

Open Spaces Activity Update – August 2009

Report of Open Spaces Unit Manager to the Activity and Monitoring Committee on 13 August 2009.

Please note – this report has been edited for information relating to Current Projects. The full report can be viewed at <http://www.franklin.govt.nz/YourCouncil/Meetingsandminutes/Meetingminutes/tabid/284/Default.aspx>

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the issues and activities relevant to the Open Spaces Activity for the period ending May 2009.

Fees and charges revenue is tracking well in relation to budget and it is anticipated that budget will be met.

Development contributions are tracking below budget as Council is aware and this trend is being monitored and reported.

The expenditure budget as can be seen is currently over expended to a level of \$190,833.

There are three significant areas impacting on the budget for operational costs:

- Vandalism across the whole activity and the costs associated with repair to maintain the level of service – costs to date are \$410K.
- Storm damage associated with the late winter and spring storms resulting in fallen trees and associated debris and coastal erosion (Port Waikato) have brought additional costs to the activity, costs to date are \$100K.
- Illegal dumping is significant and costs to date are \$80K.

Councillors know that the effects of these highlighted issues impact directly on the open spaces operation. Parks officers as previously outlined in April 2009 have looked at achieving savings within the existing operational budget to offset some of the effect of the over expenditure.

Parks officers continue to work in a proactive way with communities, Council and other agencies on initiatives that may see reduction specifically in vandalism. Key partners are the Police/Safer Community Council/Counties Manukau Sport/Resident and Ratepayer Association/Community Boards/Councillors.

The main initiative is to raise public awareness in conjunction with Community Boards and Councillors in the hope that communities will observe, report and then commit to action that will see in time a reduction in the escalating costs. As has been reported, the Police in recent times have had some success in dealing with the perpetrators of deliberate acts of vandalism however still the costs climb.

Capital Projects

In general capital works are progressing well as reported quarterly. There are however three large scale projects still being worked through Council processes:

- Karaka Sportspark – conceptual plans have been developed in conjunction with stakeholders. Consultation with Council is being progressed with detail of this process yet to be finalised.
- Waiuku Sportspark Development – a working party is progressing the development of a concept plan which is in the process of being established. It is anticipated that the first meeting will be held early April. Presently working with two organisations to produce estimates of costs to assist the concept plan development. This budget will not be expended this financial year and the balance carried forward into 2009/2010.
- Public toilet construction priorities have now been confirmed by Council. Finalising of plans for all three projects have now been initiated – Colin Lawrie Playing Fields/Hamiltons Gap Waimatuku/Puni Memorial Recreation Reserve.

Maintenance

Apart from the normal seasonal challenges, maintenance of the open space assets continues. As mentioned staff are seeking to achieve savings on direct costs to offset the over expenditure as highlighted.

Conclusions

As this is the first Activity update provided to the Committee staff are interested in any comments on improvement to the report or additional information that Councillors may require. It is intended to have a consistent template that suits Councillor's need.