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| Corporate Plan Output: Housing                 |  |

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal by the Housing Working Party for a further inner city housing development on the corner of Waltham Road and Brougham Street, adjacent to Cecil Place, and to seek a recommendation to the Council to proceed with the project. It should be noted that the financial aspects of the project are in a report in the public excluded section of this agenda.

### **BACKGROUND**

Following the 1996 Council review of its involvement in housing, a number of projects were considered with a view to meeting the policy goals established as a result of that review. The Council confirmed in principle, subject to further feasibility studies, four projects:

- Gloucester Courts
- Beckenham (partnership with Baptist Church)
- Hornby Stage I
- Cecil Place

Concept drawings were previously prepared for a significant multi-level, 60-bed complex at Cecil Place, but were not approved by the Community Services Committee, which had concerns with regard to the building form, lack of open space and lack of integration with the surrounding urban structure. Accordingly, the original Cecil Place proposal was put on the “back burner” whilst the other three projects were developed.

Gloucester Courts is now tenanted, the Beckenham project is just going out for building tenders, whilst Hornby Stage I will be going to building tender later this year.

### **PROPOSAL FOR CECIL PLACE**

As a result of a very satisfactory project outcome with Gloucester Courts with its highly functional units, the Housing Working Party has asked the Property Manager to prepare a new development proposal for Cecil Place which can be quickly put in place to meet a continuing inner city housing need, as evidenced by the Council’s housing waiting list.

With input from Janet Reeves, the Council’s Urban Design Planner, the concept shown in plan form has been developed with Bryndwr Builders (Gloucester Court developers) using the proven functionality of the Gloucester Courts complex, reconfigured to suit the Cecil Place site (refer to plan attached - Appendix 3). Enhancements in the new design include:

- Ground to roof living space with separate parking, rather than garaging, separating living space from the ground and the environment.
- Inclusion of Gloucester Courts “extras” in the proposed fixed price contract.
- A more pleasing site layout than Gloucester Courts with more outside living space/ landscaped areas.
- An opportunity to have a staged development.

#### **POLICY ISSUES**

In considering this proposal, the Council needs to consider a number of policy issues as follows:

##### **Issue 1**

The proposed development delivers on a number of the Council’s Housing Policy Goals, as follows:

- *The provision of affordable housing which is sustainable in perpetuity and which is not at a cost to ratepayers.*
- *The provision of additional accommodation for single men and women with one child.*
- *The provision of inner city accommodation for mature single men and mature single women, displaced from boarding house accommodation.*
- *The provision or facilitation of accommodation for those deinstitutionalised or otherwise affected by changes in the health system.*

##### **Issue 2**

The Council, in approving significant expenditure on this proposed development needs to consider the reason(s) why the Council should not tender for this work, which are as follows:

- (i) The internal design/functionality is replicated from existing (Gloucester Courts) drawings/specifications owned by Bryndwr Builders Limited. It is a relatively straightforward (computer aided design) task to reconfigure the footprint of the proposed development quickly and cost-effectively at minimal cost/time delay to the Council.

There would be a delay of perhaps six months if the Council went through a process of new drawings/design and then to tender.

- (ii) The contractual arrangements with Bryndwr Builders Limited for Gloucester Courts worked most satisfactorily for both parties.
- (iii) The developer has offered a fixed price contract.
- (iv) The builder and his subcontractors are available to commence immediately.

- (v) An independent QS report commissioned by the Council (refer public excluded report) confirms that if time is a critical element of this project, the Council should accept the offer of Bryndwr Builders.

### **Issue 3**

The Council Policy with regard to cost accountability for housing reads as follows:

*“The Council’s housing activity continues to be financially self-supporting (ie breaks even) allowing for depreciation, loan servicing, administration, maintenance and remodelling.”*

It should be noted that this new project will be financed totally from the existing Housing Development Fund, which means that existing housing loan servicing costs will not change and that the Council’s housing activity overall will continue to be financially self-supporting in terms of the above policy, as evidenced by the feasibility calculations which give a positive cashflow.

### **SITE DETAILS**

The 3,625m<sup>2</sup> site is located on the corner of Waltham Road and Brougham Street adjacent to Cecil Place. The property has been owned by the Council since the building of the Brougham Street expressway and has a land value (1998) of \$420,000. It is currently in rough grass. It is 2.5km from Cathedral Square and is serviced by a bus route on Waltham Road. The zoning for the site is Living 3 which allows medium-density, three-storey residential development.

### **URBAN DESIGN COMMENT**

Janet Reeves, the Council’s Urban Design Planner, comments as follows:

*“Why the revised proposal is preferable to the original one.*

*Buildings should be designed to relate to their context. Using a standard building can be compared with fitting the same false tooth into everyone’s mouth. This is a highly prominent corner site (equivalent to a front tooth) and its redevelopment provides an opportunity to upgrade the quality of this locality.*

*The original proposal has storage and service spaces facing Waltham Road and Cecil Place and end walls facing Brougham Street, which do not make a positive contribution to the street frontage. This results in an inward looking layout which is not well connected with the existing community. Tenants could become isolated in their new homes. Ground floor space is devoted to car parking and manoeuvring so that the needs of residents become secondary to the needs of vehicles, with only two units at ground level. This proposal does not maximise the development potential of the site, more units could be accommodated, which could also lead to a more close knit arrangement of homes.*

*In the alternative proposal, buildings have been arranged to define the Brougham Street/Waltham Street corner. All of the buildings face out onto the surrounding streets. This presents a more attractive connection between the new and existing buildings and helps the development to be knitted in to its context. All of the living rooms can be positioned to overlook the street where residents can see passers-by. This can add to the feeling of being a part of the community and help to increase the security of the street through casual surveillance.*

*Units which front Brougham Street have their living areas on the northern side, maximising the benefit of the sun, whilst bedrooms are on the side away from the noise of the road. A more private and homely green space is possible with this alternative arrangement of blocks. The use of the ground floor for living space rather than garaging will enable many residents to have direct access to outside space.”*

#### **HOUSING WORKING PARTY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Council’s Housing Working Party, in recommending the proposed development to the Community Services Committee, has recommended the following review of the concept plan shown as Appendix 3.

- (a) That Stage 3 be deleted and a residents’ lounge (approximate cost \$200,000) be planned as a future enhancement to the complex (note: this would also serve the adjoining Cecil Courts units), with the required area of land to be set aside as “local reserve” in lieu of paying a reserve contribution.
- (b) That the Council review the options of closing the adjacent area of Cecil Place so as to create additional green/open space.
- (c) That the development be moved back a little from the Waltham Road/Brougham Street frontage.
- (d) That double glazing be considered for the Waltham/Brougham facing windows.

- (e) That environmentally friendly “Gobi” blocks be considered for the parking areas.

(Note: A copy of the Council’s relevant strategic objectives was distributed at the meeting to allow the recommendation to be considered having regard to them.)

This report was also considered by the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board at its meeting on 6 October 1999 and the Board resolved as follows in respect of this report:

- 1. That given the Council’s current experience with car park occupancy with this type of development, the Council will seek a dispensation on not forming all of the car parks that would be required until after the building has been completed and the number of car parks assessed.
- 2. That the Board support the concept outlined.
- 3. That the Board recommend double glazing and other energy efficient measures in this complex.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. That the information be received.
- 2.
  - (a) That Stage 3 be deleted and a residents’ lounge (approximate cost \$200,000) be planned as a future enhancement to the complex (note: this would also serve the adjoining Cecil Courts units), with the required area of land to be set aside as “local reserve” in lieu of paying a reserve contribution.
  - (b) That the Council review the options of closing the adjacent area of Cecil Place so as to create additional green/open space.
  - (c) That the development be moved back slightly from the Waltham Road/Brougham Street frontage.
  - (d) That double glazing be considered for the Waltham/Brougham facing windows.
  - (e) That environmentally friendly “Gobi” blocks be considered for the parking areas.

3. That a report be prepared for the Housing Working Party on future possible housing projects, including details of projects planned, having regard to the projected cash surpluses within the housing development fund.