

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Proposed lease of Council land at 1 Spring Street Preston

1. What is being proposed?

We are proposing to lease Council-owned land for three years to an organisation called Kids Under Cover. Kids Under Cover is a not for profit organisation that aims to prevent youth homelessness.

During these three years, the land would be used for a pilot project that provides accommodation for young people aged 18-21 who are at risk of long-term homelessness.

If Council decides to proceed with the project, six relocatable studios would be placed on the site, which would house the young people and a live-in mentor. The residents would be supported to develop their skills and ability to live independently.

2. Why is Council doing this?

Council is committed to ensuring Darebin is an inclusive and affordable place to live, and to supporting young people to live well.

For kids in out of home (foster) care, on the day they turn 18 they need to find their own housing. This is in their final year of school and can significantly impact on their studies.

At the moment, more than 50 per cent of these kids will end up either homeless, involved in the justice system, unemployed, new parents, or a combination of these things. Extending care to the age of 21 results in doubling education participation, and halving homelessness rates.

Council has been exploring how its land assets can be used for housing for a number of years. The project is consistent with the Council Plan and Council's aspirations of reducing homelessness in Darebin.

The project also provides the opportunity for Council to support a project that aims to create real change in young people's lives. Kids Under Cover would do this by building the skills and ability of the young people to live independently. The aim is that the residents can enter private housing at the end of the three years.

The project is also a trial of a new housing model, and therefore provides Council with an opportunity to support learning and development in the field of youth homelessness prevention.

3. What was the site used for previously?

The site was previously used as a car park for the former Preston Bowls Club. It has been vacant since the Bowls Club closed.

4. Isn't this the responsibility of the State Government?

Council believes that each level of government has a responsibility to address issues of housing and homelessness.

Reducing youth homelessness is an objective of Darebin City Council. The State Government has part funded this pilot project with a view to better use scarce resources for more tailored and relevant youth support programs.

We hope that if this is successful, it could be a model that demonstrates to State and Federal Government that it is more cost effective to help young people at this stage of life, rather than to cover costs of not helping young people. It could help make a case to State and Federal Government for more funding to address homelessness.

5. How would the young people be supervised and supported?

The young people will benefit from having a live-in mentor on site 24/7. Anglicare Victoria will also provide a case manager and detailed care plan that sets personal objectives for each young person.

A local real estate agent will be engaged to ensure that young people meet their tenancy obligations (including good neighbour provisions) that are the same as the conditions in the private market.

6. Who would live there?

Six young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who have exited foster care, and one mentor employed by Anglicare who would provide 24/7 support on site.

7. What about car parking?

Car parking would be assessed through the planning permit application process.

8. What would happen to the site at the end of the lease?

At the end of the lease, the site would be reinstated to how it is now. Council can then use the site for other purposes.

9. What about those young people who have not found suitable accommodation at the end of the pilot?

The residents would be supported throughout the course of the lease, with the objective of securing permanent accommodation at the end of the pilot.

If a young person has not secured accommodation, Anglicare or Kids Under Cover would provide alternative accommodation.

10. Where can I get more information about the pilot?

More information will be available at www.yoursaydarebin.com.au from 29 July 2019

You can speak directly to:

Sophie Jordan
Principal Strategic Planner
8470 8461

planningservices@darebin.vic.gov.au

11. How can I have my say?

You can complete a submission form at www.yoursaydarebin.com.au (from 29 July 2019) or you can contact a Council officer and request a hard copy of the submission form be sent to you. You can also register for updates at this web page.

12. What is the process from here?

- Public notices were placed in the Leader Newspaper seeking 28-day public submissions on 28th and 29th May 2019.
- A letterbox drop to neighbouring residents will take place on 29 July 2019.
- A drop-in session co-hosted by Council and Kids Under Cover will take place on 6 August 2019 from 5.30pm to 7pm
- Consultation closes 12 August 2019
- Report to Council to consider the outcomes of the consultation process (2 September 2019)