

**17.1 LATE ITEM - PROPOSED STEP UP STEP DOWN MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY****File No:****Responsible Executive Officer: Chief Executive Officer****Reporting Author: Chief Executive Officer****Date of Report: 26 June 2017****Applicant/Proponent: WA Mental Health Commission****Disclosure of Interest: Nil****Attachment(s): Nil**

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**PURPOSE**

For Council to consider its position on the location of a proposed Step Up Step Down Mental Health facility that is funded by the State Government and proposed to be delivered by the Mental Health Commission (MHC).

**BACKGROUND**

In 2013, the Mental Health Commission (MHC) announced its proposal to establish a six bed step up/step down residential facility at Lot 500, Gawthorne Drive, Millars Well. The purpose of the proposed step up/step down service is to provide a supportive place for people experiencing mental illness to stay voluntarily for a short period of time to help people to stay out of hospital and remain in the community, close to family and friends. 24-hour on-site assistance is proposed to be available to occupants. It is anticipated that the service will be predominantly used by people aged 18 and over.

Planning and design for the facility is well advanced with significant project funds already having been expended on the project. Construction is currently indicatively scheduled to commence in early 2018, with an early 2019 anticipated opening date.

While there is clearly a need and desire for additional mental health services and facilities in our community, there is vocal community concern regarding the location of this proposed facility. The community concerns regarding the location of the facility have been discussed with MHC representatives. In summary MHC's feedback has been:

- The proposed facility is not a clinical facility. The service model is specifically built around developing the service within residential type settings. Similar facilities have been built successfully in residential settings throughout Australia including two in Perth;
- The MHC was given a limited number of sites within Karratha from which to select a preferred location for this development. Their previous assessment has been that the Gawthorne Drive location is an appropriate location for this type of service/facility;
- MHC understands that the sections of the community are concerned with the interaction between users of this facility and the general community. In some cases, these concerns are based on a misunderstanding of the nature and type of services that are proposed to be offered at the facility. Additionally, evidence from other like facilities indicates that the type of concerns being raised are rarely issues, if at all. The MHC believes that management plans/strategies can and will be put in place to address the issues that have been raised by the community; and

- While Karratha has been selected as a location for the Step Up Step Down Mental Health Facility, there is a strong desire from many other WA towns and communities to receive this type of facility. If securing support for an appropriate site in Karratha proves to be too difficult, there is a real risk that this facility will not proceed

In terms of ‘where to from here’ the WA Mental Health Commissioner, Tim Marney, has advised the City CEO that:

- While the City has no statutory approval role regarding the location of this facility, the City’s position on this matter will be considered, along with other feedback, when the MHC and the Minister for Health are considering how best to progress with this matter;
- The MHC is willing to consider other sites for this facility. A range of potential locations were discussed. The Mental Health Commissioner indicated some interest in personally viewing/reviewing these sites;
- While other sites could be considered, it should be noted that alternative sites are likely to come at a cost and time premium. Given the status of the State Government budget, additional budget for the project is unlikely to be provided; and
- If an appropriate location cannot be sourced within a reasonable time and within the prescribed budget, there is a real chance that the community may lose this project.

#### **LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE**

In accordance with Council Policy CG-8 Significant Decision Making Policy, this matter is considered to be of low significance in terms of Council’s ability to perform its role.

#### **COUNCILLOR/OFFICER CONSULTATION**

Representatives of the MHC presented to the Council at the Briefing Session on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 where the details of the service and the rationale for the proposed Gawthorne Drive location was discussed.

Council officers have had intermittent conversations with MHC staff and their consultant team regarding the service model, location and design of the proposed facility since the 2013 announcement. On the 22 June the City’s CEO met with the Mental Health Commissioner, Tim Marney, to discuss the proposal and options.

#### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

The City has not undertaken any specific community consultation on this particular matter.

The MHC advised that it initially undertaken community consultation via the following methods:

- Public advertising was undertaken in March 2017 with forums regarding the facility being hosted in April 2017;
- A door knock in the local area was undertaken in March 2017;
- Flyers being left at unattended properties outlining the proposal and notifying them of the upcoming public forums;
- A meeting for parents and teachers was held at the Millars Well Primary School on 11 April; and
- A public forum was held at the Leisureplex on 12 April.

There were community concerns raised regarding the quality/quantity of this consultation. Given these concerns, the MHS visited Karratha again on the 12 June 2017 to undertake additional community consultation.

While there is widespread community support for the development of additional mental health facilities within our district, there is community concern regarding the location of the proposed service. In particular concerns have been raised regarding the proximity of the proposed facility to residential areas, the Millars Well Primary School and the Karratha RSL facility.

The local member, Kevin Michel MP has presented a community initiated petition to parliament on this matter.

### **STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

As this facility is being owned and developed by the State Government, it is exempt from Town Planning approval as it is classified as a Public Work under the Public Works Act. Council has no statutory role in the selection of a site location for this facility.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed facility is being planned, developed and operated by the State Government. The City has no financial role in the project.

### **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no strategic implications.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

There is clearly a need/want for additional mental health resources in the local community. Lack of clarity around site location for the project potentially jeopardises the project being delivered in our community.

### **IMPACT ON CAPACITY**

There is no impact on capacity or resourcing to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

### **RELEVANT PRECEDENTS**

While it has no statutory role regarding in this matter, Council has previously provided input and advice to the State Government re where it believes State resources should be spent and where State managed facilities should be constructed.

### **VOTING REQUIREMENTS**

Simple Majority.

### **OPTIONS:**

#### Option 1

As per Officer's recommendation.

#### Option 2

That Council by SIMPLE Majority pursuant to Section 3.18 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to NOT ADOPT a Council position on the preferred location of the proposed Step Up Step Down Mental Health Facility on the basis that this is a State service that is outside of the Council's remit.

#### Option 3

That Council by SIMPLE Majority pursuant to Section 3.18 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to DEFER consideration of its position regarding the development of a proposed Step Up Step Down Mental Health Facility.

**CONCLUSION**

Given media commentary and community feedback via various forums there would seem to be a very high level of support for the provision of additional mental health services within the community but there is clearly some concern re the development of the proposed Mental Health Facility at the Gawthorne Drive location.

While the City has no specific role in the decision of where to locate this facility/service, it may want to make its position on the matter known to the MHC and the Minister for Health so that the Council's view can be considered when making this decision.

If Council elects to determine a position on this matter, it needs to be conscious of the fact that there is completion for the placement of these facilities throughout WA and if developing this project within Karratha is deemed to be too difficult, there is a risk that the project could be lost.

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**OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council by SIMPLE Majority pursuant to Section 3.18 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to ADVISE the Minister for Health and the WA Mental Health Commissioner that:**

- 1. The City and the local community strongly support the development of a Step Up Step Down Mental Health Facility within the City of Karratha;**
- 2. Sections of the local community have indicated a desire for alternative sites to be considered for the proposed service as they do not believe that the proposed location is the most appropriate site;**
- 3. The City is keen to work with the Mental Health Commission to identify alternate locations and/or facilities that may be considered appropriate for this service; and**
- 4. While the City is keen to work with the Mental Health Commission to explore alternate locations for the proposed facility, Council does not wish to jeopardise the delivery of the project/service and will accept the Ministers decision regarding where best to build the project.**