

6. COMMUNITY SERVICES

FILE NO: 7/13/9
DATE: 15 November 2007
REPORT TO: Finance and Community Services Committee
FROM: Community Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Smoke Free Playgrounds

6.1 SMOKE FREE PLAYGROUNDS

6.1.1 SUMMARY

A presentation made by two students from Hampstead School to the Young Persons Forum suggested that Friedlander Park be declared a smoke free area. The Services and Operations Committee, at its meeting of 1 February 2007, adopted a recommendation that the playground at Friedlander Park be made smoke free through voluntary compliance and, if the concept proved successful, all other playgrounds in the district be made smoke free before the end of 2007.

The initiative has been supported by families in the area and the Canterbury District Health Board and the Cancer Society have written to Council requesting consideration be given to making all Council owned playgrounds in the district smoke free.

This report recommends that Council adopts a “Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy”.

6.1.2 RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

“That Council adopts the “Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy” as contained in this report.”
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6.1.3 BACKGROUND

Council received a letter from the Canterbury District Health Board and the Cancer Society supporting a proposal put forward to Council by students of Hampstead School that Friedlander Park be Ashburton’s first smoke free park. Two students from Hampstead School had made a presentation to the Young Persons Forum run by the Council and the Ashburton Youth Council, suggesting that Friedlander Park be the first park in Ashburton to be declared smoke free.

The Services and Operations Committee, at its meeting of 1 February 2007, adopted a recommendation that the playground at Friedlander Park be made smoke free through voluntary compliance and, if the concept proved successful, all other playgrounds in the district be made smoke free before the end of 2007.

The smoke free playground initiative at Friedlander Park was launched on World Smoke Free Day, 31 May 2007, with Council representatives joining DHB and Cancer Society representatives and pupils and staff from Hampstead School.

The Canterbury District Health Board and the Cancer Society have written to Council requesting consideration be given to making all Council owned playgrounds in the district smoke free and providing details of survey work done in the vicinity of Friedlander park that shows strong community support for the smoke free playground initiative. The letter is included as an appendix to this report.

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The Parks Manager has advised there are 22 Council owned playgrounds around the district. Five of these are in rural domains (Methven, Rakaia, Hinds, Mayfield and Mt Somers), two in Methven township and one in Rakaia township with the remainder in Ashburton (including Friedlander Park).

6.1 Success of the Friedlander Park Initiative

Council Parks staff cannot say whether the initiative has had an impact on smoking within the playground area at Friedlander Park. People are still seen smoking in the Friedlander Park playground but it is impossible to say whether there has been any change since the introduction of the smoke free initiative including signage. The initiative may be discouraging some people from smoking in the playground.

The survey work undertaken by the Canterbury DHB and the Cancer Society has surveyed 215 families, of whom 140 returned completed surveys and 136 were not against the idea of smoke free parks. It should be noted that participants were self-selecting – only people who attended the launch of the Friedlander Park initiative – and therefore the survey findings should be treated with some caution.

6.1.3.2 Rationale for Extending the Smoke Free Playgrounds Initiative

Despite there being no clear evidence the smoke free initiative at the Friedlander Park playground has resulted in a reduction in people smoking within the playground area, there are reasonable grounds to proceed with extending the initiative to all Council owned playgrounds in the district.

The Canterbury DHB and the Cancer Society suggest benefits coming from the adoption of smoke free playgrounds would include:

- Avoiding the health effects of second-hand smoke
- Discouraging youth from smoking
- Establishing positive role models for youth
- Protecting, promoting and maintaining public health
- Improving and enhancing community well-being
- Reduced litter in parks

Several local authorities in New Zealand have introduced similar restrictions, particularly in public buildings and areas where children congregate such as play grounds. In the case of wider outdoor locations, smoking has been actively discouraged through signage and promotion of a smoke-free environment rather than being banned. Initiatives like this enable Council to show community leadership in promoting a healthy community through discouraging smoking and providing an extra string in the overall smoke free bow.

6.1.3.3 A Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy

The Friedlander Park smoke free playground was introduced without a formal policy supporting it. This approach was reasonable given the initiative was to be reviewed and a decision on extending the concept was to be considered at this time.

Moving to making all Council owned playgrounds smoke free, however, is probably best done through Council adopting a policy. This will give the concept the standing it requires to be taken seriously by the community and to attract the support of the community and stakeholder groups.

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Proposed Policy: – to be included in Council’s Policy Register in the Finance and Community Services section.

“Smoke Free Playgrounds

This policy applies to all children’s playgrounds in Ashburton district owned by Council.

Ashburton District Council believes the children and young people of our district have a right to be able to enjoy playground facilities provided by Council in a smoke free environment.

All Council-owned playgrounds in the District are NO SMOKING areas.

This smoke free policy will be advised through appropriate signage. Council may, from time to time, undertake appropriate communication to advise the community of the smoke free status of Council playgrounds.

All Council contracts let for work on, or adjacent to, Council-owned playgrounds will advise contractors of the smoke free status of Council playgrounds.”

6.2 Promotion of the Policy Through Signage

The Health Sponsorship Council and local smoke free group have offered to contribute to the cost of signage. The intention is that in most cases signage would be funded by these organisations and Council would fund the placement of signs. As there are a variety of signage options used at Council-owned playgrounds (including no current signage) this would need to be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

The Parks Manager advises most urban playgrounds have existing signage that can easily be updated to include the smoke free message. Some rural playgrounds currently have no signage but signs can be installed over time if cost is a barrier.

6.3 OPTIONS

1. Do nothing. Council’s Parks Department have not had any issues with smoking in parks and do not see there being any management issues in retaining the status quo.
2. Continue to monitor the effect of the smoke free playground initiative at Friedlander Park. If there is evidence the concept is changing behaviour then the policy could be extended to the other Council owned playgrounds.
3. Adopt a policy to make all Council owned playgrounds smoke free.

6.1.5 STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

6.4 CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

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6.5 STRATEGIC LINKS

Community Outcomes

Outcome 5: Healthy, Active People enjoying a good quality of life in a caring and safe community.

Strategic Objectives:

- a. Healthy, active people with good access to health services (Priority Objective)
- b. A range of agencies work together to create a safe environment
- d. Young people are supported to lead healthy and safe lives and are active participants in community life

Outcome 6: A community with access to a variety of cultural, recreational and heritage experiences and facilities that enrich our quality of life

Strategic Objectives:

- 6.6 Cultural, recreational and heritage experiences and facilities are accessible to the community and actively used

Outcome 7: A community that contributes to improving our quality of life through democratic participation

Strategic Objectives:

- a. The community is provided with opportunities to participate in local decision making

6.7 FINANCIAL

Cost of signage.

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