

8. HEATHCOTE VALLEY RIDING SCHOOL - PERMANENT GRAZING

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	City Solutions Manager
Author:	Darren Moses, Project Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to examine issues raised in the Heathcote Valley Riding Schools' deputation report and to inform the Board on:
 - Options for permanent grazing for horses in Heathcote Valley.
 - Details on staging planting that may allow for permanent horse grazing.
 - Consideration of identified recreation needs for the Heathcote Valley area.
 - Consideration of a site visit for the Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. At the Board meeting on Wednesday 8 March 2006, a deputation of Kathryn Byfield Budd and Aisjah Addison, representing the Heathcote Valley Riding School presented a report which requested the securing of permanent horse grazing land within Heathcote Valley Park.
3. The Board have requested a report which will inform them on issues raised in the deputation. A site visit is also recommended to support this report.
4. A decision now on permanent grazing is considered premature, pending further development planning by the Council's project team and a City Plan change which is being initiated. Temporary grazing is supported by the Council project team on the basis of month to month tenure as the project development, construction and planting continues over the next 5 years.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

5. Presently unknown, pending City Plan change.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board agree to receive the report.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendation be adopted and the representatives of the riding school be invited to join the Board on its site visit.

BACKGROUND ON HEATHCOTE VALLEY PARK - PERMANENT GRAZING

Current Situation

6. The Council's Heathcote Valley Park project team has been working closely with the Heathcote Valley Riding School over the past 4-5 years to ensure that the park contains a network of tracks suitable for horse trekking throughout the area.
7. Council issued the Heathcote Valley Riding School with a licence on 8 April 2005 to graze horses on Council land at Sec SO 303513, near the riding school. When Tony Hallams (Policy and Leasing Officer) became involved some two years ago he was informed by the Heathcote Valley project group that the parcel of land was being made available temporarily to the riding school. The Council through the Greenspace Unit assisted further by providing a container contract for the temporary placement of a storage facility for riding gear at the site.
8. The Council has further assisted the riding school by upgrading the fencing,(at the riding schools request) straddling the vacant grazing land beside the Tunnel Road and making this available to the school.
9. The riding school has been informed that the current licence could be notated to include other parcels of land at the Tunnel Road site when they become vacant, but this will depend on the competing demands of the public and the Council is required to exercise transparency in the selection of an occupier.
10. The licence has made it clear that any tenure of the land is temporary, and on a month to month basis, acting on the advice of the project group.

ISSUES RAISED IN HEATHCOTE VALLEY RIDING SCHOOL DEPUTATION REPORT

Horse Grazing

11. The main issue raised in the deputation report is that, with the exception of the Heathcote Valley's Riding School, which is located on private land, there is no other areas within Heathcote Valley, for permanent horse grazing. The deputation report considers that privately owned land is not an option due to financial constraints and so is seeking a solution for permanent horse grazing on Council owned land.

OPTIONS RAISED IN THE HEATHCOTE VALLEY RIDING SCHOOL DEPUTATION REPORT (SEE MAP ...)

Horse grazing on Council land

12. The Heathcote Valley Riding School report requested an option that would integrate permanent grazing alongside the rural open spaces. The areas identified in their report for permanent horse grazing are owned by Council. These areas are:
 1. 81 Ferrymead Park Drive (SEC 1 SO 303513)
 2. 150 Scruttons Road, Heathcote (LOT 2 DP 76441) (known as Old Port Lyttelton Land)

Refer to **Attachment 1** for identification of these areas.

Review of Option for Permanent Horse Grazing on Council owned land

13. The primary reason why it is considered premature to examine the option for permanent horse grazing:

The areas (81 Ferrymead Park Drive and 150 Scruttons Rd) within the Ferrymead Special Purpose zone are subject to a future rezoning. For example a decision to allow permanent horse grazing at this stage at 150 Scruttons Rd would limit the exploration of rezoning options for this site which is contradictory to the process outlined in *Volume 3 Part 8 Special Purpose Zone 1.10 Special Purpose (Ferrymead) Zone* of the City Plan.

(a) **City Plan**

It is considered that exploring options for permanent horse grazing within this zone at this stage would be premature. According to the Council's City Plan, these areas were zoned Special Purpose (Ferrymead) to indicate that further investigation was required before appropriate land uses were established. The City Plan states under V3 Part 8 1.10 Special Purpose (Ferrymead) Zone that a "detailed assessment" needs to be undertaken which includes:

1. Possible options for future use in consultation with other parties.
2. A detailed assessment of various issues involved, accompanied by a brief outlining land use options before an overall zoning pattern is identified.

The City Plan team has been directed by a Council recommendation (24 July 2003) to commence this assessment in terms of a Section 32 report (examines costs, benefits and needs for various zoning options) under the Resource Management Act 1991.

As a result City Plan will initiate consultation through a discussion "Issues and Options" paper for those areas within the zone that have not yet been designated a land-use under the "*Ferrymead/ Heathcote Valley Park Development Plan*" or have an existing use, such as land used for utilities and services. 150 Scruttons Rd, Heathcote (Lot 2 DP 76441) is one of these areas.

Proposed Planting

14. Since the first Heathcote Valley Park development proposal was released in June 2001 (refer **Attachment 2**, area 16), the area adjacent to the Riding School has been designated as forested area with the option of a lease for grazing in the interim. The extensive storm water management scheme developed for this area is the primary driver behind this development. This work is being funded in part by a cost share scheme.
15. The Council has plans to fill the area thereby raising it above flood level and then plant native tree forest and coastal bush and shrubland. **Attachments 3 and 4** show the planting plant and engineering detail for this area marked A and B.

Recreation Needs

16. The Hagley/Ferrymead Leisure, Parks and Waterways Study in 2003 identified the development of more fields at Cuthberts Green and Heathcote Valley Park as immediate options to address a lack of sportsfields in this area, hence the creation of sport fields at Heathcote Valley Park.
17. The sports field shortage was reinforced through the Hagley/Ferrymead Leisure, Parks and Waterways Study Draft Three Year Action Plan for 2004-2007 which also referred to the need to provide toilets open for use at these sport fields.
18. In order to determine if it would be appropriate to develop the sporting facilities at Heathcote Valley Park sooner than anticipated an analysis of current playing fields in the eastern part of Christchurch was undertaken. The south-east area of Christchurch by nature of its terrain has always had a shortage of suitable flat land for use as sports parks. Issues around competition for use of available fields particularly for use by winter codes have been longstanding. The pressure on sports fields has recently increased with an explosion in the number of junior players in the primary sports codes of rugby and soccer in the area over the last five years.
19. Note: A study specific to the needs of recreation users within the Heathcote Valley Park catchment has not been undertaken.

Site Visit

20. Construction of the major components of the waterway scheme is currently underway. It is expected that these works will be completed by the end of August. For this reason, a site visit is recommended for September, at a time to suit the Board.