU with the Board and the Ministry over these issues but neither could commit until community consultation had occurred. This would happen once the land was purchased and the Minister of Education had approved funding.

Following purchase of the reserve land on 6th March 2009 the Ministry confirmed funding of 8 million dollars for the school. An Establishment Board will be appointed in mid 2009 to oversee the school development and lead the consultation.

Council has an opportunity to be closely involved in the design and development of the school and work towards maximising community access and use of both the built facilities and provision of outdoor recreation space. This would involve reinvesting an amount equivalent to the proceeds from the sale to fund outdoor recreation and community facilities use within the school and wider suburb.

As part of the Establishment Board consultation, council officers would seek community feedback on the potential community facilities included as part of the school build and within the wider community. This information would be used as a basis to provide a recommendation to Council on the manner of its investment (Opex/Capex).

An option officers considered was to signal the development of facilities, but not to include values in the long-term plan until there is certainty around the investment. However with DOC's disclosure, officers believe there is a heightened expectation by the community for Council to signal its commitment to provide for outdoor recreation and community facilities.

¹ Churton Park Reserves Network, Development Strategy, Maintenance and Capital Development Plan 1999 Isthmus Group.

² Council meeting 26th September 2007.

Officer recommendation

It is recommended that funding be included in the final long-term plan (as outlined above) to develop outdoor recreation and community space within the school and the wider Churton Park community. This funding would be subject to a report back to Council, following the consultation process, to outline the planned investment.

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