

Report by Rachael Snape, Development Planner

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the following information in relation to the Department of Housing's proposed upgrade of existing social housing in Belfield.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This information report is provided in response to the Notice of Motion made by Councillor Lim at Councils' meeting held on 12 May 2009 (Minute No. P34/09):

Urgent Business – Notice of re-housing, Belfield

That the General Manager prepare a report concerning the proposed redevelopment of Housing NSW properties in Belfield.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Government under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package (NBESP) has committed a total of \$6 billion over the next three (3) years for the development of new social housing and a further \$400 million over two (2) years for the repair and maintenance of existing housing stock. The program may include the following:

1. Redevelopment of existing NSW Department of Housing owned properties;
2. Acquisition and development of land with existing development consents by public tender; and
3. Refurbishment and maintenance of existing housing stocks.

As part of the process Housing NSW (HNSW) will be reassessing the needs of occupants within the existing housing stock to ensure that existing and future residents receive access to resources based on identified need.

The aim is to increase the available social housing stock, halve homelessness by 2020 and provide economic support to NSW and local communities through the provision of an estimated 15,000 jobs over the next two (2) years.

LEGISLATION

In order to fast track expenditure of monies granted under the NBSEP the NSW State government has introduced reforms to State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

Pursuant to subdivision 5 of the SEPP particular forms of development, such as demolition, will be exempt while others, including single storey dwellings, will not require development consent from Council but rather will be subject to Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* that permits HNSW to act as the consent authority.

Provision has been made within the SEPP for consultation with Local Government and adjoining land owners as part of the assessment process. All parties will be given a 21 day notice period of the proposed works and the opportunity to comment. These comments and the subsequent processes will be treated and considered in a similar manner as a development application being assessed and determined by Council.

REPORT

On 13 May 2009 Council Officers met with Area Representatives from Housing NSW (HNSW) to discuss current projects and the further processes for potential additional developments within the local area.

At this stage, two (2) properties have been identified as being suitable for redevelopment at Nos. 8 and 10 Cecily Street, Belfield. It is the intent of the Housing NSW to redevelop the subject premises for the purpose of providing attached dual occupancies on both sites. No further advice could be provided with respect to future developments within the Strathfield Municipal Local Government Area (LGA).

Housing NSW has indicated to Council that design and assessment of the two (2) projects will commence over the coming weeks with an aim to construct in December of this year. As part of the rehousing/redevelopment strategy, the department has committed the following to the residents of Cecily Street, Belfield:

- Find appropriate alternative housing;
- Pay reasonable relocation costs including removalists, reconnection of utilities, mail redirection for three (3) months; and
- No rent for the first two (2) weeks post relocation.

Moreover it is the understanding of Council Officers that once works are completed on the redeveloped properties, and subject to identified need, relocated residents will be given the option of returning to their local areas.

The proposed works to be undertaken by NSW Housing are in response to a number of Federal and State initiatives to readdress issues of both the current economic crises and growing homelessness across the State. As future projects are identified for redevelopment HNSW will contact both Council and local residents.

Council Officers will brief Councillors of any changes or new developments as information becomes available.