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<p>Corporate Plan Output: New Assets Reserve Purchases</p>	

The purpose of this report is to consider the purchase of a six hectare extension to Halswell Domain.

LEISURE UNIT SENIOR SPORTS ADVISER COMMENTS

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide the Committee with background information on the Halswell Domain Sports Association’s (HDSA) application and to comment on the need for additional sports grounds.

Some members will recall previous applications for additional sports grounds from the HDSA being received as far back as 1996. Since then the Association has also presented several additional revised and updated submissions on this issue.

Halswell sports clubs using the domain have, over the years, experienced ongoing difficulties organising their sports programmes due to the shortage of sports grounds. Indeed the problems associated with this issue go back before local government reform in 1990.

Sports grounds shortage at the domain over the years has arisen as the result of the following:

1. Increased sports clubs membership in Halswell (refer attachment for details). Most sports clubs in Halswell report an increase in membership, which reflects the increase in the population of Halswell and Oaklands in recent years (22% increase in Oaklands alone between 1986 and 1991). The increase in sports club membership has therefore raised the demand for competition grounds and lighted training grounds due to the sports clubs fielding more teams each season.
2. Extended playing seasons – growing membership, more competition teams and insufficient sports grounds at Halswell Domain have forced sports clubs to extend their playing seasons in order to complete their programmes in terms of competition and training. The extended playing seasons have resulted in some major ‘overlap’ between summer and winter sports codes which again increases the demand for sports grounds. The extended playing season has also involved teams, which have been promoted to higher grades of competition. This situation has often resulted in marked disharmony between clubs.
3. Sports grounds overuse – the football and rugby league use of the lighted training grounds at Halswell Domain in winter is far beyond the carrying capacity of these grounds. The carrying capacity for the moderately well drained soils of the competition grounds and training areas at the domain is about six hours a week. Last season the two football training grounds each had in excess of 21 hours per week and the two rugby league training grounds each had 16 hours per week.

The increase in winter sport club membership from the 1998 season to the 1999 season suggested that these training grounds will be further used an additional 13 hours each week. This excessive winter overuse of the sports grounds at the domain results in poor playing surfaces for summer sport due to the lower turf quality and slower ground recovery.

The Parks Unit has identified the sports grounds at Halswell Domain as among the most overused in the city.

4. The introduction of additional sports to Halswell Domain – the tremendous growth of Touch in Christchurch in recent years saw the Halswell Touch Module start with 56 teams playing mid-week.

The new administration secondary school cricket by the Canterbury Cricket Association has created a demand for additional competition pitches and training areas at the domain.

It is of interest to note that at the present time there is no rugby club in Halswell. However, if in the future the need for a rugby club arises the present demand for sports grounds will be greater.

5. Other factors:
 - (i) Possible future amalgamation of sports clubs outside Halswell with Halswell clubs at the domain.
 - (ii) Possibility of present weekend trading creating a demand for mid week and twilight sport in the future. At the present time this would not be possible at the domain because of sports ground shortage.

It has been estimated that if an additional 11 hectares of land is made available adjoining Halswell Domain the present need will be adequately met for up to the next five years.

It is also agreed that further development of sport in the Halswell area should be focused away from the domain and provided within the next community.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY UNIT, SENIOR PLANNER COMMENTS

Halswell Urban Expansion Area

The proposed City Plan (notified June 1995) identified the Halswell Kennedy's Bush area as a suitable locality for long term growth, subject to detailed investigations being carried out into a number of issues. Subsequently a number of detailed studies were undertaken into matters such as flood mitigation, transport, open space and community needs.

Submissions to the Proposed Plan included several proposals for residential development around the edge of the present existing Halswell settlement. One of the submissions sought the rezoning of some 75 hectares of rural land around the Halswell Domain (East Halswell) for residential development. All together around 500 houses were requested to be rezoned for housing by submitters.

Hearings of the submissions were held during 1998 and the Council released its decisions in June this year. With respect to Halswell these decisions made provision for around 350 hectares of mainly housing land, including the 75 hectares in East Halswell. A significant expansion to the existing settlement and Kennedy's Bush, along the road from Halswell, was also provided for in the decisions. Depending on the outcome of appeals, the operative plan will provide for around 10,000 additional people in the Halswell – Kennedy's Bush area.

During the hearings on East Halswell, evidence was given by the reporting planner, the Halswell Residents Association and Combined Sports Association about the existing shortage of sports grounds on the domain. Additional development would aggravate the situation.

These concerns were reflected in the Council's decision (DISO) which identified eight hectares of land on a development plan to be set aside for sports fields. The amount was set having regard to what could be realized through reserves contributions, rather than the actual need. In an ideal world up to 15 hectares was put forward by the submitters as being needed to meet future needs and the Halswell Residents Association has lodged a reference (appeal) to the Environmental Court seeking this amount.

The recommendation of this report to acquire 11 hectares (six hectares purchased, five hectares from reserve contribution) seems to be a reasonable compromise in planning terms. The appellant have informally indicated that they would almost certainly withdraw their reference if 11 hectares of additional playing fields were to be attached to the domain. This would pave the way for development to occur and avoid the time and expense of resolving the issue at the Environment Court. Therefore the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit supports the proposed acquisition.

PARKS UNIT, PARKS PLANNING TEAM LEADER AND PROPERTY UNIT, PROPERTY OFFICER COMMENTS

Halswell Domain is the major sports park in this rapidly growing area of the city. The 13 clubs have over 2,600 members and together with the pool, kindergarten etc provide a major community base for Halswell. The Parks Unit considers it is essential to provide for current and future recreation needs by extending the domain.

While relocation of the Pony Club is still being worked on, it is considered essential that the existing club infrastructure of the domain be supported and built on by expanding the domain's sports ground capacity. Other parks will be developed at Curletts/Templetons and Carrs Reserve but the central position and existing club infrastructure means that Halswell Domain must be extended to provide for current and future sports needs.

With respect to the source of funds, it is proposed that the purchase be funded from the District Sports Park provision in the 1999/2000 Corporate Plan.

CONCLUSION

The recreation demand problems of Halswell Domain have been reported to the Council at various times since 1996. The Council has acknowledged the problem and has always supported the principle of land purchase and reserve contribution being used to extend the domain by approximately 10 hectares.

Discussions to acquire land from Apple Fields Limited have been ongoing for the past two years. There has understandably been a reluctance on the company's behalf to deal with property prior to the release of the City Plan given their expectation of a zoning change to residential.

Negotiations have now been concluded with the company to secure six hectares of land adjoining the southern boundary to the domain, sufficient to accommodate up to four playing fields.

This is in addition to five hectares to be secured by way of reserve contribution to the northern boundary of the domain to further extend the playing areas. This will leave approximately 2.5 hectares of reserve contribution to be provided within the adjoining residential development.

Details of the proposed settlement are contained within the public excluded section of the report which the company requires a decision from the Council at its August meeting.

Recommendation: That the purchase of six hectares for addition to Halswell Domain be approved on the terms and conditions contained in the public excluded section of the report.

The above report was tabled as a supplementary item at the 4 August 1999 meeting of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board. The Board resolved that a special meeting be held to consider this matter, or a meeting be held in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Committee if possible, with residents organisations to be invited to attend.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the officers' recommendation be adopted.