
Service and Operational Matters - 27 February 2024

ITEM 8.4 **Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs Centre of Excellence Proposal**

AUTHOR **City Future**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This report considers a proposal from the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs to develop a Centre of Excellence at Belmore Oval Sports Complex (3B Edison Lane, Belmore NSW 2192), adjacent to Peter Moore Field. The report provides an overview of the proposal and outlines key considerations for Council, including the request for a new lease.

ISSUE

Council has been formally approached by the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs (The Bulldogs) to develop a Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Belmore Oval Sports Complex. The CoE will offer a unique facility that brings together a mix of community and high-performance elements intended to foster excellence in Rugby League at all levels of the participation pathway.

The proposed concept design is sited across both Lots 12 (1C Leylands Parade) and 13 (1D Leylands Parade). The CoE has a number of property, planning and community impacts that need to be appropriately and carefully considered. These are outlined in the body of this report.

To provide certainty to the project the Bulldogs have requested Council enter into a new long term lease (noting the current lease expires in 2035).

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council support the proposal from the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs to develop a Centre of Excellence at Belmore Oval Sports Complex (3B Edison Lane, Belmore);
2. Council, in principle, agree to a new long-term lease arrangement with the Bulldogs, having regard to the conditions outlined in the report.
3. Subject to (1), the CEO be authorised to prepare/develop the relevant pathway to facilitate the proposed new agreement as outlined in the report.
4. A further report be provided to Council on the matter, as required.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

POLICY IMPACT

While not formally submitted as an unsolicited proposal, the CoE has been assessed using the six key principles outlined in Council's adopted '*Unsolicited Proposals Policy & Guidelines*' (Mutual Benefit, Uniqueness, Value for Money, Net Economic Benefit, Planning Approval, and Risk Allocation).

The review of the CoE proposal has considered its alignment against adopted Council strategic documents for Belmore, such as the Generic Plan of Management, the Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan and the Sports Facilities Strategic Plan.

Further detail of the policy alignment can be found in the body of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As the proposal currently stands, there is no financial impact for Council. The development of the CoE, including the total design and construction costs, are to be fully funded and managed by the Bulldogs.

As detailed in the body of this report, the CoE would require new leases to be established. As part of this process, Council will need to consider any financial implications associated with the existing leases and how they would be incorporated in the new leases. This includes understanding the condition of the existing assets and infrastructure on the site, the maintenance and upkeep of the precinct and the proposed operating and business model of the new facility.

As the proposal progresses, at certain points, Council may need to seek independent advice/ conduct due diligence, to inform further reports to Council to enable decision making. If this is the case, funding will be considered in future quarterly reviews.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Council's Community Strategic Plan, CBCity 2036, supports a vision for Canterbury-Bankstown to be 'Healthy and Active'. The CoE proposal will provide a unique facility that brings together a mix of community and high-performance elements intended to foster excellence in Rugby League at all levels of the participation pathway. There are no community impacts as a result of this report as written. Council will however continue to advocate for improved community access and good outcomes for community stakeholders in the design process.

The CoE proposal will be subject to the State Significant Development approval pathway as it has an estimated capital investment value of \$50 million. The consent authority will be either the Minister for Planning or the Independent Planning Commission. At which time the community will have the opportunity to provide feedback on any issues related to use, traffic, noise or other concerns.

DETAILED INFORMATION

Background

Belmore Oval Sports Complex, the home of the Bulldogs, is located in Belmore and is adjacent Terry Lamb Reserve. The Bulldogs have a long-standing, rich history with Canterbury-Bankstown Council, with long held leases for the use of the Belmore Oval Sports Complex and adjacent amenities. The Bulldogs are synonymous with Canterbury-Bankstown.

The Bulldogs have recently initiated conversations with Council sharing their aspirations and plans to develop an integrated high-performance training, administration and community centre, (a Centre of Excellence).

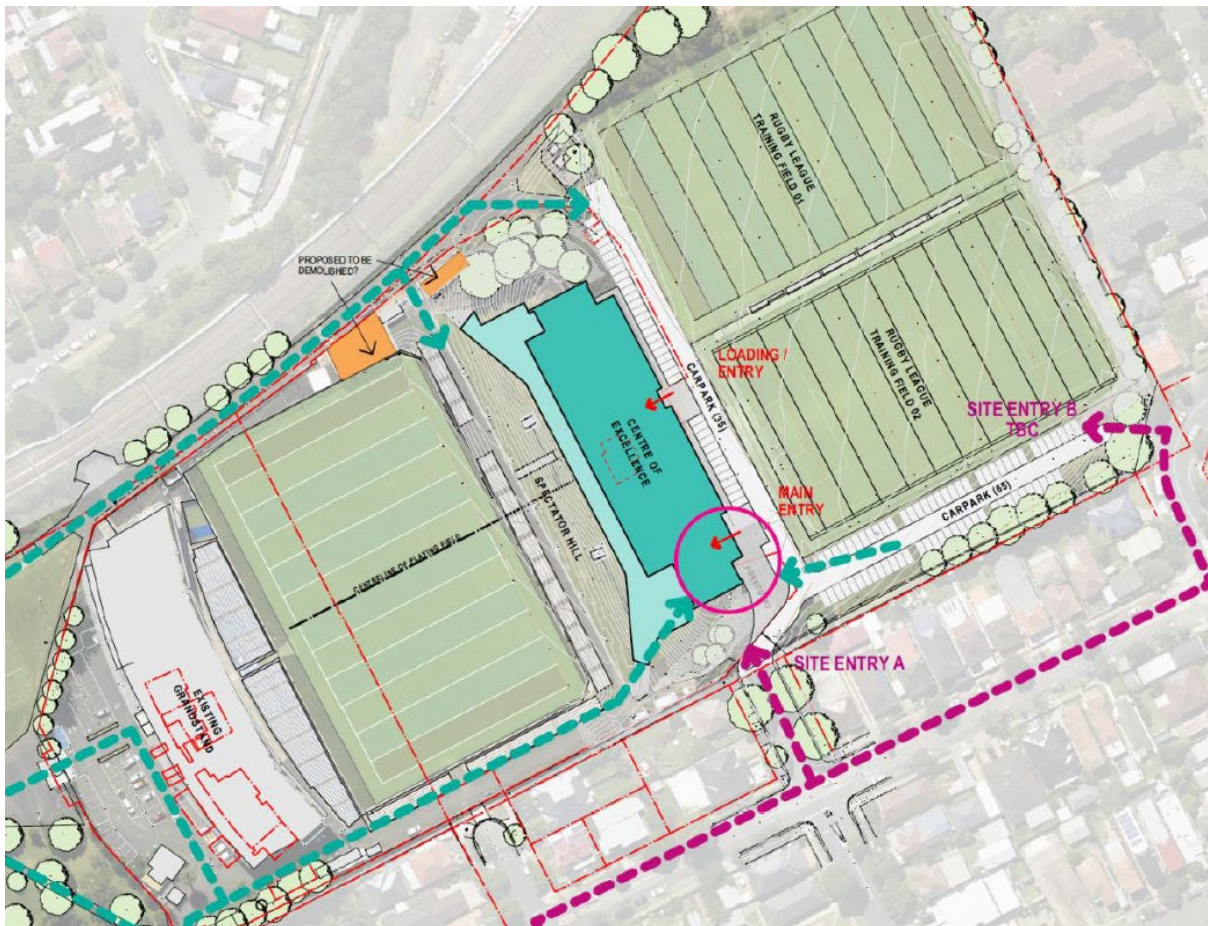
In late 2023, the Bulldogs wrote to Council, with the funding agreement from the NSW Government confirming \$40M of funding for the construction of the CoE. With the grant funding confirmed, the Bulldogs have in-principle agreed to contribute the remaining \$10M, pending the Bulldogs securing a new lease with Council which would ensure their long term tenure of the site.

The Proposal

The Bulldogs have engaged sports facility advisors Waypoint and facility architects HB Arch to help with the development of their proposal. The CoE proposal (see Figure 1 below) includes areas for training and administration, specifically:

- Change rooms and associated amenities;
- Gymnasium and training facilities;
- Player treatment and rehabilitation facilities;
- Aquatic recovery and rehabilitation pools;
- Lecture theatre and meeting rooms;
- Consolidation of current administration staff offices; and
- Public terrace space incorporating outdoor retail, café and other ancillary uses which will service the broader use of the site as a sports ground.

Figure 1: Proposed location of the CoE

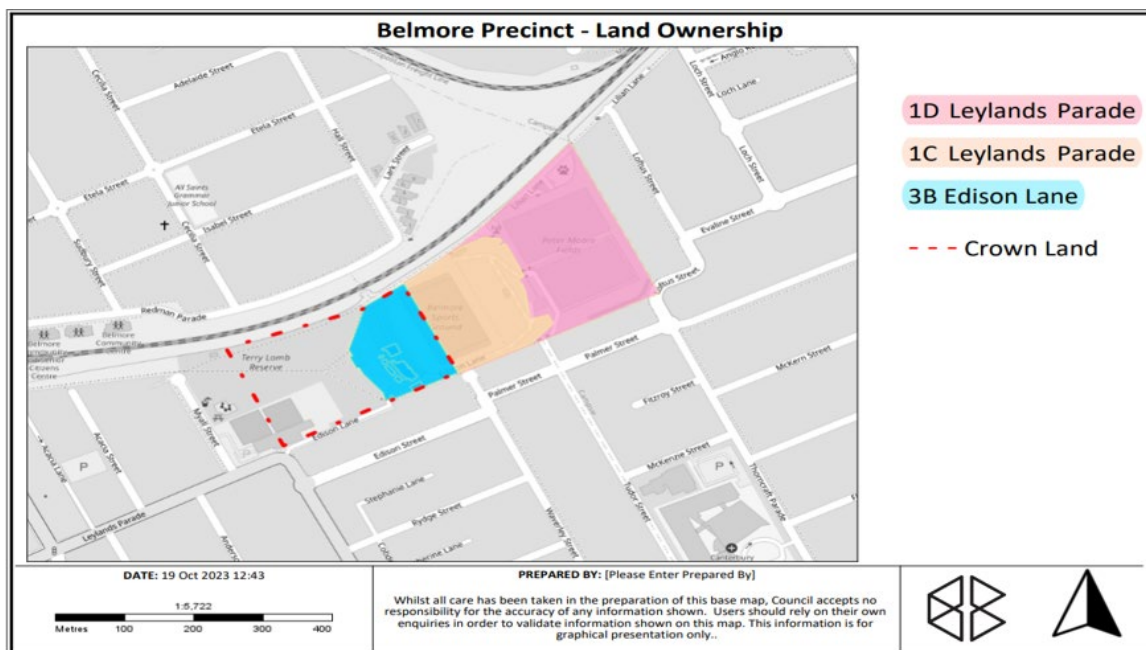


After receiving the proposal, Council officers undertook a preliminary review, and requested additional information on key matters. These are detailed below:

1. Lease/ Licence requirements;
2. Alignment with the Plan of Management (PoM);
3. Alignment with Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan; and
4. Project outcomes.

1. Lease/ Licence requirements

There are a number of existing lease and licence agreements within the Belmore Oval Sports Complex. These include agreements with the Bulldogs, Sydney Olympic and sub-agreements from the Bulldogs to Sydney Olympic. A site map and a summary of agreements can be found below.



Area	Between	Type	Comm. / Exp	Condition
3B Edison Lane	CBC and the Bulldogs	Lease	Commenced 01/11/2014 Expiry 31/10/2035	<p>3B Edison Lane (part)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crown Land. • \$65,000 pa (plus CPI) for 3B Edison Lane and 1C Leylands Parade. <p>Bulldogs obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing fields and Hill as per Maintenance Works Program. • All improvements within the premises, including all cleaning, repair, replacement or maintenance work necessary to keep the premises in a fit proper and clean condition. • Lights and floodlighting. <p>Council's obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All structural repairs. • Maintenance, repair and replacement of air-conditioning. • Capital expenditure associated with the swimming pool and spa.

3B Edison Lane	Bulldogs and Sydney Olympic	Sublease	Commenced 01/11/2014 Expiry 30/10/2035	3B Edison Lane (part) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crown Land. • Subletting permitted to SOFC only. • \$10,000 plus annual CPI increases.
1C Leylands Parade	CBC and the Bulldogs	Lease	Commenced 01/11/2014 Expiry 31/10/2035	1C Leylands Parade (part) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council land. • \$65,000 pa for 3B Edison Lane & 1C Leylands Parade <p>Bulldogs obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing fields and Hill as per Maintenance Works Program. • All improvements within the premises, including all cleaning, repair, replacement or maintenance work necessary to keep the premises in a fit proper and clean condition. • Lights and floodlighting. <p>Council's obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All structural repairs. • Maintenance, repair and replacement of air-conditioning.
1D Leylands Parade	CBC and the Bulldogs	Licence	Commenced 01/11/2014 Expiry 31/10/2035	1D Leylands Parade (north section) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern field, access to dressing sheds, toilets, canteen and storage container. • \$3,500 pa, paid annually (plus metered floodlighting – no fee for water rates, maintenance or electricity).
1D Leylands Parade	CBC and Sydney Olympic	Licence	Commenced 01/11/2014 Expiry 31/10/2035	1D Leylands Parade (South part) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern field, access to dressing sheds, toilets, canteen. • \$3,500 pa, paid annually (plus metered floodlighting).

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with Bulldogs regarding use of sheds, toilets and canteen.
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Key issues that would need to be considered if Council was to proceed with a new lease include:

- The proposal as it currently stands would require new agreements to be developed;
- The proposal would require further investigation into alignment and potential consolidation of lots;
- Existing sub-agreements and direct agreements with Sydney Olympic would need to be relinquished and new agreements negotiated. Sydney Olympic have confirmed they support the proposal if access to Peter Moore field and amenities in the CoE were available via a new agreement; and
- A negotiation on the specific financial terms of the lease depending on the associated cost allocation for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the assets (refer to table above for current arrangements).

2. Alignment with Plan of Management (PoM)

Belmore Oval Sports Complex, which includes Peter Moore Field, is listed in the Canterbury-Bankstown Generic Plan of Management (see Figure 2 below) because it has multiple land categories assigned. Specifically, the site is predominately Sportsground, some area is Park and the remainder General Community Use. Each of these categories has a corresponding set of objectives and activities that are permissible within that designated area.

The internal review has found the proposed location of the CoE building includes areas of Park but is located on Sportsground. This type of development is consistent with the Sportsground category and the hierarchy of a Regional/ State facility. There are several precedents where similar facilities have been developed in accordance with the Plan of Management in Canterbury-Bankstown. In time, a minor administration amendment to the Generic Plan of Management could include a slight adjustment to reflect the proposal.

Figure 2: Category Map Belmore Oval Sports Complex, Belmore



3. Alignment with Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan

In March 2019 Council adopted the Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan. The development of the Masterplan included extensive community engagement which identified a range of design principles which should be implemented within the Precinct. The principles have been tested against the CoE proposal, with further information on alignment below.

Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan - DESIGN PRINCIPLES		
Principle	Description	CoE Proposal
1. Green threshold	Avenues of trees and shaded pathways along park boundaries create a clear edge	This has not been assessed as the CoE proposal is away from the edges.
2. Active and green connectors	Active corridor along the north, green corridor along the south	This has been assessed, it should be noted the northern edge will be considered as part of the Metro East West Pedestrian Cycle Link. The CoE will support and enhance connectivity along the southern edge.
3. A park that deals with flooding	Courts and play spaces designed to collect stormwater to keep paths free of flooding	This will be assessed as part of the planning approval pathway. The proposal must comply.
4. Community hub as a new identity for the park	Community hub or new frontage to the sports ground to create a new public face to the park	*Further detail below

5. Multi-purpose edges	Park edges include planting, flood control and active uses including the backdrop of the rail line.	This has not been assessed as the CoE is proposal away from the edges. The CoE looks to activate the core of the site but will activate some previously inactive areas.
6. Path network	A path network that connects key spaces	Pedestrian movement has been considered into the current design.
7. Balance private sport and public access	A flexible design that works in everyday and event mode	Public and private recreation access has been considered in the current design.
8. Access and views	Car parking along edges and views into the park from all streets	The proposal includes car parking and new access roads to support traffic movement at the site. Views have not been considered at this stage of the proposal.

*The Masterplan identified the opportunity to deliver a new community hub, including elements such as a cafe, amenities, indoor hall and court, affordable function spaces, music rooms and ATSI community space. These facilities will largely be delivered in Campsie as part of the Cultural Hub project. There are accessible community spaces being proposed as part of this proposal.

4. Project Outcomes

While not formally submitted as an unsolicited proposal, the CoE has been assessed using the six key principles outlined in Council's adopted *'Unsolicited Proposals Policy & Guidelines'* (Mutual Benefit, Uniqueness, Value for Money, Net Economic Benefit, Planning Approval, and Risk Allocation).

- **Mutual Benefit**

The development of the Centre of Excellence at Belmore Oval Sports Complex will provide public access to quality sport, recreation and community facilities within the Canterbury-Bankstown municipality.

Currently, the two Peter Moore fields to the east of Belmore Sports Ground have limited and non-conforming supporting facilities and infrastructure when considering gender equity and accessibility. This has limited both Rugby League and Soccer events and programming. If delivered the CoE will provide improved infrastructure for all of users, from community and grassroots to professional levels.

There is mutual benefit in the proposal, enabling the Bulldogs to consolidate the majority, if not all pathway programs at one location which will enable the club to create new junior rugby league teams. The club estimate that developing the COE will potentially increase those participating in these programs by 5,000 people across the local community. This in turn will enable broader community access to facilities that are currently being used and hired to support those pathway programs.

The Proposal, if successful, will benefit the community by having increased path networks, car parking and new access roads to support traffic movement at the site.

- **Uniqueness**

The CoE a will offer a unique facility that brings together a mix of community and high-performance elements that will foster excellence in Rugby League at all levels of the participation pathway.

The co-location of the Bulldogs training, administration and community facilities at Belmore Oval Sports Complex provides significant “co-location benefits” and outlines a “best practice” model for an elite/community organisation partnership.

The proposal presents as a unique opportunity for investment into new infrastructure that Council would not provide as part of its Local Government obligations. The site acts as a bespoke regional / state sporting centre.

- **Value for Money**

The proposal, as presented is for all construction and operation costs to be funded by the Bulldogs. As outlined earlier in the report a new lease will need to be established. Council will need to consider any financial implications associated with the existing leases and how they would be incorporated in the new leases. This includes understanding the condition of the existing assets and infrastructure on the site, the maintenance and upkeep of the precinct and the proposed operating and business model of the new facility. It will be important that, Council’s broader operating environment are considered.

- **Net Economic Benefit**

The Bulldogs have not specifically addressed this as part of the proposal therefore Council is not yet able to provide any assessment. However initial benefits Council officers identified include potential for:

- Creation of jobs due to the construction
- Commercial business creation
- Creation of new jobs due to business creation
- Increased opportunity for boys/girls to participate in sport
- Increased opportunity for elite athletes

- **Planning Approval**

The CoE project will be subject to the State Significant Development approval pathway as it has an estimated capital investment value of \$65M. The consent authority will be either the Minister for Planning or the Independent Planning Commission. The Bulldogs have indicated issues with traffic, access, parking, noise, flooding etc will need to be addressed as part of the planning approval process.

- **Risk Allocation**

The proposal is for the Bulldogs to take on the complete financial liability for all costs associated with the construction, grant management, funding and operation of the new facility. However, the proposal does not address Council's existing asset liability and asset condition of the existing grandstand. This will need to be appropriately considered through the preparation of the new lease.

Conclusion

Based on the above consideration of Lease/ Licence requirements; alignment with the Plan of Management (PoM); alignment with Belmore Sport and Recreation Precinct Masterplan; and project outcomes consistent with the Unsolicited Proposals criteria it is considered that there is sufficient justification for the CoE proposal.

It is important to note that due to a change in financial commitments, detailed site investigations, planning approvals etc there have been several updated versions submitted to Council. Recently, a revised proposal being discussed includes the relocation of community meeting space from the new facility (CoE) to the existing grandstand, however Council has not received a final confirmed proposal. At this stage none of these changes impact on the above recommendation.

Subject to Council agreeing to support the proposal from the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs to develop a Centre of Excellence at Belmore Oval Sports Complex, it is appropriate that Council then agree to enter into a new long term lease with the Bulldogs on the site.

Next Steps

Having regard to the information contained in this report, the next steps in the process would include;

- Negotiating the proposed use of the current grandstand, possible improvements and maintenance obligations;
- Ensuring provision of community access to the site and any additional community benefits;
- Undertaking an independent valuation assessment;
- Working with the Bulldogs to negotiate the specific terms and conditions of a new lease; and
- Undertaking a consultation process for renewal of leases on crown and community land, including a written letter to the Minister for approval of additional length of lease.

A further report will be prepared for Council as required.

