

25.9.8 BANNOCKBURN FORESTRY BLOCK HARVEST

Doc ID: 2591439

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Reviewed and authorised by:	David Scoones, Group Manager - Community Experience

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the removal and replanting of the approximately 60-hectare Sandflat Road Forestry Block – LOT 3 DP 403966, in conjunction with felling the Bannockburn Industrial Development Site, while also investigating potential investment opportunities associated with the land and its future use.

Recommendations

That the Cromwell Community Board

- A. Receives the report and accepts the level of significance.
 - B. Recommends to Council to harvest the 60-hectare Sandflat Road Forestry Block - LOT 3 DP 403966.
 - C. Recommends staff investigate the costs to replant the site to retain the carbon status and also presents options to the Board/Council for alternative uses for this site along with some indicative costs
 - D. Recommends to Council to utilise any profit generated from the harvest either to fund the replanting of the block, including implementation of a post-planting management and weed control plan, or to explore alternative investment opportunities associated with the land and its future use.
 - E. Recommends to Council to subsequently use any remaining profit to offset costs associated with the Bannockburn Industrial Subdivision.
 - F. Recommends to Council to remove the dog walking status on both sites.
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2. Background

Sandflat Road Forestry Block - LOT 3 DP 403966

This forestry block comprises approximately 60 hectares and is approaching the end of its current rotation cycle. The trees, which are several decades old, have reached a stage where maintenance and operational costs are increasing and it may be timely to harvest. To ensure continued productivity and cost-efficiency, it is recommended that the existing trees be harvested.

Bannockburn Industrial Development Site – LOT 3 and LOT 4 DP 526140

~~At the Cromwell Community Board meeting on 16th September 2025~~ a confidential report was presented recommending progression of the development of the Bannockburn Industrial Subdivision. The following recommendation was made regarding the trees:

H. Recommends to Council that the total 19-hectare block of trees is harvested.

This was followed by a report to Council where the above recommendation was ratified.

3. Discussion

The below shows the two blocks for discussion.



Red outline
Bannockburn
Industrial
Development Site

Purple outline
Sandflat Road
Forestry Block

Sandflat Road Forestry Block-LOT3DP403966 Once felled, it is recommended staff investigate option either replanting the forestry block and ensuring a post-planting management plan is implemented or looking at alternative options. When investigating harvest potential, replanting with an appropriate pine species should be undertaken to initiate the next forestry cycle and maintain long-term land use viability. This should include weed control measures and ongoing maintenance to support the successful establishment of the new pine crop. These actions are critical to ensuring optimal growth conditions and long-term viability of the replanted forest. In assessing future land use options for the Sandflat Road Forestry Block, Board and Council may wish to consider alternative investment opportunities that could offer greater long-term value than replanting. One such option is the development of a solar farm, which may be better suited to the site's characteristics and align with Council's sustainability and economic development goals.

Pursuing alternative investments would require Council to surrender existing carbon credits associated with the forestry block. In doing so, Council would shift its focus to other forms of future-focused investment that support innovation, resilience, and financial return.

Bannockburn Industrial Development Site – LOT 3 and LOT 4 DP 526140 Given the nature and layout of the proposed subdivision, the existing trees within the affected area will require removal to accommodate development activities. This process will involve not only tree felling but also comprehensive stump extraction ('de-stumping') to ensure the site is adequately prepared. In accordance with development specifications, site fill will need to be imported to achieve the required ground levels and stability for future infrastructure.

Council staff recommend scheduling the felling of the Forestry Blocks in April 2026. This timing aligns with seasonal weather considerations and allows sufficient time for current lessees to vacate the site in accordance with their lease agreements.

Below is an indication of potential income generated by the harvest, based on area and tree age.

Location	Block	Species	Area (ha)	Year Planted	Age June 2025	Expected Harvest	Estimated Value	Total Estimate
Sandflat Forestry Block	Cemetery A	P Radiata	5.8	1982	43 yrs	2025	2400	\$13,920
	Cemetery B	P Radiata	53.3	1983	42 yrs	2025	2400	\$127,920
Bannockburn Industrial	Refuse A	P Radiata	2.1	1983 Old	42 yrs	2025	2400	\$5,040
	Refuse B		16.4	Crop		2025	2400	\$39,360



Both sites have been identified as having dog exercise areas within them. This will no longer be viable at the Bannockburn Development Site due to the upcoming subdivision as per the Long Term Plan. It will also no longer be viable at the Sandflat Road Forestry Block while the felling of the trees in in progress, and until further decisions have been made on the future of the block. The Alpha Street Reserve remains as a dog exercise area in Cromwell.

4. Financial Considerations

As per Councils direction at the meeting on the 24th September 2025, staff have been instructed to proceed with the felling of the trees at the Bannockburn Industrial Development Site, given the project was allowed for in the Long Term Plan 2025 – 34.

The felling of the trees will be more financially viable if undertaken while contractors are undertaking work at the adjacent block. Felling a block is usually cost neutral as has a shared percentage of profits, which will be discovered during the tender process.

A report will be brought back to Board/Council to gain direction to progress replanting or review alternative options at the Sandflat Road block.

Options

5.

Option 1 – (Recommended)

- Harvesting of both the Bannockburn Industrial Development Site and Sandflat Road Forestry Block in April 2026.
- Preparing Bannockburn site to meet subdivision development standards (ground levels and stability)
- Council staff to assess investment options for Sandflat Road block, either replanting, carbon credit implications, or alternative land uses.

Advantages:

- Cost efficiency by harvesting both blocks at the same time while contractors are available
- Meets timeline requirements for the development
- Reduces future costs of aging forest block
- Staff to assess potentially better suited investment opportunities creating better income

Disadvantages:

- Initial cost to Harvest

Option 2

- To not harvest the Sandflat Road Forestry Block while harvesting Bannockburn Industrial Development Site and in April 2026.
- Leave any further investigation.

Advantages:

- No upfront cost

Disadvantages:

- Trees are nearing end of life cycle, costing money to maintain and decrease in tree quality
- Missed opportunity to reduce costs by both sites being harvest at the same time
- Site's potential for alternative or higher-value use not being assessed.

6. Compliance

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions	This decision promotes the economic wellbeing of communities, in the present and for the future by securing a good financial return and cost efficiency while the adjacent site is being felled. Allows staff to investigate the best economic opportunities.
Decision consistent with other Council plans and policies? Such as the District Plan, Economic Development Strategy etc.	Procurement Policy - to find suitable contractor to undertake the work via a Request for Tender (RFT) advertised via GETS.
Considerations as to sustainability, the environment and climate change impacts	This decision promotes the environmental wellbeing of communities, in the present and for the future by looking at alternative options such as solar generation, or replanting pine species. Health and safety risks from tree felling will be
Risks Analysis	managed through the contractor's Health & Safety Plan. Financial return on felled timber may be lower than expected; however, we are looking to

	engage a contractor that absorbs some of this risk by sharing profit percentage. If Council do not proceed there is a risk that there will be increased maintenance costs and reduced income costs.
Significance, Consultation and Engagement (internal and external)	Due to the removal of the two dog exercise areas, there is medium impact/significance on the community.

7. Next Steps

- Take report to Council for direction/ratification
- If progressed finalise procurement plan (plus RFT) and arrangements for felling both sites in April 2026, ensuring alignment with lease termination dates and seasonal conditions.
- Begin groundworks, including de-stumping at the Bannockburn Industrial Development Site to meet subdivision requirements, including ground level adjustments and stability assessments.
- Council staff to assess Sandflat Road Forestry Block:
 - o Evaluate replanting viability and associated carbon credit implications.
 - o Investigate alternative land use scenarios to maximise site value and associated carbon credit implications.
 - o Report findings and recommendations back to Board/Council for decision-making.
- Develop a timeline for progress reporting and establish monitoring protocols for site preparation and investment investigations.
- Prepare comms to update the community of the removal of the dog exercise areas.

8. Attachments

Nil

CODC identification:

25.9.8BANNOCKBURN FORESTRY BLOCK HARVEST

DOC ID: 2591439

Rewritten: 5 March 2026

by: Judy Cockeram, DogLover

Reviewed by:

Paws for Pines, Concerned Dogwalkers

Based on the report received by the Cromwell Community Board, November 2025.

Changes are noted by bold font

1. Purpose of REWRITTEN Report

To request the Cromwell Community Board PAUSE and RE-CONSIDER the removal and replanting of the approximately 60-hectare Sandflat Road Forestry Block – LOT 3 DP 403966, in conjunction with felling the Bannockburn Industrial Development Site, to investigate potential recreational and investment opportunities associated with the land and its future use.

Recommendations

That the Cromwell Community Board

- A. Receives **this report with the appended Arborist report and accepts a new level of understanding and** significance.
 - B. Recommends to Council to **pause and reconsider** harvesting the 60-hectare Sandflat Road Forestry Block - LOT 3 DP 403966.
 - C. Recommends staff investigate the costs to replant the site to retain the carbon status and also presents options to the Board/Council for alternative uses for this site along with some indicative costs **that include the need for irrigation and water management for any future plans in a detailed management programme.**
 - D. Recommends to Council to utilise any profit **to fund the implementation of a new management and weed and rubbish control plan, and to explore alternative investment opportunities associated with the land with the users of the land and wider community.**
 - E. Recommends to Council to subsequently use any profit **from future development** to offset costs associated with **the on going costs associated with further management of recommended pruning, planting and maintaining of a recreational area.**
 - F. Recommends to Council to **maintain and improve the dog walking status on Sandflat Road site.**
 - G. - *not apparent in original Agenda*
 - H. Recommends to Council that the block of trees is **NOT** harvested
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2. Background

Sandflat Road Forestry Block - LOT 3 DP 403966

This forestry block comprises approximately 60 hectares

Professional advice tells us that it is of good health and it is not necessary or recommended that the existing trees be harvested for 'safety' reasons.

- ◆ **There appears to be no issue of disease or virus as talked about in previous meetings.**
- ◆ **The pine trees are capable of achieving a much older age than the current 40+ years.**

The value of 40 years growth to establish a canopy for sheltered and shaded activity is uncalculable and much loved and used by locals.

- **It is not possible to ascertain possible 'savings' by felling at the same time as the Bannockburn site.**

3. Discussion

We accept the loss of the pines at the Bannockburn Rd site but would encourage sensible fencing of public roads and access to areas through the site at the earliest possible time.

In assessing future land use options for the Sandflat Road Forestry Block, Board and Council may wish to consider alternative investment opportunities that could offer greater long-term value than replanting. One such option is the development **multi use recreational and** of a solar farm, better suited to the site's characteristics **and strategic site near new numbers of tourists attracted by Wine and Cycle trails etc. This would align with Council's provision of benefits to the Cromwell Community and** add to sustainability and economic development goals.

Pursuing alternative designs and Plans would mean Council **does not** have to surrender existing carbon credits associated with the forestry block. Council should shift its sights to other forms of future-focused investment that support innovation, resilience, and financial return that are inclusive of the ongoing resource that those who use the Sandflat road area currently enjoy

We request the scheduling of the felling of the Forestry Blocks in April 2026 be stopped.

4. Financial Considerations

If the status quo is maintained it is requires no financial layout and it is viable to retain the dog exercise area at the Sandflat Road Forestry Block while the deeper consideration of the site is made in consultation with the all current and varied users of the area.

Felling a block is usually cost neutral as has a shared percentage of profits, which will be discovered during the tender process. **The further costs in destumping and dust prevention need consideration. If spent now this cost may be deemed an unnecessary expense**

5. Options

Option 1 – (Recommended)

PAUSE AND RECONSIDER

- - As arborist sees no urgency for felling of trees due to poor health
- - the impact on 680+ Ratepayers and Dogs.
 - carbon credit implications, and alternative land uses.
 - Avoid upfront costs to achieve enriched value of the community asset.
 - To consider more profitable multifaceted land use model for future developments.

Option 2

REMOVE 30+ acres of pines.

- Most of the central block that would need to be made safe until future plans direct further expenditure.
- Access for felling of Pines would all happen off Sandflat Rd.
- By maintaining the two triangular shapes at the north and south edges (as shown in image below) access for dogwalking etc is still possible from both sides of the current area during felling.
- Keeping these areas would help with the dust management and allow the council to remain a good neighbour to the residents on Pearsons Road on the southern side.
- Be a start to a rotational plan of planting and felling that ensures shaded and sheltered recreational areas.



5. Compliance

Significance, Consultation and Engagement (internal and external)

Due to the removal of the two dog exercise areas, there is medium impact/significance on the community.

We object to being judged a medium impact / significance. It is for us the most significant situation with a high impact on our everyday.

In the course of a year 1 person walking a dog regularly ie daily often more multiple times, spends over 300 hours dog walking. It is noted a rugby, hockey player attends for a 150 - 250 hours at a sports ground according to Google AI, March 4th, 2026.

6. Next Steps

- Take the **new report and Arborist's Report** to Council for direction.
 - If progressed finalise procurement plan (plus RFT) and **arrangements for a scoping document for a development plan to be produced in conjunction with current users and stakeholders**
 - Council staff to assess Sandflat Road Forestry Block:
 - Investigate alternative land use scenarios to maximise site value and associated carbon credit implications.
 - Report findings and recommendations back to Board/Council **after further design and decision-making in conjunction with the many users of the area.**
 - Develop a timeline for progress with the community.
 - Prepare comms to update the community of the **further development** of the dog exercise areas and its ongoing development.
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7. Attachment: Arboricultural Inspection Report Cromwell.pdf

Authored and prepared by Cut Above Date: 03/03/2026 Inspector: Mathew Olsen

Report Sourced by Paws for Pines

- special thanks to Sarah Jones, Eddy Raffles, Lisa Telle