



12. QEII PARK – UPDATE ON THE CONDITION OF THE MAIN STADIUM ATHLETIC PARK

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Corporate Plan Output: Queen Elizabeth II Park	

The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors of concerns QEII Park management has with the condition of the Park's athletic track located in the main stadium. This report should be considered as a follow-up to a previous report presented to the Council last year.

Since that report, the condition of the track has deteriorated to the extent that management believes that track replacement has become an urgent matter. Budget allocation of \$1.55m has been made for replacement of the track in the 2003-04 financial year.

A re-evaluation of the QEII Park athletics track was made in December 1999 by Mr Robert Jones, Director of Specialised Surfaces Ltd. Mr Jones is Australasia's foremost sports surfaces consultant. QEII Park management has worked closely with Mr Jones, monitoring the condition of the track surface.

In preparing his "Updated Report on the Evaluation of the Existing Synthetic Surface of the Athletics Track at QEII Stadium – Christchurch with Recommendations and Costings for Surface Upgrading or Complete Relocation", Mr Jones made the following observations:

"Track History

The Queen Elizabeth II Stadium athletic track was originally constructed in 1973 for the 1974 Commonwealth Games. The original synthetic surface installed on the track was an American Material, Chevron 440. This surface was retextured in 1983 with a Chevron top dressing texture material. Following this, in the late 1980s, several high-stress areas were completely removed and resurfaced with new synthetic material. Finally, in 1991, the entire track surface, plus the top layer of the underlying asphalt surface were both removed, new asphalt laid, and then a new synthetic surface installed. This was a Swiss manufactured material POLYFLEX, which was installed by a local company, Fulton Hogan Canterbury Ltd."

Mr Jones report concluded that:

"The existing synthetic surface has deteriorated, since the last inspection in 1997, at a faster rate than was projected at that time, which now leads to concern over several areas.

The high jump fan is in a poor condition and needs urgent replacement.

The areas of bubbling and delamination, particularly on lane one of the track, will increase as the average daily air temperature increases over the next few months.

Both the above problems could be considered as a danger to athletes.

Because of the track's condition in some areas, doubt must be raised as to whether it would still meet all nine clauses of the IAAF's Performance Specification for Synthetic Surfaces Athletic Tracks (Outdoor) January 1990. In particular clauses 1.1 Imperfections, 1.2 Surface Flatness, and 1.9 Drainage. It is a requirement of the IAAF, if international athletics is to take place on a facility with comfort and safety for the athletes, that the synthetic surface meet the performance specification requirements at all times throughout its total life span.

While the upcoming New Zealand athletic championships at Queen Elizabeth II Stadium are not classified as an international meeting, the present condition of the track's synthetic surface may be of some concern to Athletics New Zealand officialdom approaching next year's championships.

Should the Super Games, which have recently been awarded to the Christchurch City Council and are likely to be held in April 2001, include an athletics competition, then the existing synthetic surface would definitely require replacement before this important meeting.

A likely timetable for resurfacing work would be:

Site, investigation and testing, design and tender documentation – May/June 2000.

Tendering, evaluation and awarding of a contract – July/August 2000.

Construction and upgrading work – August/September 2000.

Synthetic surface installation and line-marking – October, November 2000.

By adopting the above programme local athletes would lose use of the track for only the first two months of their 2000/2001 season.

In our earlier report we gave two possible options for resurfacing of the track. These were:

- Removal by grinding of the existing red coloured textured surface layer and then retexturing with new coloured polyurethane and red EPDM synthetic rubber granules.
- Complete removal of the existing synthetic surface and replacement with a complete new surface.

In light of the deterioration of the existing surface, and in particular the bubbling and delamination which is now taking place, the grinding and retexturing is not now a viable option and would not be recommended.

SYNTHETIC SURFACE ALTERNATIVES

In our previous report we outlined the various synthetic surface material options for the resurfacing of the track. Given the delamination and bubbling problems which can be experienced with sandwich systems, which is the synthetic surface currently installed on the new Queen Elizabeth II Stadium track, we would recommend that consideration be given to the new surface being a solid system. Either precast such as Mondo, or cast-in-situ such as Recortan.”

QEII Park recently hosted the 2000 New Zealand Athletics Championships, without incident. Clearly, however, the existing track is near the end of its acceptable life. Some coaches are now advising their athletes to avoid training at QEII Park.

The existing track has not lasted as well as expected. There are a number of factors contributing to that disappointing performance. It is important that its replacement should not be chosen on the basis of price alone. Track quality and longevity are especially important factors to be considered in line with project costs involved. QEII Park should be regarded as an athletic stadium capable of hosting international standard events. Track selection should be made accordingly.

COSTINGS

Specialised Surfaces Ltd advise that replacement of the existing surface with a solid polyurethane synthetic surface will cost in the vicinity of \$0.75m. This allows for replacement of the main track, including the water jump extensions, plus the high jump, the two javelin runways and the pole vault runway. It does not include the long/triple jump runway which has just been rebuilt.

TRACK RELOCATION

Should the Council decide to resurface the existing athletic track in the main stadium, athletics will effectively be retained in that stadium for the next 20 years.

The main stadium at QEII Park has 20,000 seats. The largest athletics attendance at QEII Park during the past season was the 1,200 spectators present at the Marley International Games.

QEII Park's main stadium plays a particularly valuable role as support stadium for Jade Stadium. The presence of the athletic track in the stadium counters a range of opportunities for the stadium to host such events as rugby league, soccer, rugby and outdoor concerts. In addition, QEII Park's main stadium could host events as diverse as equestrian, cricket or moto-cross as the need arose.

Athletics would not be disadvantaged by a new venue capable of hosting up to 3,000 spectators. Indeed, the track itself, and other athletics equipment, would no doubt enjoy a longer life and remain in acceptable condition at all times if housed in an athletics-specific facility.

That venue, however, should remain at QEII Park where the existence of an athletic track provides exceptional advantages to many sports and athletes, through its strategic location alongside aquatic facilities, playing fields, gymnasiums and sports medicine services.

Construction details and track and field layout would be as follows:

Earthworks, subsoil; perimeter drainage, storm water collection and disposal, basecourse construction, two layers of hot mix asphalt, flush inner track drainage system, outer concrete kerbing, concrete water jump pit, landing pits and throwing circles and a fully IAAF approved synthetic surface.

An eight lane track, with eight sprint lanes on the front straight, a secondary sprint straight on the back straight, and a water jump on the outside of the second bend.
A high jump fan inside the first bend.
A double ended, combined long/triple jump runway.
Two javelin runways.
A double ended pole vault runway.
Two shot put circles.
One discus and one combined discus/hammer circle.

This track layout could be easily fitted in the present, fenced off, grass track which is situated directly north of the main stadium. In addition, a small grandstand could be built against the rear of the north end open stand, with the necessary facilities such as changing rooms, officials rooms and a storage area, built under the stand.

Specialised Surfaces Ltd advise that the cost of a new track and field facility with a solid polyurethane synthetic surface would be in the vicinity of \$1.02m. Grandstand facilities would be additional to that figure. As a guide to Councillors, the recently completed athletic facility at Logan Park, Dunedin which has a high quality, 1,100 seat grandstand cost in the vicinity of \$2.6m.

Relocating the athletic track to another area at QEII Park would make for more flexible stadium usage and provide event-hosting options for Christchurch. Retaining the track in its current main stadium location could well mean that athletics in Canterbury will continue to be located in a 20,000 seat, over-sized venue which many see as inappropriate for the sport. Certainly, recent athletic venue developments in other parts of New Zealand have been completed in “dozen-sized” venues capable of hosting between 1500 and 3000 spectators.

Recommendation: That a subcommittee work with staff and report back to the Parks and Recreation Committee prior to the draft annual plan being finalised, on the best option.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.