

STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Policy Planner & Policy Manager

REFERENCE: L334

DATE: 24 January 2008

SUBJECT: **Nelson Richmond Intensification Project: implementation programme – EP08/01/10**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the Nelson Richmond Intensification Project and to gain approval for a proposed work programme for the project.

2. BACKGROUND

The Nelson Richmond Intensification Project is one of three projects identified by the Nelson Richmond Futures Working Group as priorities for joint Council work.

The objective for the project is to identify how the Nelson City and Tasman District Councils can encourage urban intensification. This follows on from both Councils identifying urban intensification as a key component of their strategies for managing growth. Intensification is intended to protect productive rural land from urban encroachment and to maximise efficient and effective use of infrastructure. As well, enabling choice of housing through intensification is oriented towards provision of future needs. Intensification may also assist 'affordability' of housing. The growth strategies (refer Nelson Urban Growth Study 2006 and Richmond Development Study 2003) propose a number of intensified nodes for further investigation, including Richmond, Stoke, Tahunanui and central Nelson

The first stage of the project involved a consortium led by Boffa Miskell preparing a study to assess the feasibility of intensification in Nelson Richmond and identifying pathways the Council could follow to encourage intensification.

In September 2007 the Councils received the Nelson Richmond Intensification Study and directed that a work programme be prepared to implement the recommendations of the study.

The study was publicly released at a well attended function on 14 November 2007. The Nelson Richmond Futures working group approved the work programme described below at its meeting on 18 December 2007.

3. NELSON RICHMOND INTENSIFICATION PROJECT WORK PROGRAMME

The Nelson Richmond Intensification Study identified three complementary pathways for the Councils to pursue to encourage intensification. The implementation programme for each of the pathways is considered below. In this consideration the Study's recommendation is described then examined in the light of the priorities and efficiencies for carrying out work for the Richmond part of the urban area.

3.1 "Runs on the Board" Pathway

The study found there were only a few local examples of intensification that represent the quality sought and the range of housing types suggested. It recommends getting some more good examples on the ground in the short to medium term to demonstrate to the market what works well. Given the site specific nature of this pathway it is proposed that the two Councils will work separately to get local examples developed but there will be a sharing of ideas and contacts. Successes will be jointly celebrated by the Councils.

During the study and at events since, the Councils have established good relations with local and national developers with an interest in pursuing intensification in Nelson and Richmond.

For Richmond, it is accepted that recognising successful development will help build awareness of what works, but the opportunities for this will only flow if other parts of the package are undertaken. .

3.2 Analysis and Control Pathway

The study identified the need for research and analysis to ensure that quality intensification occurs in the right locations and with good design quality control. Given that this is a common issue for the Councils the Nelson Tasman Futures Working Group has proposed that some of this work be undertaken jointly. For Richmond, it is considered that some of this work programme needs adapting or can be delivered more economically than as proposed by the Working Group. ..

- **Urban Area Investigation**

The study recommends investigating the whole Nelson Richmond urban area and identifying the locations or situations where intensification is appropriate after assessment of implications for infrastructure capacity, transportation and other services and any urban design implications. It is proposed that each Council carries out this work separately but keeps the other informed and shares ideas. This work will need to link with the review of generic controls to establish the scope of area-wide and location-specific changes To the TRMP that are appropriate.

For Richmond, a review of areas proposed for intensification in the Richmond Development Study as proposed above can be done by June 2008.

- **Market Research**

The study identified the need for market research on the following:

- What factors motivate people to live in more intensive housing - location, price, amenity, design of housing
- What type of people are interested in living in intensive housing.

The objective is to improve market awareness of intensification and provide information about what type of developments in what type of locations are most likely to succeed. The Working Group supported the Councils' jointly funding market research and that it is carried out before June 2008.

As proposed it is arguable that contracting such research will be cost effective for Richmond and the same information can be secured by direct staff consultation with developers and from considering existing research, and can be addressed under the review of controls.

- **Generic Council Plan Changes**

The study identified a number of barriers in the Council's resource management plans that make establishing quality intensive housing more difficult to establish for example only single storey development is permitted on small sites in Richmond. Further analysis of these barriers and possible solutions is required. This work could extend to refining all generic controls on residential development (such as consent status for subdivision and dwellings, and standards for height, setback, density, and coverage) to ensure quality outcomes for intensive housing whether this is redevelopment or infill. This would apply in all residential areas and not specific locations. It is proposed that the councils work together on these plan changes to move towards a common policy framework for the development of the Nelson-Richmond urban area. There will be efficiency gains of working together. It is proposed these plan changes are prepared in the 2008-09 financial year.

For Richmond, work has already commenced to provide urban intensification opportunities in the development controls and design guidance applying to Richmond South and Richmond West. Remaining issues are whether and how such provisions may apply across the whole Residential zone in Richmond. Nelson City has not yet commenced such work. Contributing to this review is accepted as a high priority alongside the area investigation work for Richmond to establish the pattern of controls and design guidance to support intensification opportunities within Richmond.

3.3 Leadership Pathway

Both the intensification study and feedback from stakeholders have highlighted the need for leadership by the Councils. This is an area where it is efficient and effective for the Councils to work together, and to be seen working together. The work to date by the Councils has generated interest in the development community that now needs to be built on

- **Training**

Ongoing urban design training for staff, consultants and developers is proposed to begin in March 2008. The purpose is to raise understanding about quality urban design and to strengthen relationships for working on projects together. There are both benefits and risks to enabling intensification and care is needed in supporting quality design.

- **Providing Information**

The study highlights the need for Councils to lift awareness and provide information that encourages intensification. A series of seminars by experts in the field of sustainable urban development has been well attended (60 – 100 people) - and attracted media coverage. It is proposed to continue these events and celebrate good examples as they are developed. Information on the benefits of intensive housing and on quality design will be provided through a mix of media.

It is recommended that the Council reconsider joining the Government sponsored Urban Design Protocol to signal its commitment to promoting good urban design and to access resources through the national initiative. Becoming a signatory will require the Council to

- Appoint a design champion
- Select and implement a set of actions to demonstrate commitment to the Protocol
- Monitor and report back to the Ministry for the Environment on implementation and outcomes of Council actions, starting from August 2008

There is no joining fee. A further paper could look at how we might deliver on these commitments and how Council processes can be modified to encourage quality design, what review mechanisms could be offered to applicants provided such measures are meaningful and cost effective. An example of this is the establishment of an urban design panel as recommended by the study. This and other actions would require ongoing resourcing.

- **Council Strategies**

There needs to be alignment between the Councils' policies on where growth should occur in Richmond and Nelson, and the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, to enhance infrastructure efficiency benefits. In the context of intensification, future urban form needs to be agreed and managed. We have taken steps to define the Richmond urban area for growth over the next 20 to 50 year time horizon and that protects rural land. There has been a balance established between provision of urban needs and protection of productive rural land. Now the challenge is to look at intensification opportunities within that envelope. Integrating the Council's services and transport policies, including on passenger transport and parking, walking and cycling, is also essential to support intensification.

Unless TDC can capture infrastructure benefits from the process there may be no ratepayer benefit from intensification and unless the package of proposals can deliver this, there is little point in committing resources to the exercise. Our assessment will compare the likely cost implications of intensification on either a dispersed or concentrated basis within the urban area.

A long term approach by both Councils would assist, especially in the Richmond Nelson area, with a clear statement on the role of intensification. The Tasman Regional Policy Statement is not due to be reviewed until 2011 while the Nelson Regional Policy Statement is currently under review and the initial review process by Nelson City seeks to include intensification policies. An appropriate form of policy development for Tasman in relation to Richmond and towns nearby as a key part of moving forward will need to be considered in due course.

As well as between Council policies, this Council's internal departmental activities need to be coordinated so the LTCCP makes appropriate provision for intensification through the likes of asset management plans, community facilities and reserves management plans.

4. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSED BY THE STUDY AND THE WORKING GROUP

Pathway	Task	Councils joint or separate	Timing	Joint expenses
"Runs on the board"	Get good examples	Separate	Ongoing	
Analysis and control	Location specific studies	Separate	2008	
	Generic plan changes	Joint	2008-9	\$20000
	Market research	Joint	2008	\$20000
Leadership	Training	Joint	Commencing March 2008	\$5000 annually
	Providing information	Joint	Ongoing	\$5000 annually
	Council strategies	Joint	Ongoing	

5. RECOMMENDED WORK PROGRAMME FOR RICHMOND

Arising from the work achieved in Richmond development planning to date and the qualifications noted in this report for the tasks recommended by the Nelson Richmond Futures Working Group arising from the intensification study, the following amended summary work programme is recommended.

Pathway	Task	Priority	Councils joint or separate	Timing	Joint expenses
"Runs on the board"	Get good examples	1	Separate	Ongoing	
Analysis and control	Richmond area investigation	1	Separate	2008	
	Generic plan changes	1	Joint	2008-9	Staff time
Leadership	Training	2	Joint	Commencing March 2008	\$5000 annually
	Providing information	3	Joint	Ongoing	\$5000 annually
	Council strategies	2	Joint	Ongoing	Staff time

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Committee :

1. **Approve** those task areas from the implementation work programme for the Nelson Richmond Intensification Project as recommended this report as being of relevance and value to Richmond.
2. **Agree** to become a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol and request staff to further advise on giving effect to this commitment.

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