

8. QEII PARK CONCEPT PLAN

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report summarises progress on the QEII Concept Plan, and the next steps in its formulation. As well as the general proposed land usages at the park, issues covered in the report include sports accommodation, Ascot Green, and the Ascot Golf Course.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The concept plan represents a guideline to what is seen as an aspired or ideal future shape for QEII Park. The intent of the plan is to define “envelopes of activity” for future use, rather than present a timetabled development plan. As a visioning document with a ten-year outlook, the plan will guide the sustainable development of QEII Park by providing a means to assess future development requests and proposals.
3. The proposed plan identifies as a conceptual framework the following aspects:
 - Building envelopes around the core main stadium and pools building.
 - A stadium and pools building envelope allowing for sensible expansion of sports facilities, which could include but are not limited to aquatic facilities, high performance sports, active indoor recreation, hydroslide expansion and outdoor recreation/pool/spa areas.
 - Providing a building envelope for the current and future growth of the Christchurch School of Gymnastics.
 - A substantial ring of green space areas for sporting and recreational purposes.
 - Protecting the integrity of the golf course and preserving its existing features.
 - Planning for improved vehicle, cycle and pedestrian safety as well as better access and flow into, through and out of the park.
 - An enlarged area around the community centre for locating community activities and localised leisure activities away from core facility building area, eg community crèche, petanque/boccia and playground.
 - No provision for on-site sports accommodation.
4. The next stages in producing the plan are:
 - (a) The proposed QEII Park Concept Plan is reported to Council at its 28 April 2005 meeting.
 - (b) Public consultation on the proposed plan to be carried out from late May to early July 2005.
 - (c) A final report on the QEII Park Concept Plan is presented to Council by the end of July 2005.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

5. No capital expenditure has been attached to the plan as this is solely a concept plan to guide decision-making on future use and activities at QEII Park. Infrastructural improvements could be phased in over several years. Council funding would be subject to assessing the costs and benefits of these improvements and evaluating them against other potential projects at the time.

Future development will often involve partnerships with other providers. It is not possible to predict when proposals will arise. The Council’s role may be providing access to land rather than contributing to capital costs (eg Christchurch School of Gymnastics extension, the proposed Ice Arena).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board provide comments or recommendations on the proposed QEII Park Concept Plan that can be considered alongside the report on the Plan going to Council at its 28 April 2005 meeting.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board request that Ascot Green be recognised as a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.
2. That the Board advocate in the LTCCP for provision of an upgraded entranceway to QEII Park off Travis Road, with adequate traffic management considered as part of the entranceway.
3. That the Board does not support the provision of sports residential accommodation within QEII Park.
4. That the Board supports the retention of the roadway between "O" and "P" as shown on the attached plan.
5. That the Board does not support the proposed new roadway from Ascot Avenue.
6. That the Board supports the retention of the crèche in immediate proximity to the main stadium and facilities at QEII.
7. That the Board request that officers ensure the existing traffic management plan includes clean-up services for neighbouring streets after events at QEII park.
8. That the Board request provision of adequate on-site parking to meet the future growth anticipated by the concept plan.

BACKGROUND

6. QEII Park contains the largest recreational facility in Christchurch. There is increasing demand for facilities and open space at the park. There is also widespread community interest in the type of activities that occur in the facility buildings and on the surrounding park area.
7. Both the Council and QEII Park management are regularly approached with proposals or requests for activities at QEII Park. For example, in 2003 the Council was approached regarding the construction of a sports academy at the park, which included sports accommodation.
8. At the moment the Council has no real framework to guide planning decisions regarding the balance between green space and built space. There is also no clarity about the appropriateness of on-site sports accommodation, which would be a departure from the current level of service provided at QEII Park.
9. To address these issues, in 2003 the Council passed the following resolutions:
 - (a) That priority be given to the preparation of a long-term concept plan and policies for the future development of QEII Park.
 - (b) That the long-term concept plan be subject to the special consultative process.
 - (c) That staff include reference to the siting of sport related accommodation at QEII Park in the long-term concept plan.
10. An inter-unit staff working party was formed to oversee the forming of the plan. The following goals were formed to guide its development:
 - Identify generally how much of QEII Park, and specifically what areas, should be retained as green space, and what areas should be set aside for built up space.
 - Identify current and future vehicle and pedestrian access and flow throughout the park.
 - Include reference in the plan to the possible siting of sports related accommodation (as requested by the Council).
11. The process used to develop the concept plan has included research, community consultation and professional advice. The initial consultation comprised nine focus groups held in June and July of 2004. These included local residents associations, sports organisations, sports businesses at QEII Park, schools and youth. The process also involved discussions with the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board, the then Community and Leisure Committee and a staff working party.
12. Focus group discussion centred on how QEII Park should be developed in the future, how much of QEII Park should be built up and how much should remain green space, and attitudes towards the locating of sports-related accommodation at QEII Park. The working party also gave consideration to current and future leisure demands for QEII Park for sport and recreation users, the local community and the general public; current recreation trends and demographic patterns; and the relevant policies and current planning issues for QEII Park.

CONCEPT PLAN PROPOSAL

13. Following the assessment of various options, a proposed option was developed (see attachment). This option is considered to provide the best provision of space for a multi-use sport, recreation, leisure, and events location, as well as balancing local community versus wider metropolitan needs. Its main advantages and disadvantages are noted in Table One below, with the advantages being seen to outweigh the disadvantages in terms of both their quantity and quality.
14. It should be noted that although the plan identifies and allows realistic expectations from the public about what areas will be used for what purposes this does not mean that the Council is committed to funding the plan. It is expected that future developments would be considered by Council on their own merits, and would be subject to separate decision making processes before Council would commit any funding.
15. Furthermore, the plan should not delay progress on current developments which are largely complimentary with the plan's vision, eg the ice arena, and the proposed Christchurch School of Gymnastics expansion. It is intended that the Local Government Act consultation requirements for the current expansion within the total gymnastics building envelope, which has received financial support from Council through the Metropolitan Funding Committee, will be done as part of the public consultation for the concept plan.

16. A vision is important to broadly describe what the plan is intended to achieve, and to provide a guide for its utilisation. During the initial consultation process of putting together the plan, the following vision for QEII Park was formed:

'QEII Park: Canterbury's ultimate multi-dimensional sport, recreation, leisure and event place, enhancing the community's health and well-being'

Table One: Main advantages and disadvantages of the proposed option

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better traffic access and flow through park, improved road safety off Travis Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires replacement of internal northern access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus route through park for patrons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route past facility buildings may be perceived as undesirable by some sports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building envelope for Christchurch School of Gymnastics caters for expected future growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total Christchurch School of Gymnastics building envelope would mean relocation of boccia courts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining current orientation of soccer pitch and allowing for its enhancement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost opportunity to re-orientate soccer pitch more favourably.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Par 3 golf course and driving range retained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost opportunity to provide for junior golf.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing of sports buildings adjacent to Village Green to support sports activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No provision for sports accommodation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When appropriate, crèche can be shifted away from main entrance area to Community Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost associated with crèche relocation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of building envelopes which are clustered around existing core of facility buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small loss of open space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building envelope adjacent to existing pool for future growth and provision when required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of green space flow around park. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised and defined area for Ascot Green. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved walking/cycling pathways in and around park. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies removal of high maintenance, outworn stands. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved main entrance and forecourt area. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment of pond as a leisure area. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlarged area around Community Centre to include other community functions. 	

CONSIDERATIONS

(a) Sports Accommodation

Sports accommodation at QEII Park was not considered to be a high priority at this time for the following reasons:

- This need can be met by private providers elsewhere in the city.
- There are better sporting and recreational uses to put valuable park space to.
- There appear to be alternative sites for sports accommodation near QEII Park.
- Lack of strong demand from sports organisations.
- Strong opposition from the local community.
- There are legal implications associated with the proposed siting of sports accommodation as this falls outside the City Plan (any construction would require either a change to the City Plan or a resource consent).

Should a strong case arise in the future for on-site sports accommodation, there are locations identified in the plan for additional sports buildings that could be considered if they are still available at the time.

(b) **Ascot Green**

There was considerable discussion in some of the focus groups about the status of Ascot Green and the ability of locals to access it for casual recreation purposes. Notwithstanding these concerns, the proposed plan recognises Ascot Green as recreational green space and retains this area within the park as part of one fee simple entity.

It is considered that both metropolitan and local needs can be well met in this fashion without the need for Ascot Green to become a reserve under the Reserves Act (1977), ie the proposed plan calls for Council ownership and management of QEII Park as one cohesive unit.

The advantages and disadvantages of Ascot Green remaining as fee simple or changing to reserve status are summarised in Table Two below.

Table Two: Ascot Green Options

1. Ascot Green as Fee Simple	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management of QEII Park as one cohesive unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land could be sold or leased to other interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognised in Concept Plan as recreational space and part of green space ring around core buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council could use space for non-sporting or non-recreational purposes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More flexible use of Ascot Green space for sport, recreation and events.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• QEII Park has a citywide significance as a sport and recreation destination.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some protection in LGA (s138: cannot sell or dispose of part of park without consultation).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection in City Plan for QEII Park ('Open Space 3'), eg retention of open space, building limitations.	
2. Ascot Green as a Reserve	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preservation of Ascot Green as a reserve and recreational space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• QEII Park not able to be managed as one entity by Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits on types of activity that could occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More limited land uses for Ascot Green, eg limits the power of the Council to grant leases and licences over the reserve.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to go through consultation under LGA (s138) to change park status.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management Plan needs to be completed pursuant to the Reserves Act.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will involve the Minister of Conservation in some decisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The reserve must be managed within the classified purposes of the Reserves Act 1977.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits the power of the Council to grant leases and licences over the reserve.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are strict notice requirements under the Reserves Act.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public notice would be required under the Reserves Act prior to classifying the reserve.

(c) **Ascot Golf Course**

There are several aspects of the concept plan that impact on the lease operated by the Ascot Golf Course. Potentially these relate to small areas of the Ascot Golf Course between the Ascot Community Centre and Ascot Green as already noted, and how the walking track at QEII Park may link up with the Travis Wetland via Beach Road.

These impacts have been discussed in general terms with the leaseholder, who is broadly happy to accommodate them. The golf course lease has another seven years to run.

(d) **Consistency with Policy**

The overall vision is consistent with the results anticipated from metropolitan facilities such as QEII Park, as described in the Christchurch City Plan.

The proposed option is consistent with Council policies such as the Recreation and Sport Policy (eg catering for all users as well as target groups), and the Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy (eg encourages sporting excellence, allows for partnerships with private or non-commercial providers).

(e) **Consultation Process**

Given that the plan is of a concept nature rather than being a specific development programme about to be carried out, and that consultation to date has been carried out with key interest groups, there appears to be no real need or benefit to carry out a special consultation process.

Accordingly, it is considered that general public consultation would effectively enable the wider community to comment on the plan. A motion to Council to rescind the earlier special consultation resolution would be needed.