

**1.5 65A POWER AVENUE CHADSTONE - SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION –  
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

1. *Commences an Expression of Interest process with Registered Housing Associations to assess the level of interest in the development, construction and management of social housing at 65A Power Avenue, Chadstone.*
2. *Notes that if the proposed development is over 10 units and is funded through the Big Build/Social Housing Growth Fund, and undertaken on behalf of the Minister for Housing, the planning permit process, inclusive of re zoning from PPRZ to GRZ will be the responsibility of the Minister.*
3. *Notes that if the proposed development is funded by the Registered Housing Provider, then the development approval process and any rezoning process is undertaken at Council level. Should this be the case, it is proposed to commence the re zoning, once Council has decided upon which Registered Housing Provider it will partner with, and the extent of the proposed development is known.*
4. *Officers present the findings of the Expression of Interest process to Council for consideration.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to commence an Expression of Interest process with Registered Housing Associations to assess the level of interest in the construction and ongoing management of a social housing development at 65A Power Avenue, Chadstone.

**BACKGROUND**

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 30 March 2021, Council considered a report on *Potential Sites for Social Housing in Monash* in response to the Victorian State Government's "Big Housing Build".

After considering the report, Council resolved as follows:

*That Council:*

1. *Notes and endorse the three potential sites being:*

- a) 1399 – 1401 Centre Road, Clayton;
- b) 329 - 333 Waverley Road, Mount Waverley; and
- c) 65A Power Avenue, Chadstone

*which have been identified as possibly being suitable for social housing in Monash in response to the Victorian State Government's landmark 'Big Housing Build' \$5.3 billion investment package into social and affordable housing.*

*2. Provides in-principle support to the three Council owned sites identified within this report and notes that these sites will form the basis for any further discussions with Homes Victoria for the possible provision of social housing within the municipality.*

*3. Advocates to the State Government that they also identify land controlled by VicTrack and Melbourne Water that may be suitable as potential sites amongst their significant land holding in metropolitan Melbourne, such as the site identified at 1A Johnson Street, 1 – 15 Johnson Street & Part Johnson Street, Oakleigh.*

*4. Notes that this stage is a first step in planning for the opportunities to be announced by Homes Victoria when they provide further timelines and direction to local government in 2021, and that officers will brief Council when the next stages are known.*

*5. Notes that the preferred model would be for Council to retain ownership of the land and provide a long-term lease over the land to facilitate the provision of social housing.*

## **DISCUSSION**

**Definition of social housing** - For the purpose of this report, social housing refers to housing owned either by the State Government or by Not-for-Profit Community Housing providers that are rented to low-income households at either 25% (public housing) or 30% (community housing) of household income. Social housing does not generally include rooming houses. It is generally owned by the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (Public Housing) or Registered Housing Agencies (Community Housing).

Social housing provides more than just placing a roof over someone's head. It aims to provide long-term, wraparound services, including but not limited to child and family services, mental health support, health and clinical services, independent living services and disability support.

**Homes Victoria** will prioritise and fast-track new social and affordable housing through its landmark \$5.3 billion 'Big Housing Build' over the next four years.

**Community Housing Sector** - The Community Housing sector through the 39 agencies regulated under the Housing Act will partner in the Big Housing

**Build.** A Registered Agency must be either a Not for Profit organisation, a Company limited by shares or guarantee, an Incorporated Association, or a Co-operative. Of the 39 agencies, 29 are Housing Associations (HA's). HA's are able to expand new housing through construction, purchase or acquisition, using a mix of government funds and private sector investment.

**Funding** – Funding may be sourced from Homes Victoria through its \$1.38 billion 'Social Housing Growth Fund' for housing projects led by community housing providers. Regular competitive funding rounds will be made available over the next four years. The first round opened in December 2020 and closed early 2021. A second round has also recently concluded.

**10 Year Social Housing and Affordable Housing Strategy and Compact with Local Government** - Homes Victoria is currently developing a *10 Year Social Housing and Affordable Housing Strategy* and a Compact with Local Government. The Compact will establish a new financial partnership with local government to promote collaboration and increased housing across Victoria. The Compact will include identifying suitable sites for new social housing and will provide opportunities for Councils to input into the design of projects.

**Planning** - Amendments VC187 and VC190, gazetted on 1 December 2020, introduced changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes to streamline the planning process to facilitate the rapid delivery social and affordable housing. Both amendments specify the Minister for Energy, Environment, and Climate Change (the Minister) as the responsible authority for social housing projects under the Big Build/Social Housing Growth Fund.

If the proposed development is over 10 units and is funded through the Big Build/Social Housing Growth Fund, and undertaken on behalf on the Minister for Housing, the planning permit process, inclusive of re zoning from PPRZ to GRZ, will be the responsibility of the Minister.

If the proposed development is funded by the Registered Housing Provider, then the development approval process and any rezoning process is undertaken at Council level. Should this be the case, it is proposed to commence the re zoning, once Council has decided upon which Registered Housing Provider it will partner with, and the extent of the proposed development is known.

### **65A Power Avenue, Chadstone.**



### **Land Status**

The vacant land at 65A Power Avenue Chadstone is described as Lot 44 on Plan of Subdivision 055183, Certificate of Title Volume 8355 Folio 142 and is approximately 0.31 hectares. There are no restrictions or easements on title.

The land is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone under the Monash Planning Scheme, with part of the land subject to a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and part of the land fronting Power Avenue subject to a Special Building Overlay.

Should the EOI be successful, the land would need to be rezoned to a Residential zone. The details of any proposed rezoning would be determined as part of the consideration of the EOI submissions.

The Monash Open Space Strategy identifies this land as public open space used as an Accessway or Trail.

The land is adjacent to a strip of Victrack land. Victrack have advised that their land is not available for lease or purchase as the land is reserved for Victrack Telco use.

The land is located approximately 900m from Holmesglen and Jordanville stations.

### **Community Engagement**

Community consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. Consultation will inform the local community of Council's identification of the site for a proposed Social Housing site and the subsequent proposed Expression of Interest process.

Further consultation may be required through any potential re-zoning process and leasing process in accordance with applicable legislation.

### **Expression of Interest**

The proposed EOI will invite Registered Housing Associations to consider the opportunity to develop, construct and manage the site for the purpose of social housing.

The EOI will provide a degree of flexibility for interested applicants to design to the strengths of their organisations. Submissions will be required to:

- provide a brief summary of the size, dwelling yield, dwelling mix and scale of development they consider appropriate for the site;
- an explanation of proposed project funding;
- provide an indicative construction time frame;
- outline any special or particular conditions relevant to their proposal;
- provide information about the capacity and capability of the organisation to fund and deliver the project in a timely and professional manner; and
- detail experience in the ongoing management of social housing.

In addition the EOI proposals will be required to show:

- A delivery model that prioritises access for people currently living in or with strong community connections to the City of Monash;
- Built form featuring Environmentally Sustainable Design principles;
- How the ongoing management of the development will deliver access to wraparound social support services to care for its community beyond the provision of shelter;

The interested applicants will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- How the proposal aligns with the thirteen priorities of *Council's Social Housing Framework 2020 - 2025* and its focus on specific cohorts that are over-represented in the homelessness population including:
  - Women and children fleeing family violence
  - Children and young people
  - Asylum seekers and refugees
  - People who identify as LGBTIQ+ (particularly youth)
  - Indigenous Australians
  - Older people, particularly women
  - People who have a disability
  - People living with a mental illness
  - People experiencing repeated homelessness
  - People exiting from care or institutions into homelessness
- How the proposed development fits within planning controls;
- Capability and capacity to deliver the development and manage the social housing development with an outcomes-based model;
- Expertise in community development and social impact assessment, including Gender Impact Assessment;
- Approach to a long-term partnership with Council;

- Long-term wraparound service delivery and support for tenants. The Register Housing Agency will need to have a presence in Monash or provide long-term assertive outreach with wraparound support to social housing tenants including mental health, physical health, family violence, disability and support for other complex issues;
- Delivery of high quality built form including environmentally sustainable design principles;
- Strong governance through development and into operational phase;
- Ability to fund the project in a timely manner, either through grant funding or independent resources.

### ***POLICY IMPLICATIONS***

The **Monash Social Housing Framework 2020-2025** (Framework) endorsed by Council in December 2020 guides Council's efforts to address homelessness and influence an increase to the supply of social housing, primarily through outreach and advocacy.

Throughout the Framework, Monash endorses the evidence that the most powerful action Local Governments can undertake to reduce homelessness is to support the delivery of homes that people can afford. For the lowest income households most vulnerable to homelessness, this means the provision of social housing.

Council's leadership in 2020-21 of the **Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Charter 2020** [the Charter] demonstrates Council's commitment to social housing. Through this Charter – inter alia - we agree to partner with Federal and State Governments, public and private sectors partners to coordinate an approach to increase social housing and respond to homelessness in the south and east of Melbourne.

The Framework and the Charter are integral in guiding Council's response to the Victorian State Government's recently announced 'Big Housing Build' \$5.3 billion investment.

The Framework's priorities align to Council's draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025, where dedicated social housing and related homelessness actions will be proposed.

**Monash Open Space Strategy** - 65A Power Avenue Chadstone is located close to Batesford Reserve and is within walking distance of other major parks in the area. Disposal of this open space does not impact on gap areas of open space in the locality.

The Glen Waverley Rail Trail passes along the southern boundary of the site and whilst it is not directly impacted by the proposal it will be retained and

has the potential for improvement in conjunction with any development of this site. This is a major trail for Monash and essential to be retained.

### ***CONSULTATION***

A series of meetings with 4 local Registered Housing Providers has occurred to test general interest in the available sites. Interest in the sites and the process were positive.

Community consultation in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy is proposed to be undertaken upon completion of the EOI process.

### ***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The purpose of this EOI is to commence the process to deliver upon Council's commitment to address the significant shortfall of social housing in the community and contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and safety of people experiencing homelessness in Monash.

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

The lack of access to appropriate housing may impinge on many human rights that are protected under several international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights include the right to: an adequate standard of living; privacy; social security; education; freedom from discrimination; the vote; liberty and security.

The following principles provide a strong human rights framework to guide Council to implement this framework.

**Equity:** We provide or enable services and supports to everyone, but especially for those who are most vulnerable.

**Access & Inclusion:** We will remove or reduce barriers to participation by ensuring that information, services and facilities are accessible to people of all abilities and circumstances.

**Intersectionality:** We recognise that people's lives are multi-dimensional and complex and therefore our response to community issues cannot be developed through a singular lens.

***GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT***

Because this proposed EOI will have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a Gender Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of this work.

Through the EOI process, applicants will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of, and application of gender equity in the delivery and ongoing management of the provision of social housing.

***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

An EOI project that has a land component as an integral element of the project, requires Council as land owner to obtain and disclose information about the land. This provides interested applicants with a solid base of knowledge from which to consider the opportunities of the site, especially as the land is proposed to transfer in leasehold not freehold.

Financial resources to prepare an EOI document will be managed through existing budgets.

It is not anticipated that Council will contribute to the construction or ongoing operation of social housing on the site.

***CONCLUSION***

Council has previously identified 65a Power Avenue Chadstone as a suitable site for the provision of Social Housing.

In order to move to the next stage it is proposed to commence an Expression of Interest for the provision of social housing at the site.

The EOI will invite Registered Housing Associations to submit proposals for the delivery of social housing through the design, construction and ongoing management of social housing development to serve the Monash community.