

The following people made submissions in relation to this item and were thanked by the Chairperson, Mayor Le Cerf:

- *Michael Brennan*
- *Terry Mason*
- *Serena O'Meley*
- *Paul Zamarian*
- *David Sealy*

8.2 REIMAGINING RUTHVEN MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Author: Urban Designer

Reviewed By: General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider its next steps in regards to planning for the long term future of the old Ruthven primary school in Reservoir.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council purchased the old Ruthven Primary School site in 2016 to provide a park for the community and Council has been engaging with the community to help shape the vision and to understand community aspirations, needs and ideas to help develop a master plan for this site into the future.

The scope of Council's work towards developing a master plan has included exploring development of a Children's hub at the site. Community feedback has shown that a significant proportion of the community do not want a building at the site and Council's technical investigations have also confirmed that there is not an immediate need for a Children's hub in this area, nor is this the only site in this community that could provide for facilities at a future point in time when additional services are expected to be needed.

Based on the findings of the community engagement work and technical work to date, Officers recommend adjusting the scope of the master planning and now focusing on planning for this site to be a local park with natural character for the long term, in line with community aspirations.

Officers also recommend undertaking some immediate upgrades in this financial year to include some new bins and introducing recycling at the park, seats, tree planting and a drinking fountain to make the site more accessible and usable straight away.

Working with the CRG, Officers would prepare the draft master plan focussing on creating a natural character local park over time and for the long term, and would also engage with the broad community including diverse groups. Officers would explore opportunities to enhance biodiversity and to support community involvement in the park, for example by getting the community involved in naming of the park and by exploring opportunities for community planting days.

There has been wide-ranging community participation in consultation and this included a Family Fun Day event attended by 350 people and the involvement of community members

in a Community Reference Group (CRG). It was clear that a significant proportion of the community oppose the idea of an early year's facility at the site.

Two other options could be considered by Council:

- Council could continue master planning on the basis that this site should provide an Early Years Hub in future years when there is expected to be a need for additional services. Officers advise this while this site could be used for this purpose, it is not required for this purpose, as there are other potential sites in area.
- Council could put master planning on hold until community infrastructure planning for the whole precinct is finished. Master planning would then be finalised during 2019-20 or later, rather than in 2018-19. This approach would provide Council with detailed information about the needs for services in the wider area and all the potential locations so it could consider the precinct as a whole before resolving plans for this particular site. Officers advise that current knowledge of the area is sufficient to understand that there are other potential sites in the area for community services in future, and this particular site is not required for this purpose.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Confirms that its vision that the former Ruthven Primary School is for a local park of natural character that is open space for the long term.
- (2) Thanks the Community Reference Group for their advice and seeks their further advice to help complete development of a draft master plan for a local park of natural character and to prioritise some immediate upgrades to the site.
- (3) Formally responds to the Community Reference Group's submission as found in **Appendix B**.
- (4) Writes to the local community providing them with a project update.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 18-303

MOVED: Cr. G Greco
SECONDED: Cr. S Rennie

That Council:

- (1) Confirms that its vision is that the entire former Ruthven Primary School (3.056 ha) is a local park of natural character that is open space for future generations.
- (2) Formally resolves not to proceed with the initiative identified in the Darebin Council Plan 2017-21 to use the Ruthven school site as a place for a children's hub, and to report this decision in the next Council Plan progress report against any relevant actions or goals.
- (3) Confirm that Council's long term plans do not include any large exclusive-use buildings on the Ruthven site.
- (4) Will include the whole of the Ruthven site in the new Darebin Open Space Strategy.
- (5) Will commit to ensuring the zone and planning controls reflect the long term plans for the whole site as an open space.
- (6) Thanks the Community Reference Group for their advice and seeks their further advice to help complete development of a draft master plan for a local park of natural

character and to prioritise some immediate upgrades to the site.

- (7) Formally responds to the Community Reference Group's submission as found in **Appendix B**.
- (8) Writes to the local community providing them with a project update.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY