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NSW Department of Planning and Environment

By online submission to the planning portal:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/exhibition/explorer-street-rezoning-proposal>

City of Sydney - Final Supplementary Submission to the Explanation of Intended Effect for the Explorer Street Site, Eveleigh

At its meeting on 20 November 2023, the Council of City of Sydney (the City) resolved to make a supplementary submission to the Department of Planning and Environment's Explanation of Intended Effect (EIE) for the Explorer Street Site, Eveleigh. The information below builds on the original submission made on 16 November 2023.

1. Impacts on Tenants

The City recognises the significant impact that the renewal of the social housing estate at Explorer Street Eveleigh has had and will continue to have on tenants. The City understands that some tenants have long standing connections to the area having lived in their homes for more than 20 years. Others have reportedly relocated to Explorer Street from Miller's Point, making this the second time they are being impacted by relocation.

Of particular concern are the adverse impacts on the health and wellbeing of tenants¹. Given the high prevalence of health and socio-economic vulnerability among social housing tenants this is especially significant².

Recommendation 1 – Relevant agencies should recognise the potential impact of the project on tenants and respond to the resulting needs of tenants in the relocation process and the management of the project.

Recommendation 1.1 – All efforts should be made to minimise the disruption to tenants. This includes but is not limited to arranging the sequencing of development milestones in a tenant focussed way.

¹ Evans, G. W., Wells, N. M., & Moch, A. (2003). Housing and Mental Health: A Review of the Evidence and a Methodological and Conceptual Critique. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59(3), 475-500. Doi: 10.1111/1540-4560.00074

² Baker, E., Lester, L., Beer, A., Mason, K., & Bentley, R. (2013). Acknowledging the health effects of poor quality housing: Australia's Hidden Fraction. In Centre for Housing (Ed.): *Urban and Regional Planning*, the University of Adelaide.

2. Consultation with Tenants

Tenant residents need to be actively engaged rather than informed. Evaluations of previous social housing renewal projects have highlighted the importance of consultation³. Effective consultation cannot be limited to the less contentious aspects of projects. Genuine consultation is inclusive of the design of the new housing to suit the returning residents' specific needs as well as the delivery of the project.

Active consultation can ameliorate the effects of marginalisation that many social housing tenants experience. Evidence has shown that social housing accounted for the largest proportion of marginally or deeply excluded residents⁴. The vulnerability of many tenants heightens the importance of thorough and active consultation with tenants in relation to future social housing renewal projects.

Recommendation 2 – Future stages of the Explorer Street renewal and other future social housing renewal projects be preceded by robust, transparent and open consultation with social housing tenants.

3. The Compact for Renewal

The Compact for Renewal is an agreement between the agencies undertaking urban renewal and social housing tenants affected by renewal. It was developed by Shelter NSW, the Tenants' Union NSW and City Futures in consultation with tenants. The principles contained in the Compact reflect the priorities for tenants in social housing renewal projects. The principles include⁵:

- Respect for tenants
- Acknowledgement that renewal has damaging and disruptive impacts
- Impacts will be mitigated and minimised
- Commitment to real engagement
- Tenants to receive a fair share of the benefits of renewal

Implementation of the principles extends to:

- Relocation and resettlement
- Managing change and the adverse impacts of renewal
- Planning and setting up the renewal project
- Community engagement

It is noted that other jurisdictions meet and exceed the principles in The Compact for Renewal. The City considers these standards to be the minimum requirement, with encouragement given to exceeding them.

Recommendation 3 – All relevant NSW Government agencies should, at a minimum, implement and agree a Compact for Renewal with tenants and demonstrate evidence of this relation to the Explorer Street Eveleigh site.

4. A Guaranteed Right of Return

A small proportion (roughly 20 per cent) of tenants have exercised their right of return in previous social housing renewal projects⁶. Studies have attributed this to a range of

³ Stubbs et al, 2005, Leaving Minto: A Study of the Social and Economic Impacts of Public Housing Estate Redevelopment

⁴ Stone, W., Reynolds, M., & Hulse, K. (2013). Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis AHURI Final Report no. 207 (pp. 1-90). Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

⁵ <https://files.tenants.org.au/resources/what-tenants-want-from-renewal.pdf>

⁶ Kelly and Porter, 2019, Understanding the assumptions and impacts of the Victorian Public Housing Renewal Program, Centre for Urban Research, RMIT

factors, including the poor match between the new dwellings and the household composition of tenants and the impacts of dislocation and the lack of temporary housing options near the project site.

Recommendation 4 – Issue a formal and enforceable right of return to the site for all existing social housing tenants.

5. Tenant Relocation

There is substantial Australian and international evidence that social housing renewal programs have caused direct and significant displacement of residents. Adverse impacts arising from dislocation have been documented for mental and physical health, social networks, economic outcomes (employment), productivity as well as access to services⁷. These impacts have been experienced on an individual, household and community level.

A genuine commitment to deliver a right of return to tenants has implications for the tenant relocation process. Tenants choosing to return to Explorer Street need to be supported to maintain their connection to the area during the construction phase of the project.

Feedback has suggested the wait times for social housing in the inner city are more than 12 months for applicants with an urgent need for housing. The level of priority accorded to existing tenants affected by a renewal project lengthens wait times for social housing applicants. The City is concerned about the impact that the Explorer Street project on homelessness in the area. It is noted that the renewal of social housing in Waterloo has already started to limit housing options and will have a very significant impact on wait times and in turn homelessness as it progresses. The City urges consideration of other temporary housing options for Explorer Street tenants seeking to return to the site. This could help to mitigate the impact on wait times and homelessness in the City.

Recommendation 5 – Where operationally feasible and preferred by tenants, relocate tenants within a 10 kilometre radius of Explorer Street Eveleigh to enable valuable cultural, education, employment, social, healthcare and other links to be maintained.

Recommendation 5.1 – Consider non-social housing options including head leasing properties from the private rental market for existing tenants exercising a right of return to Explorer Street.

6. Dwelling Mix

Unless the mix of dwellings in the new social housing on the site can meet the housing needs of existing tenants, the right of return will have little value. The housing needs of any existing tenants wanting to return to the site should form the basis of the planning for the new social housing. Consideration should also go to the housing needs of new tenants as indicated by both the priority housing and general wait lists.

While the broader trend in social housing is for smaller dwellings of 1 to 2 bedrooms, this does not diminish the importance of the housing needs of larger households requiring 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings.

⁷ Kelly and Porter, 2019, Understanding the assumptions and impacts of the Victorian Public Housing Renewal Program, Centre for Urban Research, RMIT

The City notes the wait times for studio/1 bedroom dwellings in the Leichhardt / Marrickville allocation zone, in which Explorer Street is located, is expected to be 5-10 years and in excess of 10 years for dwellings with 3 and 4 bedrooms⁸.

In the broader Sydney District that Explorer Street Eveleigh is located, there is a scarcity of larger dwellings. Most recent data indicate that 4 bedroom dwellings make up just 4 per cent of all social housing in the area. While dwellings containing 3 bedrooms make up 17 per cent of all social housing stock.

The loss of 37 dwellings with 3 bedrooms from Explorer Street and 8 dwellings with 4 bedrooms is significant and may have negative impacts on the diversity of the social housing property portfolio. It further diminishes the capacity of the portfolio to meet the housing needs of a range of cohorts. Including families with children and Aboriginal, Torres Strait islander, Pasifika and some Culturally and Linguistically Diverse households.

The importance of stable, affordable and appropriately sized housing to the developmental, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children is well established in research⁹. A wait time of more than 10 years for appropriately sized social housing is concerning and should inform decisions regarding dwelling mix in the project.

The City is home to one of Sydney's largest communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. First nations people are more likely to live in one or multi-family households than non-indigenous people (82 per cent compared to 70 per cent). Households of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people tend to be larger and fluctuating and overcrowding is also more prevalent than it is for non-indigenous households¹⁰. There is also an over representation of first nations people in social housing. It is critical that the cultural and housing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander tenants are responded to in the dwelling mix in the new housing in Explorer Street (including the additional bedroom allowance).

Design innovations like dual key dwellings, as delivered by St George Community Housing (SGCH) in Gibbons Street, Redfern, and flexible floor plans present opportunities to respond to the cultural and housing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The City urges consultation with the community and tenants on the appropriateness of these options and their potential inclusion on the site.

Recommendation 6 – Dwelling mix will need to accommodate existing tenants who may wish to exercise their right of return; and respond to the importance of granting an additional bedroom to tenants for cultural reasons.

Recommendation 6.1 – Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and tenants on design innovations to respond to cultural and housing needs.

⁸ <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

⁹ Young, P. (2002). Non-Shelter Outcomes of Housing: A case study of the relationships between Housing and Children's Schooling. University of Sydney and Bridge, C., Flatau, P., Whelan, S., Wood, G., & Yates, J. (2003). Housing Assistance and Non-Shelter Outcomes. Final Report. In AHURI Sydney Research Centre (Ed.). AHURI Western Australia and Cunningham & McDonald (2012) Housing as a platform for Improving education outcomes among low-income children, Urban Institute Cunningham & McDonald (2012) Housing as a platform for Improving education outcomes among low-income children, Urban Institute

¹⁰ <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia>

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Sam Ngui, Program Manager Diverse and Affordable Housing, on 9265 9333 or at sngui@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Jahn', written in a cursive style.

Graham Jahn AM LFRAIA Hon FPIA
Director
City Planning | Development | Transport

Enclosed:

NOM 15.5 - 20.11.23 - Council Submission to the Explorer Street Public Housing Rezoning Proposal

LMM 3.3 - 20.11.23 - Support for Waterloo South Relocations

Resolution of Council

20 November 2023

Item 15.5

Council Submission to the Explorer Street Public Housing Rezoning Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Scott –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the NSW Government has announced plans to rezone, demolish and redevelop 46 public housing homes in Explorer Street, Station Street and Aurora Place Eveleigh;
- (ii) the Explorer Street rezoning proposal is on public exhibition until 1 December 2023; and
- (iii) Council has made a submission in response to the rezoning proposal which is publicly available on the Council website; and

(B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:

- (i) provide a supplementary submission which provides further detail in relation to the City's expectation of community engagement and consultation in relation to current and future plans for the site; and
- (ii) draft the City's supplementary submission to:
 - (a) emphasise that robust, transparent, and open consultation with public housing tenants should be a pre-requisite of all plans to redevelop existing public housing;
 - (b) include recommendations about tenant engagement in the design and delivery of the project, and better consultation with the wider community. Best practice engagement should include involving public housing tenants in co-designing and/or playing a leading role in the future plans for the site;

- (c) note that there is a high level of anxiety and concern amongst tenants about the proposal, amongst the tenants who are aware of the plans;
 - (d) note that a number of the public housing tenants who live at the Explorer Street have been tenants there for more than 20 years, and that other tenants were relocated from Millers Point when this public housing was sold, and had been told they would not be forced to move again;
 - (e) advocate that, at a minimum, NSW agencies should follow the Compact for Renewal published by Shelter NSW, Tenants Union of NSW and City Futures Research Centre UNSW, and developed with public housing tenants;
 - (f) advocate strongly that appropriate sizes apartments for all existing families be renovated or built as part of any redevelopment, noting that a number of apartments currently include overcrowded families;
 - (g) advocate strongly that any public housing tenants relocated as a result of the development be housed in the local area, if this is their preference;
 - (h) advocate strongly for the right of return for existing tenants to be formalised, including a guarantee that future accommodation will be suitable and appropriate; and
 - (i) advocate that any future plans prioritise minimising disruption and the time that any parts of the site will be vacant and without housing, including advocating that in-fill and staged development be considered, if the plans are to go ahead; and
- (iii) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise and submit supplementary information in line with this Council decision.

Carried unanimously.

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Resolution of Council

20 November 2023

Item 3.3

Support for Waterloo South Relocations

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Since the redevelopment of the Waterloo Estate was finally announced by the former NSW Government in 2015, residents of Waterloo have endured years of uncertainty. Many in the community are fatigued by consultation, confused by the iterations of masterplans and planning decisions. Community need certainty about the project to feel secure about their future.

Over the past seven years, the City has worked with the community to improve the plans including to achieve more Social and Affordable Housing on the Waterloo Estate. We also urged the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) to ensure a Human Services Plan as well as a Social Impact Assessment and Management Plan are developed and implemented alongside the planning process.

In August 2023, the NSW Premier and Minister for Housing announced their commitment to provide 50 per cent of the housing at Waterloo South as Social and Affordable Housing (with a minimum 15 per cent of this housing dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples). This comes after years of our steadfast advocacy.

Residents were recently told they will begin to receive formal relocation letters from mid-2024. This announcement brings heightened anxiety for many in the community, particularly about how their relocations will be managed.

The Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) has committed to providing residents with six months' written notice of their relocation, up to two offers of housing and they will have the right to return to Waterloo South.

Support for residents

In the lead up to, during and after relocations, residents will need access to various forms of support. The NSW Government has committed to bringing LAHC, the Aboriginal Housing

Office and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under one agency called Homes NSW in February 2024.

DCJ, NSW Health and GroundSwell Redfern Waterloo have developed the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan and LAHC has separately developed an overarching People and Place Guiding Framework that proposes to develop a Human Services Plan and a relocations plan.

The NSW Government must holistically assess the needs of the Waterloo community, now and in the future and provide ongoing services (such as health, social, legal and cultural services) that respond to and support vulnerable residents and promote a harmonious community.

The NSW Government must also listen to and work with the community to implement the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan. In 2017, Shelter NSW, Tenants' Union of NSW and UNSW undertook research with Social Housing residents to understand the human impact of government redevelopment projects. They reported back with guiding principles for governments to follow to support residents through redevelopment projects. These principles must be incorporated into a comprehensive Waterloo-specific relocations policy due to the scale and impact of this project.

City of Sydney support

The City has a history of funding local organisations to support residents in NSW Government redevelopment projects. For example, we have supported community organisations by:

- Funding Redfern Legal Centre to provide tenancy support and legal advice to Millers Point residents.
- Funding Counterpoint Community Services to support Waterloo residents through the redevelopment process.
- Funding Redfern Legal Centre to provide tenancy support and legal services for residents impacted by current and future NSW Government redevelopment projects.
- Supporting the Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Alliance to build the capacity of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and community advocate for increased provision of Social and Affordable Housing.

Community development and capacity building will ensure residents are prepared for the relocation process, know what to expect and have access to resources to support self-advocacy. Individual legal case management may be required to help them understand their options, rights and how to respond. Culturally appropriate community support is also a priority, which should be managed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation.

The City's grants programs could again help Waterloo South residents through local community organisations, for example through our Community Services Grants Program and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund.

As part of the City's consultation for Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 - Continuing the Vision, the community told us they want a place where everyone feels welcome, where everyone has a home, a place people can afford to live in if they choose and that Social, Affordable and supported housing is available for those who need it.

The City of Sydney is committed to supporting the Waterloo Estate community and local organisations through the relocations process.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Lord Mayor –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the Land and Housing Corporation's relocations process for Waterloo South residents will commence in mid-2024;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) consult with local community organisations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the Waterloo area about what support residents will require during relocations and advise them about the City's available grant programs; and
 - (ii) report back to Council (if required); and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Housing calling on the NSW Government to:
 - (i) develop a Waterloo-specific relocations policy and mandate that all residents who wish to return to Waterloo South can be assured that they will be able to do so in accordance with the Minister for Housing's undertaking.
 - (ii) adequately resource ongoing support services for Waterloo Estate residents as part of the NSW Government's redevelopment;
 - (iii) listen to and work with the whole Waterloo Estate community to finalise and implement the Human Services Plan in the lead up to, during and after the redevelopment;
 - (iv) confirm when Homes NSW will be created and how it will address the social impact of relocations as well as how the current Waterloo Human Services Action Plan will link to the Human Services Plan being developed under LAHC's People and Place Framework; and
 - (v) work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to ensure that the 15 per cent of housing allocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households is culturally appropriate with mix of studio, one, two, three and four bedroom apartments.

The Minute, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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