

COTSWOLD PRESCHOOL AND NURSERY - UPDATE

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Corporate Plan Output: Community Development and Social Well Being Policy Outcomes	

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Board regarding the Cotswold Pre-School and Nursery Management Committee's wish to purchase the St Gregory's Church Hall.

BACKGROUND

Members will be aware of the report outlined in the September 1999 Board agenda which the Board resolved:

- "1. That the Board assist and support the Cotswold Preschool and Nursery in purchasing the ex St Gregory's Church facility.*
- 2. That the Board consider project funding allocation in February/March 2000 as a contribution to achieving 1. above."*

The Board may wish to review the above resolution in regard to the Management Committee purchase deficit and the inappropriateness to meet this from the Board project/discretionary funds.

The following is additional information that will allow the Board to reconsider the situation.

The Cotswold Management Committee have negotiated a six month option to purchase the building from the Church. The purchase figure is set at \$225,000. The expiry date is set as April, 2000.

At a Service Centre meeting last December with members of the Cotswold Committee present, Advocacy Team staff were advised that the Committee has approximately \$100,000 on hand to assist with the purchase. The Committee is also sourcing possible mortgage funding to meet the shortfall.

As Board members were made aware, when visiting the complex on its annual bus tour the Pre-school and Nursery occupies part of the existing premises. The Committee intended to maintain availability of the remaining community hall for local activities and club use. The Committee also advises that there is a demand for out of school care services and intends investigating the commencement of a service in the near future.

As a result of a recent Education Review Office report the management committee received a \$46,000 Ministry of Education grant to upgrade the centre's toilet and service area. This work is nearing its completion. It was carried out because of the previously existing substandard toilet change facilities.

It appears the committee is well managed and is wishing to extend its services to provide for and assist local groups continue to function in the community hall section of the complex. The fact that the Pre-school management committee has been able to build its development funding base capital over a short period indicates the dedication and effective planning that the committee has carried out.

The management committee has also carried out some investigation regarding future housing development in the area. As the Pre-school is on a vehicle glidepath with the development of the subdivisions at Nunweek, Regents Park and the Highsted area it is felt these areas will remain within and improve its catchment. Local schools and kindergartens indicate increasing enrolments with one school indicating it would like to make use of the community hall part of the facility for school purposes.

Currently the Pre-school and Nursery is licensed to accept 40 children. The Pre-schools registration currently exceeds 80 children. Most sessions operate with maximum numbers. The nearest other creches are; Redwood, Fairhaven, and Bishopdale. While Bishopdale is nearby it has a waiting list.

Advocacy Team staff have also encouraged the Pre-school committee to make an application to a local chartered clubs casino machine distribution fund.

SUMMARY

The options are:

1. The Council make a grant for the difference of the purchase cost. Under the Council's Early Childhood Policy.
2. The Council purchases the building and leases it back to the Preschool Nursery Committee.
3. The Council supports a loan application to an external body.
4. The Council provides a loan.
5. The Council supports a funding application to an external organisation and meets the interest payments.
6. The Council does nothing.

It would also be necessary to clarify how the Council would retain an interest or part ownership if a substantial grant was made from Council sources.

Currently the Service Centre from its annual operational budget contributes a rental subsidy of \$6,000 and has done so for a number of years as per the Council Policy guidelines.

Because of the purchase option period expiring shortly there is some urgency for the Board to expedite an outcome to assist the Pre-schools management committee.

Recommendation: That the matter of the purchase of the St Gregory's Church Hall be referred to the Board's Community Services Committee for further consideration and report back with recommendations.

**Chairman's
Recommendation** That the foregoing recommendation be adopted.