

6. NORTHWOOD PARK/ENGLEFIELD RESERVE FOOTBRIDGE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN

General Manager responsible:	General Manager, City Environment Group
Officer responsible:	Transport and Greenspace Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board to proceed to detailed design and construction/ implementation of the Northwood Park/Englefield Reserve footbridge and landscape plan project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Englefield Reserve and Northwood Park are located in Belfast. These reserves are separated by the Kaputone Creek, which forms part of the Styx River system. This part of the Styx is an ephemeral waterway and its associated river terraces provide an important natural feature between these reserves.
3. Preliminary planning highlighted the need for pedestrian access across Kaputone Creek as part of a walking route from Northwood to Englefield Road. A concept plan was developed to meet this need and also to create an ecological green corridor that identifies this area as part of the Styx River catchment.
4. In November 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 650 residences and key stakeholders (refer attachment 1). The consultation received 229 submissions with community feedback being generally very positive about the proposal. The consultation summary is included as attachment 2.
5. The following quantitative response was received:

Footbridge Statements	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
<i>"Yes, I support the footbridge"</i>	218	95%
<i>"No, I do not support the footbridge"</i>	6	3%
Position not indicated	5	2%

Landscape Plan Statements	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
<i>"Yes, I support the landscape plan"</i>	211	92%
<i>"No, I do not support the landscape plan"</i>	9	4%
Position not indicated	9	4%

6. While these figures indicate strong support for both the proposed bridge and the proposed landscaping, the following key issues were also highlighted in the feedback:
 - Cost of the bridge – concern that the bridge looks too expensive (expressed by 7% of respondents)
 - Stream flow in the Kaputone Creek – concern about the need for more stream flow (expressed by 7% of respondents)
 - Tree removals and/or landscaping – concern was expressed about a number of tree and landscaping related issues (expressed by 16% of respondents).

7. The cost of the proposed bridge is estimated to be around \$170,000. A rough estimate for a simple boardwalk would be in the order of \$100,000. The reason for this cost is that, as the river bank is quite high, the project would involve extensive earthworks and tree removal to get a 1:12 grade. The result would be significant disruption to the natural environment and a heavy looking timber structure. There would also be resource consent issues as the boardwalk would be located in the floodplain. It could be lifted higher but, once it was over 1m high, it would require handrails and would become a bigger and more expensive structure.
8. The issue of stream flow is beyond the scope of this project and, regardless of stream flow, the river banks pose a barrier between the reserves, due to their steepness. However, the Greenspace Planning team has recently submitted a resource consent application to sink a bore at the headwaters of the Kaputone Creek. If this application is approved, the water that is taken will be used to augment the flow of the creek. The details of this project will be outlined in an upcoming report to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board.
9. A number of submitters expressed concern at the tree removals due to their visual amenity and role in protection from the wind. However, the majority of the tree removals (willows) in this plan are required for safety reasons and, as such, are proceeding as part of Council's maintenance programme. In addition to the required tree maintenance work, this proposal would only require the removal of the remnant pine hedge on Northwood Park.
10. The initial concept has been amended in response to community feedback, where possible, and the preferred option is included as attachment 3. This option best satisfies the objectives of the project and has good community support. The construction of the bridge and footpaths is scheduled for April-June 2007. The implementation of the landscaping will begin in the winter planting season in July-September 2007 and will be staged over three years.
11. The preferred option best satisfies the objectives of the project, is consistent with the choices made by the community, and is consistent with the funding allocated in the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

12. The funding for the proposed Northwood Park/Englefield Reserve Footbridge and Landscape Plan has been set aside in the LTCCP under "Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways – Local Projects - New Bridges and Structures" (refer page 84 LTCCP).
13. The total cost of the bridge and paths is approximately \$210,000. The cost of landscaping is approximately \$90,000 and will be developed over the next three years.
14. The funds for the bridge, paths and part of the landscaping are programmed in the Capital Programme Unit's budget, for construction over the 2006/07 and 2007/08 financial years. The remainder of the landscaping will be budgeted for over the next three years.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Shirley/Papanui Community Board approves the plan in attachment 3 in order to proceed to detailed design and construction/implementation of the Northwood Park/Englefield Reserve footbridge and landscape plan project.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendation be adopted.

BACKGROUND ON THE NORTWOOD PARK/ENGLEFIELD RESERVE FOOTBRIDGE AND LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

15. Englefield Reserve and Northwood Park are located in Belfast. These reserves are separated by the Kaputone Creek, which forms part of the Styx River system. This part of the Styx is an ephemeral waterway and its associated river terraces provide an important natural feature between these reserves.
16. Englefield Reserve is a local park that contains a sports field, children's play area, toilets and landscaping. Englefield Reserve now extends across Kaputone Creek and has strong links to the Northwood and Crombie Green residential developments on the other side of Kaputone Creek.
17. Northwood Park is a sports ground containing a sports field, some amenity boundary plantings and some residual planting (pine trees) associated with the boundary of Northwood subdivision.
18. Preliminary planning highlighted the following issues:
 - Pedestrian access is needed across Kaputone Creek as part of a walking route from Northwood to Englefield Road. Children from Englefield need to access the bus stop on Northwood Boulevard and to do so they must cross the creek. The alternative is to catch a bus on the other side of Main North Road.
 - A number of issues need to be addressed with regard to tree health. In addition some trees would need to be removed to accommodate a bridge.
 - An esplanade strip follows the Kaputone Creek upstream on the Northwood side.
 - The developer raised expectations of a tennis court in Northwood Park. Styx Mill has private tennis courts. Sheldon Park, which is located across Main North Road, has public tennis courts, basketball and skate facilities. Council has received two opposing petitions about need for a tennis court (2004).
 - There is a toilet near the car park on the lower field of Englefield Reserve. There may be a need for a toilet in Northwood Park. Changing rooms would be needed to service senior teams.
 - There has been a loss of base flow in Kaputone Creek - CCC, ECan and Styx Living Laboratory Trust are examining this.
19. A concept plan that included two pedestrian bridges across the Kaputone Stream was initially developed and presented to the S/P Community Board in March 2005. In 2006 a Capital Programme Project Team was set up to finalise the concept, consult with the community and implement the bridge project. The initial concept plan has been rejected due to the cost of the two proposed bridges and the significant tree removal required.
20. The objectives for the project were:
 - To develop a concept plan for a bridge over the Kaputone Creek, between Englefield Reserve and Northwood Park, which enhances the ecological green corridor and pedestrian linkages in and around the river corridor
 - Ensure that the concept plan is endorsed by the community and Community Board
 - Use an integrated artworks approach to the design of the bridge
 - Visually identify the Kaputone Creek as part of the Styx catchment
 - Improve accessibility between the reserves and between the Northwood and Englefield suburbs
 - Enhance the Kaputone Creek as an ecological green corridor including natural landforms and existing native botanical flora
 - Improve amenity of the reserves.

21. The Project Team developed a concept to meet these objectives, which included the following:
- One pedestrian bridge across the Kaputone Creek
 - Pathways between the reserves and along the creek
 - Extensive landscaping of the ecological green corridor, which would be staged over several years.
22. The design philosophy for the landscape plan took into account the following landscape principles:
- This area provides a transition zone from neatly manicured residential development through to a sense of wilderness associated with an important ecological area
 - Large, tall plantings associated with the 5 metre ecological strip along the top of the terrace are essential in order to retain the sense of wilderness within the reserve. The only exceptions being where the houses will be screened by existing trees within the reserve
 - New plantings should reflect the ecological significance of the reserve
 - Built structures to have a modern feel and be in keeping with the strategy, Purakaunui: The Styx, The Role of Art and Design.
23. In November 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 650 residences and key stakeholders (refer attachment 1). This pamphlet included a summary of the concept, an initial concept plan and a feedback form. The project team sought feedback from the community to see whether the bridge and the landscape proposals were generally supported.
24. The consultation received a 35% response rate (229 responses). Community feedback was generally very positive, as can be seen in the tables below. The consultation outcome and project team responses are outlined in full in attachment 2.
25. The following quantitative response was received to the following statements:

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<i>"No, I do not support the footbridge"</i>	6	3%
Position not indicated	5	2%

Landscape Plan Statements	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
<i>"Yes, I support the landscape plan"</i>	211	92%
<i>"No, I do not support the landscape plan"</i>	9	4%
Position not indicated	9	4%

26. While these figures indicate strong support for both the proposed bridge and the proposed landscaping, the following key issues were also highlighted in the feedback:
- Cost of the bridge – concern that the bridge looks too expensive (expressed by 7% of respondents)
 - Stream flow in the Kaputone Creek – concern about the need for more stream flow (expressed by 7% of respondents)
 - Tree removals and/or landscaping – concern was expressed about a number of tree and landscaping related issues (expressed by 16% of respondents). The key landscaping issues raised were:
 - Concern at tree removals due to their multiple values, especially visual and protection from the wind
 - Species choice - exotic vs. native, opposition to grasses, need for more colour, need for some fast growing species, preference for low maintenance.

Cost of the proposed footbridge

27. The cost of the proposed bridge is estimated to be around \$170,000. A rough estimate for a simple boardwalk would be in the order of \$100,000. The reason for this cost is that, as the river bank is quite high, the project would involve extensive earthworks and tree removal to get a 1:12 grade. The result would be significant environmental disruption and a heavy looking timber structure. There would also be resource consent issues as the board walk would be located in the floodplain. It could be lifted higher but, once it was over 1m high, it would require handrails and would become a bigger and more expensive structure.
28. Local community has identified a need for a footbridge to connect the two reserves and this need is now urgent. The funding for this proposal is allocated in the Capital Works Programme, in accordance with the Long Term Council Community Plan. The project team considers that the overall design will be well integrated with the surrounding environment and will help to identify this area with the Styx River catchment. It will be in keeping with Purakaunui: The Styx, The Role of Art and Design and Styx Vision 2000-2040 strategies.

Stream flow in the Kaputone Creek

29. The issue of stream flow is beyond the scope of this project, which is focussed on the provision of a bridge and landscaping to link these two public spaces. Regardless of stream flow in the creek, the river banks pose a barrier between the reserves, due to their steepness. However, the Greenspace Planning team has recently submitted a resource consent application to sink a bore at the headwaters of the Kaputone Creek. If this application is approved, the water that is taken will be used to augment the flow of the creek. The details of this project will be outlined in an upcoming report to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board.

Tree Removals Issues

30. A number of submitters expressed concern at the tree removals due to their multiple values; in particular, visual amenity and protection from the wind. The consultation material outlined the following tree removal plan:
 - End of 2006 - Removal of approximately 10 willows, located east of the proposed bridge, due to ill health and risk of failure. This work has been completed and was part of the city's ongoing maintenance programme.
 - Early 2007 (depending on approvals) - Removal of the remnant pine hedge, located on Northwood Park side near site of proposed bridge, to allow visibility to proposed bridge. Removal of failing willows, located at the bridge site, due to ill health and risk of failure.
 - Ongoing work over next 5-10 years - Willows, poplars and pines along this stretch of Kaputone Creek will be gradually removed as they decline and as new plantings mature, to allow for replacement plantings of indigenous species along the Kaputone Creek corridor.
31. The majority of the tree removals in this plan are required for safety reasons, as they are not healthy trees. In terms of healthy trees, this proposal would only require the removal of the remnant pine hedge on Northwood Park.
32. A number of submissions mistakenly expressed concern about the removal of trees that we do not intend to remove e.g. the large pines and poplars bordering the creek, the walnut trees and healthy willow trees.

Key Landscape Plan Issues

33. The landscaping plan provides an ecological green corridor with native species chosen to encourage bird life and other natural ecosystems. Existing exotic trees will be phased out as they decline and as new indigenous plantings mature. Exotic plantings will continue to be developed outside the river corridor, in the more modified environment.

34. A number of submitters sought tree characteristics that are provided for in the landscape plan, such as flowering species, trees that attract birds, fast growing tree species, large native trees.
35. There was some concern that the proposed dense plantings would provide entrapment areas. The design will ensure that the plantings along the through-routes, and adjacent to the property boundaries, will be open so that there are not any areas of concealment. However, parts of this concept will include densely planted 'wilderness areas' that people can choose to enter if they wish.
36. In response to calls from the community, there will be a community planting day for this project. Details of this will be released closer to the time.
37. The project team considered the feedback from consultation and revised the landscape plan in the following way:
 - Under-planting will not be included under the proposed trees on Crombie Green
 - The number of tussocks will be minimised and appropriate species will be chosen
 - Hebes and coloured flax may be used in the planting plan
 - The potential future walkway up the Kaputone Creek was incorrectly noted on the plan on the northern side of the creek and has been relocated to the southern side
 - The landscape plan will note that the maximum height of landscaping will be 2m within 4m of property boundaries.
38. Some concern was raised about the proposed crossing point over Crombie Green that connects with the existing footpath on Crombie Green. This corner was identified as a problem in terms of speeding drivers and visibility of oncoming traffic for pedestrians. This corner has a posted speed limit of 35kph and the proposed crossing point was identified by the traffic engineers as the preferred site because it optimises intervisibility on both approaches to the bend.
39. A number of other issues were raised by the community that were outside the scope of this project and the project team's response to these issues is outlined in the consultation summary (attachment 2).
40. The recommended concept plan is included as attachment 3. The construction of the bridge and footpaths is scheduled for April-June 2007. The implementation of the landscaping will begin in the winter planting season in July-September 2007 and will be staged over three years.

OPTIONS

41. Three options were considered for the footbridge in Northwood Park/Englefield Reserve:
 - (a) One bridge across the Kaputone Creek. This option is favoured by the community, which urgently requires a footbridge to link the two reserves. However the public consultation highlighted some concern about the cost of this bridge. The pathway proposal will improve access for those with impaired mobility. Community identification fostered by integrated artwork linking to sense of identity with the Styx River catchment. Social and environmental benefits from landscaping and community planting day.
 - (b) Two bridges across the Kaputone Creek. This option was only partially developed and was not presented to the wider community as an option due to the excessive cost and significant tree removal and earthworks that would have been required. Public consultation on the single bridge option highlighted community concern about cost, indicating that two bridges would not be an acceptable option.
 - (c) Status quo - No footbridge. This option would not meet community expectations.

PREFERRED OPTION

42. The preferred option, (a) one bridge across the Kaputone Creek, best satisfies the objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation, which supports the need for a footbridge to link the two reserves.
43. The preferred option is consistent with the following policies:
- **Christchurch City Plan**
The City Plan contains policy specifically referring to art in public places. It states:
 - **Policy: Art in Public Places**
4.2.5 "To promote appropriate cultural development and the expression of art in buildings and areas accessible to the public."
 - **Council's Arts Policy Statement: He Kaupapa Ita Mo Nga Mahi Toi**
The statement of intent of this policy is that "*The Christchurch City Council is committed to achieving an enlivened and creative city in which the arts are widely recognised as being essential.*"
Goal 5 of this policy seeks to provide "*Buildings and public spaces that reflect the past, celebrate the present and provide a legacy for the future.*"
Among the objectives of this goal are to "*Ensure that the Council as a developer leads by example in achieving excellence in design and incorporating public artworks in its capital programmes.*"
 - **Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy:**
Styx Vision 2000-2040
44. The Kaputone Creek is an important tributary of the Styx River ecosystem and forms part of the overall vision for the long term management of the waterways, wetlands and surface water within the Styx catchment as outlined in 'Styx Vision 2000 – 2040'. This long term vision contains 5 interrelated visions including the following:
- Vision 2 - To create a "Source to Sea Experience" through the development of an Urban National Reserve.*
- Vision 4 - To establish "The Styx" as a place to be through maintaining and enhancing the special character and identity of the area.*
45. Specific actions include recognizing, highlighting and enhancing the unique landscape character of the Styx River ecosystem through:
- Improving public access, visibility and the growing of large trees along the margins of its waterways
 - Protecting and accentuating the stories of the land, its drainage and vegetation patterns, cultural patterns, features and landmarks.
46. The preferred option is also consistent with the following:
- LTCCP 2006-2016
 - Parks and Open Spaces Activity Management Plan
 - Safer Parks Policy
 - Parks and Waterways Access Policy.

47. The preferred option has primary alignment with the following Community Outcomes:

- *“Our diversity is seen, heard, valued and celebrated. All people feel a sense of belonging and participate in the community.”; and*
- *“Our lifestyles reflect our commitment to guardianship of the natural environment in and around Christchurch. We actively work to protect, enhance and restore our environment for future generations.”; and*
- *“Christchurch has a vibrant centre, attractive neighbourhoods and well-designed transport networks. Our lifestyles and heritage are enhanced by our urban environment.”*