

City of Melbourne submission regarding Planning Scheme Amendment (C306) for the Abbotsford Street Social Housing Estate

19 September 2017

Presenter: Emma Appleton, Manager Urban Strategy

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Future Melbourne Committee's endorsement of a submission to the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee regarding proposed planning scheme changes affecting the Abbotsford Street Estate at 366-422 Abbotsford Street and 1-49 Molesworth Street North Melbourne (the Site). The Amendment is proposed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
2. The Victorian Government has committed \$185 million to the Public Housing Renewal Program as part of its housing strategy, 'Homes for Victorians', with a commitment to increase the number of social housing properties in the State by at least 10 percent. The Site is one of the nine identified for renewal.
3. The Minister for Planning established the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee '*to report on the suitability of planning proposals to facilitate new social housing outcomes*'. On 21 August 2017, the Victorian Government announced that the redevelopment of the Site would include provision for a new education and arts facility (Education Facility).
4. The Site is currently zoned General Residential Zone (GRZ1) with maximum building heights of 11 metres and three storeys. A Design and Development Overlay (DDO66) also applies. The Amendment proposes to rezone the Site to a Mixed Use Zone (MUZ), and apply a Development Plan Overlay (DPO) and Parking Overlay (PO).

Key issues

5. Management has prepared a draft submission to the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee (Attachment 1) stating that the City of Melbourne:
 - 5.1. Supports the Government's commitment to renew the Abbotsford Street Estate, including an increase in social housing on the Site. The redevelopment should demonstrate a new benchmark for integrated public and private housing as well as excellence in urban design and social and environmental sustainability.
 - 5.2. Does not support the proposed massing and built form strategy for the Site established by the DPO, as it does not respond or contribute to the neighbourhood context or established street character. The proposed heights and building footprints proposed in the DPO are establishing excessive yield expectations that should be reduced significantly.
 - 5.3. Proposes that the design framework and associated planning controls be reconsidered. The DPO should: establish a built form envelope, with reduced heights, that responds to the neighbourhood context; introduce a finer grain network of pedestrian connections through the Site; mandate basement car parking; stipulate the number of social and affordable housing units and ensure a diverse range of housing types; secure provision for community facilities and open space for residents; define how the proposed Education Facility interfaces with housing; retain significant trees and define areas for deep soil planting to establish a strong landscape structure and amenity.
 - 5.4. Supports, in principle, the inclusion of the Education Facility in the area but requests further clarification regarding the strategic vision and brief for the Facility. A Public Use Zone (PUZ2) should be applied for the Education Facility instead of the proposed Mixed Use Zone (MUZ).
 - 5.5. Supports the PO to reduce car parking requirements but suggests this could be further reduced, justified by the Site's proximity to public transport options and neighbourhood services.
 - 5.6. Seeks to be made a recommending referral authority and requests that a clause is included in the DPO to secure City of Melbourne's on-going role in the process.
6. Management is liaising with DHHS to ensure existing Social Housing residents remain within the municipality, where possible, to maintain connections to services and communities.

Recommendation from management

7. That the Future Melbourne Committee:

- 7.1. Determines to make a submission to the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee advising that Council does not support the proposed Amendment in its current form for the reasons outlined (Attachment 2).
- 7.2. Authorises the Director City Strategy and Place to make any further minor editorial changes to the submission document prior to submission to the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. City of Melbourne submission regarding Planning Scheme Amendment (C306)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. The Minister for Planning established the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee 'to report on the suitability of planning proposals to facilitate new social housing outcomes' under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
2. The Minister for Planning is proposed to be the Responsible Authority for the Site. The proposed Amendment is the responsibility of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Council is entitled to make a submission.

Finance

3. The costs associated with this responding to the application are contained within the existing budget.

Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Stakeholder consultation

5. Public exhibition commenced on 23 August 2017 and will close on 20 September 2017. Landowners and occupiers were notified by DELWP and invited to make a submission. DHHS conducted stakeholder and community leader engagement sessions in May, August and September 2017.
6. It is the responsibility of DHHS and DELWP to consult with key stakeholders. All information and documents are available on the DELWP website.
7. The City of Melbourne held a Community Information Session on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at the North Melbourne Community Centre, 49-53 Buncl Street, North Melbourne from 7pm to 8.30pm. The intent of the session was to inform the community on the details of the planning scheme amendment process and how to make a submission, and to provide an overview of Council officer's assessment of the amendment. Approximately 60 people attended. The audience was primarily local residents living adjacent to the site with some tenants from the estate also present. Attendees expressed anxiety and significant concern regarding both the process and the proposal.
8. City of Melbourne considers that community consultation has been deficient. A longer process, with more detailed engagement, is required to build community support for what could be a beneficial proposal.

Relation to Council policy

9. The City of Melbourne's housing strategy *Homes for People* sets out the directions for the City of Melbourne to address affordable housing in the municipality by helping to deliver at least 1721 affordable homes for low and moderate income earners, to improve the design quality and environmental performance of new apartments and to foster a high level of awareness and knowledge around good housing outcomes. The proposed amendment may result in an increase in social housing by 10 per cent, approximately 13 dwellings.
10. Council Plan Action 2.3 for 2017–18 is to review and broker affordable housing options to enable more affordable housing in the municipality.
11. The Melbourne Planning Scheme identifies there is a 'need to increase the proportion of lower cost accommodation, social housing and housing for people all abilities' (Clause 21.07).

Environmental sustainability

12. Any development will be required to comply with the Energy, Waste and Water Policy in the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Management is advocating for deep soil planting and protection of significant trees, consistent with Urban Forest Strategy.

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