

9. JOINT PROJECT - BECKENHAM SCHOOL & WATER SERVICES UNIT

Officer responsible Water Services Manager	Author Chris Fourie
Corporate Plan Output: Education Programme 9.3.16	

The purpose of this report is to seek the Boards support for a joint initiative between the Water Services Unit and Beckenham School, that also has potential to benefit the wider community.

Beckenham School is currently involved in the upgrading of its facilities in response to current population and needs of the School, for which it has received Ministry of Education funding. In conjunction with this process, the School has approached the Water Services Unit for assistance in developing ideas for linking the School with the Heathcote River, and for help with managing a drain that runs through the property. A preliminary concept is being developed by a team consisting of Chris Fourie (Water Services landscape architect), Wayne Rimmer (a consultant landscape architect and school parent), Nick Major (School Principal), Alice Shanks (Board of Trustees representative), and the School's architect, Dennis Ching from Hall and McKenzie. The concept is being developed with regard to its ability to benefit the wider community.

The project is being developed in conjunction with the Water Services Unit's educational programme, 'Waterlink'. This programme uses waterways in or nearby schools in Christchurch as a medium for maximizing learning opportunities in a whole range of curriculum areas, for implementation in and outside of the classroom (refer to attached memo regarding the Waterlink Programme, previously distributed to the Board). Teachers are enthusiastic about having teacher Margaret Yorke on board to assist. Margaret is on a Teacher Fellowship from the Royal Society of Science and Technology, and is working with the Water Services Unit for a year to develop a learning resource which will help teachers with curriculum related learning through waterway restoration projects.

As well as being optimistic about waterway opportunities within and immediately adjacent to the School, both the School and Water Services Unit acknowledge that there is potential beyond their respective areas of responsibility to work through a process which could benefit the wider community.

Beckenham School is an important community facility, and part of the open space network in Christchurch. It is strategically located, having the potential to become a real leader in integrating opportunities in the Beckenham Loop, such as linking Beckenham Park, the Heathcote River, the ponds and the neighbourhood. Elements such as tree planting and road narrowing can be used to provide a safer pedestrian environment opposite the School and the park.

Water Services have offered to facilitate a meeting between Beckenham School, the Parks Unit, and City Streets, to explore possibilities for an integrated design process that could deal with a wider range of issues. The concept could then be promoted for input from the Beckenham Neighbourhood Association, the tennis, soccer, and cricket clubs, and the wider Beckenham community.

This project provides an opportunity for the Board to become involved also. It is proposed to report back on progress at various stages of the project, with a view to seeking some financial support.

Recommendation: That the Board receive the information and endorse the proposed project.