

7. HORNBY TEEN PARENT UNIT – FEASIBILITY STUDY – APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

General Manager responsible:	General Manager Community Services, DDI 941-8534
Officer responsible:	Community Support Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to request \$6,700 of funding from the Board's 2006/07 Discretionary Fund for costs associated with undertaking a feasibility study relating to a proposed Teen Parent Unit at Hornby High School. There is currently an available balance of \$32,582.70 in the 2006/07 Discretionary Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. On 29 March 2006 over 50 people attended a forum called "What's Happening for Young People in Hornby?". The forum was open to parents, professionals and community representatives associated with young people aged 13-17 years. The invitation to attend was generated by the Child, Youth and Family Justice staff based at the Hornby Heartlands Centre. The forum worked through several structured small group-work exercises to identify service gaps and potential actions to enhance services for youth.
3. One of the gaps identified was a school for young parents. A working party was set up to look at this issue, and has met several times during 2007. A working party and key officials' distribution list is **attached**. The Principal of Hornby High School, Andy Kai Fong heads up the working party. At its last meeting on 30 November 2006 the working party decided that a feasibility study was necessary in order to accurately scope the need for a Teen Parent Unit based at Hornby High School. It was also agreed that the Community Development Advisor for the Riccarton/Wigram ward, Denise Galloway, would investigate funding options for the feasibility study.
4. Hornby High School currently has six buildings that are unoccupied, and decisions related to what is going to happen to the future of these buildings need to be finalised by the end of March 2007. The feasibility study needs to be completed by this time as the results may impact on school property issues. A study of this nature should take approximately six weeks to complete.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

5. There are no legal considerations. The Board currently has an available balance of \$32,582.70 in its 2006/07 Discretionary Fund. The cost of the feasibility study would be approximately \$6,700. A research brief is **attached**.

BACKGROUND ON FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A TEEN PARENT UNIT AT HORNBY HIGH SCHOOL

6. Teenage childbearing is generally considered a poor life choice. It is widely acknowledged that the responsibilities of early parenting have long-lasting effects on the socio-economic well-being of the women and children involved. This can result in interrupted education, failure to attain educational potential, reduced earning potential and reduced career prospects. Various research and studies show that teen parents are less likely to complete school and more likely to be single parents, and the long term costs of teenage parents to the state in terms of sole-parent family benefits is substantial.
7. In New Zealand during 2001 there were 3,773 live births to mothers aged less than 20 years. Thirty-one percent of these were to teenagers aged less than 18 years. Maori and Pacific Island teenagers have the highest fertility rates. In a longitudinal study (2001) of a cohort of 533 young women born in 1971 in Christchurch, 26% had been pregnant at least once by the age of 21, and 14% had become parents. The study also found that young pregnant women in Christchurch were characterised by higher rates of educational underachievement.
8. Teen Parent Units provide the opportunity for second chance education for teens that have to opt out of their schooling early due to pregnancy and parenthood. There is now a significant amount of Units established around the country. In the South Island there is one in Dunedin and two in Canterbury. The Teen Parent Units in Canterbury are both based at high schools. The Kimihia Learning Centre is based at Linwood College and has been operating for one year and Karanga Mai Young Parent's College Unit is based at Kaiapoi High School and has been operating for ten years.
9. On 29 March 2006 over fifty people attended a forum called "What's Happening for Young People in Hornby?" at St Aidens Church in Hei Hei. The forum was open to parents, professionals and community representatives associated with young people aged 13-17 years. The invitation to attend was generated by the Child, Youth and Family Justice staff based at Hornby Heartlands Centre. The forum worked through several structured small group-work exercises to identify service gaps and potential actions to enhance services for youth.
10. One of the gaps identified was a school for young parents. A working party was established to look at this issue, and has met several times during 2007. The Principal of Hornby High School, Andy Kai Fong, is heading up the working party. At the last meeting on 30 November 2006 the working party decided that a feasibility study was necessary in order to accurately scope the perceived need for a Teen Parent Unit based at Hornby High School. It was also agreed that the Community Development Advisor for the Riccarton/Wigram Ward, Denise Galloway would investigate funding for the feasibility study. The Board of Trustees at Hornby High School is also supportive of exploring this issue and a letter is **attached** from the Board of Trustees Chairperson.
11. Hornby High School currently has six buildings that are unoccupied, and decisions relating to what is going to happen to these buildings in the future need to be finalised by the end of March 2007. The feasibility study for the Teen Parent Unit therefore needs to be completed as soon as possible. A study of this nature should take approximately six weeks to complete as key stakeholders need to be interviewed and statistical data collated. If the feasibility study identifies a need for a Teen Parent Unit at Hornby School, one of the buildings currently vacant could potentially serve as an appropriate venue, thus avoiding additional major costs.

OPTIONS

12. The Board could agree to grant \$6,700 towards a feasibility study which will address the perceived need for a Teen Parent Unit based at Hornby High School.
13. The Board could decline the request for funding for a feasibility study. The result of not funding this project would mean that the study would not be completed within the immediate time frame. The importance of the tight time frame has been discussed in this report.

PREFERRED OPTION

14. The preferred option is for the Board to grant \$6,700 for a feasibility study. In this case the time frame is very tight, given that Hornby High School has to make decisions about current vacant classrooms by 30 March 2007. Educational or second chance opportunities for young parents are a key contributor towards breaking the poverty cycle which young parents are often caught in. It is important to make sure that a comprehensive scoping exercise is undertaken in order to clarify the current perceived need for a Teen Parent based at Hornby High School. This project meets the following Council Community Outcomes:

- A Prosperous City
- A City of Life-long Learning.

15. This project is also aligned with the Council's Youth Strategy:

- Principle 1: Equity
- Principle 2: Empowerment
- Principle 3: Partnership
- Principle 4: Co-operation
- Principle 5: Treaty of Waitangi
- Principle 6: Effectiveness.

16. This project also meets the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Objectives (2006-2009):

Board Objective 11

Contribution to increased social well-being in the Riccarton/Wigram area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Board agrees to allocate \$6,700 from its 2006/07 Discretionary Fund for costs associated with undertaking a feasibility study identifying whether or not there is a need for a Teen Parent Unit at Hornby High School.