

5. PLANTATION TREES - SOUTH BRIGHTON MOTOR CAMP

RR 10577

Officer responsible Leisure Unit Manager	Authors Lyall Matchett & Walter Fielding Cotterell
Corporate Plan Output: Camping Grounds – Leased - South Brighton Motor Camp	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Parks and Recreation Committee on a situation regarding the unsafe nature of an area of plantation trees adjacent to the South Brighton Motor Camp and to formulate a proposal for removal and replanting.

The following background advice has been received from Walter Fielding Cotterell (Parks Arboriculturist) to the Leisure Unit regarding a large tree falling in to the camping ground area.

On Sunday 11 July 1999 following a period of heavy rain, a large cupressus macrocarpa tree growing in the conifer plantation adjacent to the motor camp fell into the camping area narrowly missing a parked (but unoccupied) caravan.

There have been several such incidents over the past few years where apparently healthy trees in the plantations surrounding the camping ground and sports field areas have uprooted and fallen over.

The ground on which the trees are growing consists mainly of pure sand which in addition to the high water table, due to the land being low lying and adjacent to the estuary, provides poor root anchorage for large trees growing on such soils. The saturated soils which exist just 300-400mm below the soil surface prevent sinker roots from penetrating the lower soil levels for support. Lateral root development is also restricted due to the competition from other plantation trees nearby.

The majority of trees in the area in question are now aged about 75 years (about twice the normal life of a commercial plantation tree) and have reached an age and size which makes them increasingly prone to windthrow or rootlift in the ground conditions described.

The camping round is a high public use area with camp sites and facilities situated close to the plantation trees and is considered a high hazard target area, particularly in the summer or public holiday periods.

In view of the above factors, it is recommended that consideration be given to removing all plantation trees growing within 30 metres of the camping ground and replanting the felled area with suitable shelter and amenity trees.

An onsite meeting and inspection of the site was held with staff, the Camp Lessee, members of the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board and the South Brighton Residents' Association on Tuesday 24 August 1999. The immediate proposal is to remove a 30 metre wide block of trees in the section of the plantation where the risk of further trees falling is the greatest. Other individual trees leaning towards the campsite would also be removed. Replanting would be done as soon as possible and any trees that are suitable for saving would be retained.

Further to this immediate action, a management plan of a similar nature would be produced with the proposal that the tree work be carried out progressively over a period of some years. This will reduce the risk of more plantation trees falling into the camp, minimise the impact of the felling on the amenity values of the camp and the domain, and provide new plantings for the future. The community board and residents' association members attending the onsite meeting were in agreement that some form of safety action was required and that removal of a number of the trees was necessary. They felt that it should be possible to retain some of the smaller trees and were interested in the types of trees to be replanted. With the camp becoming busy over the Labour Weekend period it was considered necessary that the offending trees be identified as soon as possible and felling completed by then. To meet this timetable it was agreed that Walter Fielding Cotterell would identify which trees are likely to be removed. The residents' association would then be invited to inspect which trees had been selected and subject to their approval they would be removed.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Parks and Recreation Committee give delegated authority to the Parks Manager to undertake the necessary tree removal and replanting in the plantation adjacent to the South Brighton Motor Camp. This would be restricted to the area defined in the attached plan, and subject to the approval of the South Brighton Residents' Association. The residents' association would also be consulted with regard to the future planting of the area.
 2. That a Management Plan for the risk management of the remainder of the camping ground area be prepared and referred to the Residents' Association, Community Board and camp lessee for comment by 30 November 1999.

The above report was before the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board at its meeting on 30 August 1999. The Board decided to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee that the appropriate action to be taken by the Council to isolate and minimise the potential safety hazard the plantation trees may be to the public, and patrons of the South Brighton Motor Camp.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.