

21. BECKENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY OPTIONS REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Community Board's comments for the Property and Major Projects Committee's consideration when it makes its recommendation to Council to determine the future use of the building situated at 65 Sandwich Road (Beckenham Public Library) – see Appendices 1 and 2.

CONTEXT OF THE REPORT

In accordance with the Council's policy in regard to making a decision about the future of this building the property has been internally notified as being available.

In the current 2003/04 financial budget \$6,632 has been provided for operational costs. The Property Unit used to receive \$12,000 per annum by way of internal rent from the libraries budget. No provision has been made for capital improvements or for the disposal of the land and building.

This report summarises those groups who have expressed interest and outlines the options available.

BACKGROUND

The property at 65 Sandwich Road was purchased in 1928 by the Council in fee simple in trust for the purpose of a library site.

The legal description is: Part Lot 1 DP 2623 (In Trust) T185078), Certificate Title 412/9 originally 286/224. The Beckenham Public Library has been closed for the last two months.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The property at 65 Sandwich Road was acquired from the Canterbury Education Board by the Council for library purposes.

Council staff have been made aware that the building is no longer required by the library with the completion of the South Christchurch Library, and therefore in determining the future use of the property the Council needs to firstly consider whether there are other community or Council uses/needs. This report outlines internal options compared to other options.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

Council Policy

There are two policy issues relevant to this project:

1. Future use of properties that are no longer required for operational purposes must be determined in accordance with the "property decision-making flow chart". The main steps in this process are:
 - Step 1 Identifying that a property asset is no longer required for operational purposes or is under-utilised.
 - Step 2 Assessment of the property, ie features, legal status etc.
 - Step 3 Internal circularisation for the purpose of establishing whether there are other Council/public uses.
 - Step 4 Property Unit assessment of internal/public submissions and preparation of an Options Report.
 - Step 5 Council resolution on future use or sale.
2. Should Council resolve to sell the property this will need to be conducted in a public manner, ie. *"That, in principle, the Council should publicly tender properties for sale unless there is a clear reason for doing otherwise"*.

Through the process of internally notifying Council Units that the building is available only one submission was received from Community Advocates/Council officers.

DESCRIPTION OF OPTIONS

Option 1 Retain the Property for use by a Opawa/St Martins Plunket Toy Library

Through the internal process we received an expression of interest from Community Advocates/Council officers promoting a group within the community to utilise the property.

The submission we received was from the Beckenham Community Advocate to relocate the Opawa/St Martins Plunket Toy Library, which is presently occupying the former Parks garage at Risingholme Park. This group has been in existence for ten years and currently services one hundred and seventy families. The garage is now too small to store the number of toys it has to lend.

A report tabled nearly two years ago at the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board discussed the idea of increasing the size of the present building at Risingholme. Because of the cost the Board asked that other options be looked at.

Although many options were considered, it became evident that the integration of a toy library within another community facility was impracticable because of the storage requirements. Beckenham Public Library's use would fulfil this need.

This option is supported by the Community Relations Manager as it meets the needs of the community and is cost neutral to the Council, as the \$12,000 rent and \$6,632 operational costs are included in the 2003/04 financial budget. Although this is not going through the public process, there is a good reason for dealing unilaterally with this. The Opawa/St Martins Plunket Toy Library is an existing tenant which has outgrown its premises and this is an opportunity to relocate it.

Option 2 Used by Beckenham School

The Property Unit has received an enquiry from the Beckenham Primary School whose property adjoins 65 Sandwich Road. At the time of writing this report the School has not clarified its use of the building so, at this point, its intentions are unclear.

Option 3 Tender out the building seeking Request for Proposals

The Council invites proposals from interested parties to submit concepts for the use of the building. At this point the public have not been given this opportunity.

Option 4 To Sell the Property

Should the Council resolve to declare the property surplus to requirements it would firstly have to offer back the property to Mr John Butler or his successor under his will pursuant to section 40 and 50(1) of the Public Works Act 1981, before any other form of disposal.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

Option 1 Retain the Property for use by a Opawa / St Martins Plunket Toy Library

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding provided in budget.• Internal alteration costs met by Toy Library.• Toy Library willing to pay rent.• Suitable building to accommodate Toy Library.• Frees up smaller area that could be used for smaller group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ties premises to one group.• Council responsible for future operational and capital costs.• At present operating hours are two days a week. With new premises this would increase.• Beckenham School may consider that we have dealt unilaterally and they should have been offered the opportunity.

Option 2 Used by Beckenham School

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School next door to property.• School may consider working in with community group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unwillingness of School or Ministry to pay rent.• Council responsible for operational and capital costs.

Option 3 Tender out the building seeking Request for Proposals

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wider community would be able to participate in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost to Council – operational/capital.• Minimal rent return.

Option 4 To Sell the Property

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain money on the sale.• Would not be faced with on-going operational or capital costs.• Reducing number of Council properties it holds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council would have to offer property back to John Butler or his successors pursuant to section 40 and 50(1) Public Works Act 1981.• Undertake planning, consultation and decision set out in Local Government Act 2002.• Foregone possible sale return. Current GV \$107,000.

CONCLUSION

The main issue Council currently needs to come to terms with is whether it wishes to retain ownership in the property, even though there is a defined need. Will this need to stand up to scrutiny, given it is one of Council's objectives to divest itself of surplus land?

Staff

Recommendation: That Council retain the Beckenham Public Library at 65 Sandwich Road for the relocation of the Opawa/St Martins Plunket Toy Library.

Chairperson's

Comment: I support the officer's recommendation. This option has previously been supported by the Community Advocate and the Community Relations Unit Manager.