

Officer responsible City Manager	Author Mike Richardson, City Manager
Corporate Plan Output: Public Consultation	

At its April meeting the Community Board requested that I investigate and report on the following matters:

- (a) Deletion of Annual Plan provision for District Playground Fund, New Brighton Foreshore Children’s Playground, New Installation and Reallocation, and Pier Landscaping.
- (b) Reallocation of the \$50,000 Car Park Fund possibly funded by special rates levied upon New Brighton commercial ratepayers.
- (c) Failure to prepare the landscape plan with Annual Plan provisions.
- (d) Action that he will implement to ensure the Parks Unit will give effect to Council policy on public consultation and the terms of reference relating to Community Boards.

I would like to respond to the above matters, although in a more general manner.

First, I would like to state that it is my view that the spirit of our delegation framework is such that I believe that landscaping plans should have been included on a Community Board agenda to enable input, though not a decision. It can be argued that in terms of the letter of delegations it was not necessary to do this but from my perspective the intent to achieve Community Board involvement in issues such as this is clear.

The reallocation of funds from “unspecified playground development” was included on the Community Board agenda of 1 March 1999 as part of a “Parks Capital Works Programme 98/99” monitoring report. The use of the \$50,000 from the New Brighton Car Park Fund in my view should also have been reported to the Board although decisions on the use of such special funds (and this one has been in existence for some 20 years) are made by the City Council and not the Board.

I have spoken with Unit Managers, principal advisers to committee and standing committee chairs and some redesign of the paperwork for report preparation is being undertaken to minimise the risk of issues not being placed before Community Boards in future.

I would therefore state that we have learnt from this particular exercise, improved our processes and I would expect them to operate better in the future.

I must comment however that while I believe the process in this instance was inappropriate several aspects of the issue are far from clear cut.

Firstly, responsibility for the New Brighton Library and Pier Terminal complex was given by Council to its Projects and Property Committee. Elected members will be aware that this Committee is responsible for implementing a small number of complex and high value projects and adopts a focused project management approach to ensure effective implementation and cost control and is not required to liaise with Community Boards (although it may choose to do so). Several of the matters which are included in the landscape plan and arguably the plan in its entirety are a part of this “major project”; they are required by the resource consent. In administrative terms, the complexity arose because the major project needed to rely on funding already assumed to have been set aside for upgrade of the foreshore.

I also understand that the Community Board had seen New Brighton Beach Park Landscape Plans in April 1996 and March 1997 and these had formed the basis of the detail design for the work.

I am not of the opinion that there was need for public consultation on the detail design. In terms of the Council seeking community views policies there had previously been opportunities for input to the Beach Park Landscape Development Plan.

CONCLUSION

I can very much relate to the Board’s sense of frustration in being left out of the loop at this stage of this high profile project. As stated above I have no doubt that the spirit of our delegations is such that the Board should have been fully aware of all the significant aspects of this landscape development project.

We have made some minor but potentially significant changes to our system for preparation of committee reports which should at least provide significantly earlier warning of difficulties of this sort arising. Empowering Community Boards to be effective is clearly one of Council’s fundamental operating principles. At the same time the formal powers of Community Boards are very limited under the Local Government Act and in legal terms the City Council can always choose to make a decision on matters such as those subject to this report.

Chairperson’s

Recommendation: That the information be received.