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The purpose of this report is to seek approval to release a draft Development Plan for English Park for public consultation. The development plan was circulated to the Committee with the agenda for the Annual Plan. Councillors are requested to bring their copy of the plan to the meeting.

INTRODUCTION

English Park is situated in St Albans, bounded by Cranford Street, Sheppard Place and Trafalgar Streets.

The land was bought by Canterbury Football Association in 1914 and was named after Robert English, the Manager of the Christchurch Gasworks, who was president of the Association at that time.

The Christchurch City Council bought the land for 3,000 pounds in 1943 when the Football Association was unable to meet the mortgage commitments. Since that time the park has been leased to the Canterbury Football Association.

The present legal area of English Park, held in fee simple by the Council is approximately 2.7 ha, and consists of a soccer pitch which has irrigation, drainage and lighting, an amenity building, sealed car parking, a residence/office, a 400 metre cycle track and open stands.

Expenditure on the park has been minimal over the past 20 years, with the installation of lights, irrigation and drainage being the major capital works undertaken in that period.

A report to the February 1997 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee highlighted the dangerous state of the existing wooden grandstand and identified options for repairs. However as the repairs were estimated to cost in excess of \$30,000 and would not extend the life of the building by more than five years the Council subsequently resolved to demolish the grandstand. Funding was provided in the 1997/98 Annual Plan for replacing the grandstand in the 1999/00 financial year.

Following the allocation of the funding for a new grandstand, discussions were held with Canterbury Soccer regarding the siting and facilities to be included in the new stand. In the knowledge that Canterbury Soccer was keen to remove the cycling track, which had not been used by Canterbury Cycling since the construction of Denton Oval in 1974 for the Commonwealth Games, Canterbury Soccer was requested to prepare plans/ideas of how it would like to see the park redeveloped.

Plans prepared by Canterbury Soccer providing for the removal of the cycling track, identified the potential for relocating the soccer pitch and providing space on site for alternate uses.

The Council's Parks Unit was then consulted over options for redeveloping the site to not only the benefit of Canterbury Soccer but for the wider Christchurch community and the St Albans residents in particular.

The proposed development plan is the culmination of meetings between Canterbury Soccer and the Leisure and Parks Units, and cover a wide range of potential enhancements.

VALUE OF NEW PARK AREA FOR ST ALBANS

While this area of St Albans, unlike south St Albans, is not deficient in open space, having Malvern, Westminster, Abberley Parks and the St Albans Primary School, the population of the area is increasing as a result of infill housing and demand for additional recreation areas will continue to grow. English Park redevelopment is more about realising its potential, than addressing an identified deficiency.

The redevelopment will provide 8,500m² of new public open space for St Albans. The field enclosure while currently being used, could also have greater public use in the new plan. Even if it were possible to acquire 8500m² of new public open space in St Albans the cost would be prohibitive - more than \$1 million - so this redevelopment is a unique opportunity to provide additional park area at a modest cost. The proposed park will also complement the grounds of St Albans Primary School to the north.

Canterbury Soccer has a section at 18 Sheppard Place which adjoins English Park and they have agreed to contribute that section towards the development (approx value \$100,000). This section is valuable in that it enables the pitch realignment, which maximises the creation of additional green space. Canterbury Soccer has also agreed in principle to retain only the area occupied by the grandstand and soccer pitch within a new lease. This enables the remaining 1.3ha to be developed as green space area (0.85ha) and sympathetic car parking (0.45ha).

TRAFALGAR ACCESSWAY

An accessway between English Park and Trafalgar Street has also been the subject of negotiations with the adjoining land owners at 78 and 80 Trafalgar Street. This issue came before the Shirley/Papanui Community Board on 1 July 1998. Canterbury Soccer wish to retain this accessway for emergency egress. However, they are prepared to allow a formal agreement to be negotiated with the adjoining land owners providing them with alternate access to their properties. This will be the subject of a separate report to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board following negotiations with the adjoining landowners.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

This issue was addressed by the Committee at its Annual Plan meeting on 3 February 1999.

CONCLUSION

The English Park redevelopment plan provides a unique opportunity to upgrade the stadium as a home for soccer in Christchurch, add 8,500m² of public open space to St Albans, restore the St Albans Creek and provide a multi use park adjacent to an existing primary school.

Recommendation: That the Draft Development Plan for English Park be approved and be released for public consultation.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.