

3. ST ALBANS PRESCHOOL

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The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on progress in finding an appropriate site for a replacement preschool facility for the St Albans Educare Preschool.

BACKGROUND

The Council approved funding of \$350,000 for the building of a new facility for St Albans Educare Preschool on 28 March 2002.

The sum of \$350,000 was to include fitout and landscaping and a second recommendation was endorsed that any new facility be erected on land owned or controlled by the Council.

Since that date several Council-owned sites have been reviewed and discounted for various reasons. A summary of these sites is contained within this report. A review of the concentrations of under five year old children from the census statistics indicates that the census area units of Rutland, Edgeware and St Alban East have capacity for additional childcare facilities but there is overall capacity St Albans wide.

A submission was made to the 2003/04 Annual Plan asking for the scope to be widened to allow consideration of privately owned sites. This recommended amendment was subsequently approved however no additional funding was granted.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council-owned sites reviewed to date include the following:

Site	Reason for discounting as an option
Malvern Park	No scope for facility without encroaching on sports fields. Reserve issues.
English Park	Not part of original concept and no scope now.
34 & 38 Courtenay	Designated for road widening. Necessitates purchase of an adjacent private site est. \$200,000.
Abberley Park	Land zoned Conservation 2. No buildings greater than 40m ² unless for custodial or management purposes
Rutland Street Reserve	Flooding issues, substantial impact on building cost, reserve issues.
St Albans School	Limited land availability for an additional building.
10 & 12 Clearbrook Street	Location in Mairehau rather than St Albans.
EPH Housing – Forfar Street and 6 other EPH sites	Forfar Street necessitates the relocation of EPH units and is an option not favoured by the Housing Team Leader. Other EPH complexes have high density and comprise non relocatable units
43 Edgeware Road (Edgeware Pool and Pumping Station)	Access, visibility and location issues.
278 Westminster Street	Location is an issue for preschool.

The first nine options have been discounted for the reasons outlined in the table above.

The new facility could conceivably be sited at 278 Westminster Street although the preschool have expressed concern about the competition from a nearby Christian Preschool. This site is held in fee simple and is zoned L1 and comprises a land area of 764m². A house exists on the site that is rented. Richard Holland of the Parks Unit advises that they were hoping to incorporate this section into their proposed park land to adjoin the Christchurch Football Club land. Their reason for this is to widen the frontage/access of the proposed park to Westminster Street. However, the Parks Unit would be happy to incorporate a new preschool facility within the proposed park. The Property Unit will work in conjunction with the Parks Unit to derive the best outcome from a parks and preschool facility perspective. From a property perspective a site with road frontage would be preferred from a profile

and security issue perspective. If the facility was to be set back from the road and on the proposed park this option would not be as favourable.

The second and preferred option requires the purchase of a private site. However, without alternate funding this will be difficult to achieve. Michael Campbell from the preschool committee has mentioned that alternate funding may be provided but has yet to confirm details. A private site would allow a better location to be obtained but is reliant on this additional funding.

CONCLUSION

It has proven to be a difficult task to find a Council-owned site in St Albans that is free of any inhibiting factors and that is also in the right location. Of the all the Council-owned sites reviewed that could realistically be used only 278 Westminster and the Westminster Street Depot land are possibilities.

The preferred option would involve the purchase of a private site. This option enables a more suitable location and site to be obtained. At this stage no alternate funding source has been confirmed.

Staff

Recommendation: That this report be received for discussion.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Committee undertake a site visit to 278 Westminster Street and English Park sites prior to the meeting to consider options outlined in the report.