

8. LINWOOD PARK PLAYGROUND REDEVELOPMENT

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	Transport and Greenspace Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the plan for the redevelopment of the Linwood Park playground following consultation with the local community (refer attached).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. A long term plan for the development of Linwood Park was prepared by the Council in 2003 with community input. The Board received information from the public consultation process on this master plan at its meeting of 19 November 2003. The redevelopment of the existing central play space, along with the provision of a new playground for younger children, was a part of that development plan.
3. Although the redevelopment of the playground had already been agreed upon as part of the earlier consultation, more detailed designs for separate junior and senior playgrounds were released for further public comment in September-October 2006. Staff noted that during the 2003 consultation process there had been a response rate of only 195 submissions received from the 3,000 copies of the consultation document distributed to stakeholders and residents in the area surrounding Linwood Park. It was therefore considered that it would be more effective to target local families over a wider area by distributing the public information leaflet to the 342 pupils of Linwood Avenue Primary School which adjoins Linwood Park. The leaflet was also distributed to a number of key stakeholder groups, and made available at the Linwood Service Centre, Linwood Library, and on the Council's website. In addition, focus groups were also conducted with two groups of children, aged 5-10 years old, and 11-14 years old respectively, from Council's school holiday programmes, and with a class of Linwood Intermediate School pupils.
4. There was still a very low response rate to the public information leaflet with a total of four stakeholder groups and nine residents returning the comment form providing feedback on the proposed plans. However, the feedback was very positive with all respondents indicating a good level of support for the both playground designs. The children in the focus groups also provided many constructive suggestions.
5. As the overall feedback was positive, the Transport and Greenspace Unit propose to make only one minor alteration to the original proposal as follows.
6. Many of the children identified the need for a drinking fountain and it was suggested that it be situated close to the playgrounds but away from the toilet block. There have been drinking fountains in the park previously but these were continually vandalised and were eventually removed for this reason. However, a new drinking fountain of extremely robust construction will be installed in an open area close to the playgrounds with the exact location to be determined by the ability to connect to water supply and waste services.
7. The proposed new play equipment for both playgrounds was generally very well supported. The children were particularly enthusiastic about the space net, the provision of which was also previously identified in the 2003 consultation.
8. Many of the children expressed a desire for additional play equipment or recreational facilities to be provided. There was a clear indication that another larger piece of equipment is needed for the senior playground, preferably one with a spinning component such as a 'spica'. At this time, there is no funding available for other pieces of equipment in addition to those shown on the concept plans. However, staff will continue to investigate whether this may be able to be provided within the next few years through other sources of funding.
9. Similarly, there is currently no funding for other facilities such as a public barbeque. This area is also currently well serviced with paddling pools in other parks. In addition, some items are no longer considered to be appropriate for a public park, for example, tree huts.

10. A new public toilet to be situated close to the Linwood Avenue entrance has been approved as part of the overall development plan for the park, although this is not scheduled to be constructed until 2013.
11. One respondent identified the need to ensure good visibility with the plantings to allow for supervision. In the new landscape plantings, the trees will have their lower branches pruned back, and the plantings underneath will be at a low level, to maintain good sight lines and visibility into the playground areas and improve user safety.
12. Another respondent expressed concerns about how the separation of the two playgrounds would make it difficult to supervise children of different ages, and also attract children from the school. The desire for a separate junior playground was identified in the original consultation process. This provides younger children with the opportunity to play on equipment more suited to their age and abilities, with less likelihood of straying into the path of older children, or of the equipment being dominated by older children. Although the two playgrounds are separated, the junior playground has been sited on a raised area of the park close to the main path with good visibility all around and clear sight lines across to the senior playground area. The School has confirmed that children are not permitted to enter the park during school hours other than for organised sport.
13. The issue of rubbish and graffiti in the park and surrounding streets was raised by one respondent. Some children also expressed a dislike of graffiti on the play equipment and the removal of this is a part of ongoing routine maintenance. The issue of rubbish will be referred to other staff within the Council as appropriate.
14. All respondents who supplied their contact details have been sent a letter of reply thanking them for their input. The letter has also informed respondents that the plan would be presented to the Board for approval. Details of the meeting were provided so that any interested people could attend. Linwood Avenue School and Linwood Intermediate School have also been thanked for their assistance and informed of the outcome of the consultation process.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The current Greenspace Capital Works Programme has funding available to undertake the playground redevelopment at Linwood Park with \$100,000 available in the current 2006/07 year. Subject to any unavoidable delays, the works will be completed within the current financial year.
10. If a building consent is required for the space net due to its height, this will be applied for as part of the implementation process.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board approve the plans for redevelopment of the senior playground, and the construction of a new junior playground, at Linwood Park and that the Transport and Greenspace Unit commence the construction programme.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That option "B" be adopted

OPTIONS

11. There are two options:
 - (a) Do nothing/maintain the status quo. This is not considered a viable option as the upgrade of the senior playground and the installation of a new junior playground has already been agreed upon in the overall development plan for the park.
 - (b) Approve the plans for the redevelopment of the senior playground, and the construction of a new junior playground, at Linwood Park and the Transport and Greenspace Unit commence the construction programme.

This will allow the Transport and Greenspace Unit to provide an improved playground with an improved design that provides better facilities and play opportunities for children using the reserve and their caregivers.

PREFERRED OPTION

12. The preferred option is (b).

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

13. Approve the plans for the redevelopment of the senior playground, and the construction of a new junior playground, at Linwood Park and the Transport and Greenspace Unit commence the construction programme.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Improved play opportunities for both children in this immediate area, and those visiting the park from other areas; Improved facilities for caregivers; Improved safety for users.	None identified.
Cultural	No benefits identified.	None identified.
Environmental	Enhancement of recreation facilities.	None identified.
Economic	No positive economic impact for the community identified.	\$100,000 already in capital programme for 2006/07 year; May be maintenance costs for additional equipment due to high level of vandalism in this area.

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:
Primary alignment with community outcomes:
A city for recreation, fun and creativity.
A healthy city.
Also aligns with:
A city with a sustainable natural environment – our city's natural resources, biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystem integrity are protected and enhanced. Also contributes to:

Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities:
No impacts on Council's capacity and responsibilities have been identified.

Effects on Maori:
No effects on Maori have been identified.

Consistency with existing Council policies:
Parks and Waterways Access Policy.
Childrens Play Equipment on Parks Policy.

Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:
Those local residents and user groups who did respond indicated good level of support of proposed plan.

Other relevant matters:
None identified.

Maintain The Status Quo (If Not Preferred Option)

14. Do nothing/maintain the status quo

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	None identified.	Recreation experience for children in this low socio-economic area is not enhanced by existing inadequate facilities.
Cultural	None identified.	None identified.
Environmental	None identified.	None identified.
Economic	No immediate financial cost of upgrade.	Eventual removal of old equipment.
Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: None identified.		
Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities: No impacts on Council's capacity and responsibilities have been identified.		
Effects on Maori: No effects on Maori have been identified.		
Consistency with existing Council policies: N/A.		
Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Those residents who did respond indicated a high level of support for the proposal.		
Other relevant matters: None identified.		