

DED36/18 COUNCIL ACTION PLAN ITEM - MULTI-USE COMMUNITY FACILITY AT 33 SAXON STREET, BRUNSWICK - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONCEPT PLANNING STAGE (D18/177342)

Director Planning and Economic Development

Places

Executive Summary

In 2010, Council acquired a former school at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick (the site) in order to provide for future community needs in the dense and growing neighbourhood of Brunswick. A range of activities have occurred in relation to the site since 2010, including temporary activation since 2016 for community and creative uses, known as 'Siteworks'. This activation continues as a year to year proposition until 2021.

A Strategic Framework was endorsed by Council in August 2017 (DED70/17) to facilitate decision making around future development of the site. The framework includes potential uses, a draft vision, strategic objectives and site development principles.

From December 2017 through to May 2018, the potential range of uses to be accommodated in future planning for the site were tested with the community through community engagement and further reviewed with relevant service delivery officers across Council. A set of revised uses are now recommended for further development via a concept plan.

Subject to Council endorsement, the next step is to develop concept plan options and associated costs.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommendations included in this report for future uses, services and features to be further tested in the upcoming concept planning stage for a multipurpose community hub at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick.
2. Endorses the commencement of preparation of concept plan(s) and associated costings for the multipurpose community hub at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick, for Council's consideration.

1. Policy Context

This item is directly referenced in the 4-year implementation program of the Council Plan 2017-2021 ref. R3b): Saxon Street Hub: implement strategic plan to guide future use and development of the Hub. The key target is for Council to endorse a Concept Plan by December 2018.

Planning for the site with an integrated 'place-based' approach also addresses the following other Council Plan actions:

- Development of expanded and enhanced public open space, including a playground, in an area of high need (ref. P4a & C4b).
- Improved community engagement (ref. R2a).
- Secure a new site for ongoing service delivery from the Brunswick Neighbourhood House (ref. R3e).
- Enhance the capacity of Moreland's creative sector to maintain and grow their practice (ref. P8a(i)).

2. Background

Strategic Framework

At its meeting on August 2017, Council endorsed the Strategic Framework (DED70/17) to facilitate decision-making about the future of the site. The Strategic Framework identified potential future uses for the site, development principles, strategic objectives and a draft vision.

The potential uses as identified in the Strategic Framework are listed below. These uses were identified based on an assessment of current and future community infrastructure needs (to 2036) across wider Brunswick (Brunswick, Brunswick East and Brunswick West), undertaken by consultants Sociologic. They were also informed by an understanding of what uses have proved successful in the current short term activation of the site as 'Siteworks' since 2016. The potential future uses included:

- Public open space including:
 - Passive space
 - Children's play
 - Outdoor fitness (no permanent equipment)
 - Outdoor events and exhibitions
 - Public toilet
- Multipurpose community rooms for:
 - General community groups and events
 - Seniors groups
 - Social support groups
 - Playgroups
 - Community learning and engagement
 - Indoor performance and rehearsals
 - Youth groups and programs
 - Indoor fitness (no permanent equipment)
- Creative industries, including:
 - Artists in residence
 - Writers studio

- Film studio
- Rehearsal space
- Professional artist studios
- Consulting rooms for:
 - Maternal and child health
 - Youth support
- Staff administration rooms
- Occasional Care.

The potential uses and draft vision identified in the Strategic Framework were the subject of community engagement in early 2018.

3. Issues

This section outlines the community engagement, use assessments and recommendations for the concept planning stage.

Phase 1 Community Consultation

The development of a concept plan for the site is informed by a staged consultation as follows:

- Phase 1: Potential Uses and Draft Vision
- Phase 2: Concept Plan Options
- Phase 3: Preferred Concept Plan

Phase 1 included a wide variety of community engagement activities that occurred from December 2017 until March 2018. The full Consultation Report can be viewed at **Attachment 1**.

186 online survey responses were received, which included 86 responses from supporters of the Brunswick Neighbourhood House (BNH). Many ideas and suggestions were also recorded during face-to-face consultation activities.

Overall, the community was very supportive of a flexible multipurpose community facility being planned for the site, with particular support for improving the open space, provision of multipurpose community rooms and spaces for the creative sector.

94% of participants liked the draft vision which allows Council to move confidently forward in defining the long-term use of the site. The draft vision from the Strategic Framework states that:

33 Saxon Street is both an oasis of calm from the busy-ness of Sydney Road and a hive of cultural and community activity. The site reflects Brunswick's values of diversity, harmony, progress and cultural productivity. The site has grown into a vibrant, open and welcoming place, serving the local community and attracting a diversity of tenants, activities and visitors. The site acts as an anchor creative space in Brunswick and a catalyst for other creative activity.

New ideas put forward by the community included:

- Opportunities for integration between the site and the Brunswick Baths;
- Interest in health and wellbeing classes to be delivered at the site;
- The importance of having a strong diversity and inclusion focus;
- Support for Indigenous cultural education and celebration;
- Support for the allocation of space for a community garden; and
- Suggestions for a café/food provider to be onsite.

Key points raised in the proforma responses supporting the BNH include:

- BNH fulfils all the requirements of the Strategic Framework and offers a range of programs consistent with uses being considered for the site;
- BNH is in need of a facility to accommodate its administration, occasional childcare and activities including educational, recreational, wellbeing and social programs, as well as mini festivals and public events;
- Based on their constant activities and programs, BNH could act as the foundation of a vibrant and inclusive hub;
- BNH provided feedback and suggestions for improving the draft vision including a preference for future tenants to complement each other.

Recommendations for Concept Planning Stage

Following Phase 1 of community consultation, a review of the potential uses to be included in the Saxon Street multipurpose community facility was completed with relevant service managers across Council. The assessments revisited the Sociologic strategic needs assessment findings, carefully considered the community feedback received and utilised officer expertise to refine the uses to be considered in the concept plan options.

As a result of the review, it is recommended the below be included in the brief for development of concept plan options. Ultimately, testing through concept plan options will allow Council to better understand the quantum of space and uses which can fit together on the site and the associated costs.

Use/Service/Feature	Recommendations
Public open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded the public open space to a minimum size of 2,000 square metres from current size of 1,700 square metres. • Space be assigned for a community garden. • Children's play areas to be incorporated into design. • The public open space will not be a designated 'dogs off leash' park. • Passive recreation is a focus (purpose) of the park. • Trees, canopy cover and grass is incorporated into the design.
Multipurpose community rooms	Include a minimum of two multipurpose community rooms.
Multipurpose consulting rooms	Include 3 consulting rooms primarily for provision of maternal and child health services (MCH) which can be uses for other purposes out of consulting hours.
Creative production spaces	<p>Include a minimum of 400 square metres for the purpose of creative production spaces.</p> <p>This may incorporate small, medium and large sized rooms that are flexible in use and may be shared as community rooms.</p>
Creative: Exhibition Space – Gallery	<p>Include an exhibition space.</p> <p>Any future gallery on site is intended to be leased by a private operator and should continue to have a social inclusion focus.</p>
Tenant: Brunswick Neighbourhood House (BNH)	<p>Incorporate BNH space requirements to test the viability for possible future tenancy.</p> <p>This includes requirements of a multipurpose space for occasional childcare noted below.</p>
Multipurpose space for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A space be incorporated into the concept designs that could be adapted for Occasional Care as the

Use/Service/Feature	Recommendations
Occasional Care	<p>primary use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The space needs to be flexible to be able to be used for other purposes outside its primary use. Storage is essential.
Supporting infrastructure required to support multipurpose facility with a variety of tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff administration rooms for shared use by potential on-site manager and/or multiple tenants. Shared staffroom with kitchen facilities. Public toilets accessible from both inside and outside (outside access can be locked). Explore the possibilities of a commercial kitchen being incorporated onsite.
Integration with Brunswick Baths	Explore options for the two sites to integrate.
Café/Food Provider	Explore the opportunities for a café/food provider to be incorporated into concept plans on a temporary or permanent basis.
Income Generating Tenants	<p>In accordance with Strategic Objective 2 of the Strategic Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> carefully manage the draw on Council's limited rates raised budget and develop a viable multi-use facility at the Site. <p>Concept plan options should also explore provision of space for income generation which would help offset costs to Council. This may include office space for commercial tenants.</p>

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Consultation

The following consultation has been undertaken since the Strategic Framework was endorsed in August 2017:

- Phase 1 Community consultation regarding the draft vision and potential future uses occurred from December 2017 until March 2018. The full Consultation Report can be viewed at **Attachment 1**;
- The methodology and results of the engagement process and the uses in/out assessment methodology was discussed with the South Ward Councillors at the Brunswick Advisory Group (BAG) on 19 April 2018;
- Advice was sought from officers across Council involved in the uses in/out assessments during April and May 2018;
- The Project Board was consulted throughout the process and provided strategic guidance and decision-making on a monthly basis;
- The recommendations were presented to the Moreland Executive Group on 1 May 2018;
- The recommendations were presented to Councillors at a Councillor Briefing on 7 May 2018.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Redevelopment of 33 Saxon Street will result in both capital and operational costs to Council. As such, carefully managing both capital and operational costs to Council is an objective included in the endorsed Strategic Framework.

During the concept planning stage, financial modelling is being undertaken to ensure future ongoing operational costs are minimised. In particular, investigation into the potential for income generating tenants to be included on the site to help offset costs to Council.

The funds to undertake planning for the future use of 33 Saxon Street, including the community needs assessment, community engagement and concept planning are covered by the Saxon Street 'reserve' (to become the 'major projects reserve' in future).

7. Implementation

Timing	Activity
June/July 2018	Develop Concept Plan options
August 2018	Council Report to endorse Concept Plan(s) for community engagement
August/September 2018	Phase 2 Community Engagement
October/November 2018	Finalise preferred Concept Plan and Cost modelling
December 2018	Council endorses preferred Concept Plan

Attachment/s

- 1 Saxon Street Phase 1 - Final Consultation Report D18/179009