

ATTACHMENT 2



EDYG

Chester Square Community Voice Panel

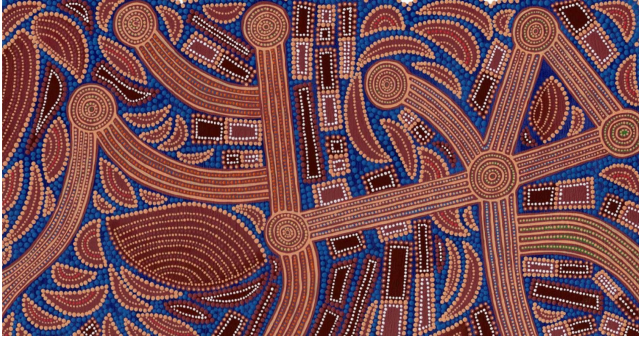
25-138 Chester Square Community Voice
Panel

Submitted to Canterbury-Bankstown Council
by Gyde Consulting

21 July 2025

gyde.com.au

Acknowledgment of Country



Towards Harmony by Aboriginal Artist Adam Laws

Gyde Consulting acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past, present, Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise the deep and ongoing connections to Country – the land, water and sky – and the memories, knowledge and diverse values of past and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.

Gyde is committed to learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the work we do across the country.

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Disclaimer

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Appendix A Terms of Reference

1. Proposed development of Chester Square

Planning Proposal for the development of Chester Square

A planning proposal has been put forward to Canterbury-Bankstown Council for the development of Chester Square, located at 1 Leicester Street, Chester Hill.

The site contains Chester Square Shopping Centre, the main Chester Hill retail facility.

The planning proposal, on behalf of the Holdmark Group, seeks to deliver new residential apartments and affordable housing in close proximity to the Chester Hill train station, local shops and services.

The planning proposal seeks to increase retail and commercial space, improve the public domain, and deliver a new publicly accessible square and community facility.

The planning proposal includes:

- Approximately 515 dwellings, including affordable housing
- 12,400m² of retail and 1,218m² of commercial floor space,
- 2,000m² publicly accessible square, and
- 2,000m² multi-purpose community facility.

The purpose of the planning proposal is to facilitate the redevelopment of the site in a manner that will achieve a profound urban design improvement and provide a placemaking catalyst for transformational change within the centre, including major public benefits for the betterment of the local community.

Chester Hill Profile

The closest Strategic Centre to Chester Hill is 4km to the north west at Fairfield, in the Fairfield LGA. Bankstown is 5km to the south east and Parramatta CBD is 7kms to the north.

The 2016 population for Chester Hill was 12,060 people, which represents a significant increase of 9% from 2011.

The Chester Hill catchment includes Chester Hill, Sefton, Birrong and Bass Hill.

Figure 1: Chester Square Site Context Analysis (Source: Nearmap, 2020)



The planning proposal for this site has the unique opportunity and capacity to achieve a transformational change for Chester Hill while delivering public benefits, jobs and additional housing. The aim of the planning proposal is:

- To amend the existing planning controls to achieve a profound urban design improvement and provide a placemaking catalyst for transformational change
- Facilitate redevelopment that supports the NSW Government's objectives for growth in local centres near transport and with a significant public benefit.
- To support more housing choice and diversity near major public transport and services.
- To promote both business activity and private sector investment within the centre
- To achieve a retail and residential density in line with demonstrated capacity of the site.
- To improve pedestrian connectivity and enhancement of public spaces through the widening and activation of Frost Lane and surrounding areas, and a new a public square.
- To deliver 3% of the total residential floor space as affordable housing.
- To deliver a new multi-purpose community facility.

Amendment of existing controls

The Canterbury Bankstown Local Environmental Plan (CBLEP) 2023 is the statutory planning framework that establishes land use zones and building envelope controls such as floor space ratios and building heights in the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA).

In order to achieve the proposed development of the site, a planning proposal has been put forward to Council that seeks to vary the current controls for building height and floor space ratios that apply to the site.

The proposed amendments to existing controls are as follows:

Control	Existing	Proposed
Land use zone	E1Local centre	No change
Height of building	20m	10-60m
Floor space ratio	2.5:1	4:1
Local provisions	N/A	Minimum underground and total maximum retail floor space areas, affordable housing provision, ground floor residential where there is no net loss of employment generating uses, key setbacks and open space.

What has happened so far?

The proposal was first considered by the Canterbury Bankstown Local Planning Panel (LPP) on 17 August 2020 which recommended that additional planning investigations, community consultation and a comprehensive masterplan be undertaken.



Following the LPP's recommendation, the proposal was put to Council on 22 September 2020 where it was resolved to prepare and submit a planning proposal on the site.

Council requested a Gateway Determination on this site in September 2020. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure agreed that the proposal has strategic merit, and recommended refinement of the urban design and traffic studies for the site before resubmission of the planning proposal.

The planning proposal is viewed as a Complex proposal due to the local provisions that will apply to the site, the change in urban design character anticipated and the demand for additional infrastructure.

At the September 2020 Council meeting, Council resolved to establish a community voice panel (comprising a random selection process to establish a panel representative of the community) to be independently chaired and funded by the proponent. The panel is to operate post Gateway to provide feedback and input into the studies to be completed in the next steps.

Following public exhibition process, a review of community feedback and any additional information, any required updates and amendments will be made to the planning proposal.

Council will then consider this feedback before deciding whether the planning proposal is submitted to DPHI to request finalisation of the LEP Amendments, whether to adopt the draft site specific Development Control Plan and whether to enter to a planning agreement with the Applicant.

Council has been working with the project applicant to ensure community needs and concerns are prioritised. The Community Voice Panel was established to help Council evaluate the proposal and inform decision-making.

Artist impression of the proposed mixed-use development at Chester Square.

2. Chester Square Community Voice Panel

Purpose of the Community Voice Panel

The purpose of the Community Voice Panel was to give community members the opportunity to provide their input into the planning proposal for Chester Square.

Council is the Planning Proposal Authority (PPA) for this rezoning and is responsible for assessing the planning proposal, managing its planning process and ensuring that the community is informed and has opportunities to provide input and feedback.

In establishing the Community Voice Panel, Council was seeking to actively involve residents, businesses and other stakeholders, to identify potential community benefits and better address local needs.

The purpose of the Panel is to allow the community to provide input on the planning proposal, as well as their views on how it will impact and benefit the community.

The objectives for the Panel included to:

- provide a representation of community views, needs and priorities within Chester Hill
- further increase community participation and engagement with the Chester Square Planning Proposal
- provide feedback on the community's key priorities, aspirations and values for Chester Square and the broader Chester Hill area, to enhance Council Officers' understanding
- provide feedback and recommendations in relation to the planning proposal that will be considered by Council Officers and the proponent before the matter is reported to Council
- ensure transparency and openness whilst also being inclusive by receiving community input and feedback

The Community Voice Panel was established to provide an opportunity for community representatives to give a balanced view of the best outcomes for the community to Council, and was not a decision making panel.

The panel will serve as the community's voice, providing feedback and making recommendations in relation to the proposal that will be considered by Council Officers and the proponent before the matter is reported to Council post-exhibition.

Workshop findings will be key to Council's decision-making in its role as the planning proposal authority

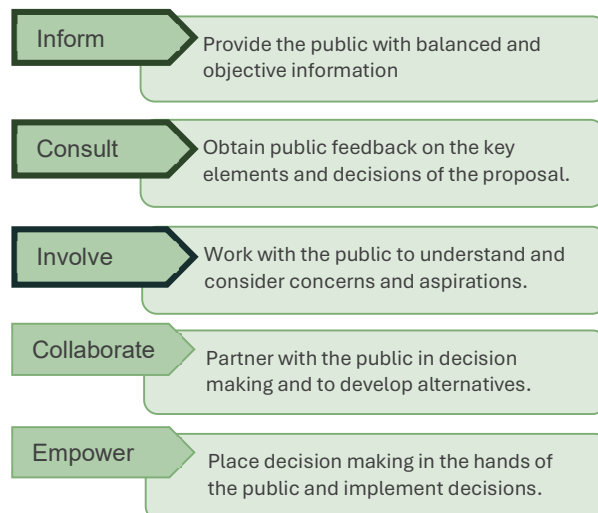
Community participation

The key purpose of the engagement with the Community Voice Panel was to give the community opportunity to actively contribute to the future plans for Chester Square.

As defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum the purpose of the engagement was to:

- **Inform** the community of the planning proposal for Chester Square and the planning process
- **Consult** with the community on key elements of the planning proposal, and
- **Involve** the community in project planning, to understand community aspirations, priorities and concerns.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Recruitment of Panel members

The opportunity to participate in the Community Voice Panel was advertised on Council's Have Your Say page.

Nominees were required to complete the EOI questions on Council's Have Your Say page and disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest, such as memberships in other committees or affiliations with community groups that are directly related to the purpose of the Panel.

Expressions of interest for the Panel were assessed on the following criteria:

1. Familiarity with Chester Hill
2. Representation of a range of perspectives from within the local community
3. Proximity of home or workplace to Chester Hill
4. Ability to express views clearly and respectfully (language/interpreter support is available, as/if required)
5. A demographic mix that reflects the community, and
6. Availability to attend workshops.

The following individuals were not eligible to become panel members:

- representatives from the applicant
- consultants engaged on behalf of the applicant
- an elected Councilor
- a property developer within the meaning of section 96GB of the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981*
- a real estate agent within the meaning of the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002*
- individuals who have connection with the applicant

A total of 12 community representatives were selected to participate in the Panel, comprising local residents, workers and business representatives.

Terms of Reference

The Community Voice Panel was funded by the planning proposal applicant and facilitated by an independent professional facilitator appointed by Council.

Panel members were provided with a \$100 gift card for their participation in the meetings.

The purpose, scope and structure of the Community Voice Panel were outlined in a detailed Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference set out expectations of the Panel members in relation to:

- Conflict of Interest and pecuniary interests
- Attendance and participation
- Media representation and confidentiality
- Administration and management of the Panel.

The Terms of Reference is provided at Appendix A.

3. Panel Sessions

Community Voice Panel Workshops

Two Panel workshops sessions were held at the Yagoona Community Centre.

The Panel sessions were hosted by an independent facilitator, Senior Associate - Community and Stakeholder Engagement from Gyde Consulting.

Council representatives were in attendance to observe the session and answer technical planning questions.

Panel Session 1:

Wednesday 21 May 2025
6pm – 8:30pm

Key themes discussed at the Panel included:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Panel
- Details of the planning proposal and proposed development of Chester Square
- Information about the planning system, and next steps for the planning proposal
- What participants value most about Chester Square and the local community, and how this can be reflected in the proposed development.

Panel Session 2:

Wednesday 4 June 2025
6pm – 8:30pm

Key themes discussed at the Panel included:

- Proposed community benefits
- Examples of high functioning community facilities
- How panel members use existing facilities and what types of spaces are needed
- Examples of mixed use public domain spaces and uses
- Community priorities for new public domain spaces and activities.

The outcomes of each session are detailed below.

4. Session one outcomes

Session One of the Community Voice Panel was held at Yagoona Community Centre on Wednesday 21 May 2025, from 6pm to 8:30pm.

Of the 12 Panel members, two members were not able to attend. The total of 10 present representatives exceeded the required 50% participation rate for the session to proceed.

Housekeeping

Members were welcomed to the Community Voice Panel and reminded of the Panel's purpose, terms of reference and proposed agendas for the session.

Introductions

Participants were asked to introduce themselves to the group. All participants are current residents of Chester Hill, and most have lived in Chester Hill or surrounding suburbs for several decades.

Residents cited a range of reasons for applying to participate as a member of the Panel, including:

- As users of Chester Square shops and services on a daily basis
- Wanting to have input into the future of Chester Square, and leave a legacy for the next generations
- Would like to have a positive influence on what happens at Chester Square.
- Wanting to keep the village feel of Chester Square
- Would like to see positive improvements to Chester Hill, and
- Wanting to understand the impacts of the proposed development.

Panel discussions

The session started with a detailed explanation of the planning proposal, the planning system, and the proposed development.

Many Panel members were not aware of the planning proposal, the scale of the development proposed at the site, or the proposed public benefits.

Following the presentation, Panel members discussed the following key questions:

What works well in Chester Hill today?

Key themes included:

- It is very walkable, everything is close.
- Chester Square is close to the train station community facilities, schools, shops and medical services.
- Shopping centre provides great amenity and a good mix of retail (Woolworths, chemist, post office) for daily needs.
- There are some emerging dining options, but this could be expanded to increase patronage out of hours.

What could be improved?

- There are some services that are not available – such as a café, deli or bakery.
- The centre would benefit from an anchor tenant retailer such as KMart, BigW, Best&Less, or ALDI.
- There is nothing for children, no places for children to play, or spaces for them to use.
- Car parking is an issue and is limited. Some people choose to travel elsewhere (in particular Bass Hill) to avoid trying to find a parking space.
- It was noted that the proposed height of the new development means that you get better public spaces at ground level.

What does project success look like to you?

- More parking to service the shopping centre.
- Controlled parking, to prevent commuters parking in the shopping centre car park for extended amounts of time, as it is currently unmonitored.
- Good retail businesses and amenities, building on what is already there.
- Activation of the lane way would improve amenity and safety of that area, which is currently not very accessible.
- Safe public spaces which may include safety measures such as passive surveillance, CCTV, police presence and security.

Response to the Planning Proposal

For many of the members the Panel session was their first introduction to the planning proposal for the site.

While the role of the Panel was to focus on best uses of community spaces and facilities arising from the planning proposal, members chose to take the opportunity provide feedback to Council on the over-arching development of the site.

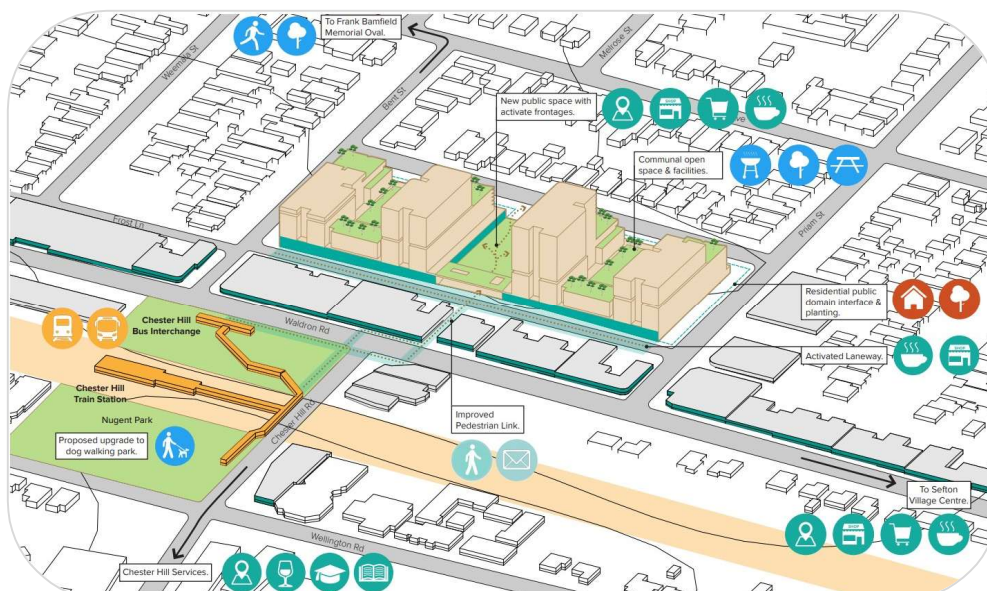
Key issues raised by the panel included:

- The height and scale of the building and whether the number of apartments is needed in the area.
- Impacts of the development of traffic and congestion in the area.
- Concerns related to crime rates and safety in Chester Square with more residents.
- Look and feel of the proposed development (noting that look and feel is based on artist impressions in the planning proposal documentation, and may be revised as part of an SSDA).
- Panel members expressed a preference for more diversity of housing – such as town houses and midrise – over high density housing options.
- Threat of over-development with a number of high density projects planned for the area.

Next meeting

Participants were asked to consider three key questions for discussion at the next meeting, to be held on Wednesday 4 June 2025.

- What types of community facilities would benefit residents the most?
- What types of things would you like to achieve in a public plaza?
- What types of activations would you like to see in public spaces? (Such as markets, events, festivals, smaller scale activations)



Indicative proposal for Chester Square

5. Session two outcomes

Session Two of the Community Voice Panel was held at Yagoona Community Centre on Wednesday 4 June 2025, from 6pm to 8:30pm.

Of the 12 Panel members, one member was not able to attend. The total of 11 present representatives exceeded the required 50% participation rate for the session to proceed.

Focus on opportunities

Members were welcomed to the session and invited to think about the opportunities for community benefits arising from the planning proposal.

Community facilities

The planning proposal for Chester Square includes the delivery of a 2064m² community facility. The final use of the facility has not yet been determined. There is an opportunity for the Community Voice Panel to influence the purpose of the facility and how it may be used by the community into the future.

A presentation was provided to the Panel outlining the types of facilities currently available in the area including:

- Community centres and public halls
- Senior's centres
- Youth centres
- Libraries, and
- Bankstown Arts Centre

It described high functioning community facilities as being:

- Busy and active, attract people
- Versatile and serve multiple purposes
- Meet diverse community needs – cultural, generational, health related
- Encourage social connection and build community
- Provide quiet space and retreat
- Provide space for recreation
- Well located and easily accessed.

Examples of high functioning community spaces were provided, including:

- Marrickville Library
- Riverwood Library and Knowledge Centre
- The Granville Centre.

Panel members were asked to discuss the following key questions.



Riverwood Library and knowledge centre

Which local community facilities do you use?

Panel members use the following facilities:

- Chester Hill library
- Neighbourhood Watch centre
- NDIS services
- Scout Hall
- RSL, including sporting clubs
- Before and after school care clubs.

Some of the issues raised in relation to the use of existing spaces included:

- Senior citizens are not using these spaces as much since Covid
- Halls are often booked out / unavailable
- Activities may not be advertised well enough

What types of spaces are missing in the local area?

The types of services that could use more space were identified as being:

- Youth centre and drop in spaces
- After school clubs
- Kids sports clubs and facilities
- Outdoor fitness spaces
- Women's health and fitness
- Women's and maternal health centre or baby clinic
- Youth centre or drop in service
- Mental health services including drug and alcohol or domestic violence services
- Skills workshops, such as sewing or making spaces
- Employment skills and support services.

What types of new facilities would benefit the community as part of the proposed development?

The Panel noted the following suggestions for a new community facility at Chester Square:

- General use community hall spaces
- Multi-faith spaces for cultural events
- Short-term creche for shoppers
- Doctors and health care services, although some felt the area was already well serviced
- Student spaces that are linked with the University of Western Sydney
- Skills or making workshop spaces
- Educational spaces for youth, such as coding

One Panel member suggested that a successful community facility would cater to a wide, intergenerational demographic, creating a space that brings the community together in the central location of Chester Square. A library was given as an example of a facility that actively attracts people across all age groups.



Older Women's Network Greek Group

Image: Canterbury-Bankstown Council

Public domain opportunities

The planning proposal for Chester Square includes provision for a 2,000m² publicly accessible town plaza, public domain street improvements along Waldron Road, and a new active laneway along Frost Lane.

Panel members were asked to consider:

- what types of things they would like to see in the new public square
- what their priorities are for the space
- what types of community activities should happen in this new public domain.

Participants felt that the opportunity to improve public domain in and around the Chester Square development would support community connections and be positive for local businesses.

Participants felt that a new public space would offer the opportunity to make Chester Square a destination for the wider community, with a 'build it and they will come' approach.

It was noted that it would be beneficial to have some nighttime activity offerings in the space, to provide more opportunities for residents while also maintaining an active space throughout the day and into the evening to support vibrancy and safety of the area.

Examples of public spaces associated with mixed use developments were presented to the Panel for consideration, including:

- The Canopy, Lane Cove
- Green Square
- Rouse Hill town square fountain.



The Canopy, Lane Cove combines outdoor dining, a stage, green space and a playground.



Artist impression of the Chester Square public domain.

Recreation opportunities

It was noted that recreation opportunities would provide intergenerational active spaces that bring people together and activate the public space. Suggestions from the Panel included:

- children's playground with seating
- water features that children can play and interact with, particularly during hot periods
- half basketball court
- table tennis tables or a pickleball court
- skate facilities
- outdoor chess, backgammon or boules to provide opportunities for older generations of diverse cultures to connect
- bbq and seating facilities.

Panel members noted that with an increasing number of young families in the area, a playground space would be important. It was noted that a playground allows children, parents, grandparents and carers to gather in one place.

In particular, it was noted that children living in the apartments would need places to socialise, play and interact with the community.

It was noted that some shaded spaces should be provided as part of the design to support outdoor activities.

There was also a strong preference for open, green spaces over paved and concreted spaces.

Activation of public spaces

Many of the participants saw the opportunity to use improvements to public spaces to build community connection.

One participant noted that a central cultural hub would act as an anchor, bringing people together and creating good will and a sense of community.

It was noted that a facility such as a library, which caters to a wider cross-section of the community, would draw a diverse range of community members to the space, making it inter-generational, active and busy.

A range of events were identified as has having the potential to attract people, and support increased foot traffic for local businesses.

Potential activations were identified as:

- outdoor dining
- food markets or food truck events
- a coffee cart each week
- music events, potentially showcasing local talent
- cultural or social events
- performance space
- open air movies (potentially 'silent movie' with headphones if noise is a constraint)
- opportunities to showcase and promote local businesses – eg. pop up shops in the public space
- opportunities to link to local services such as neighbourhood watch centre, local health services etc.

It was noted that public events should be well promoted and that it would be useful to have a digital noticeboard in the space.

Panel members were asked to suggest examples of successful public spaces:

- *Southbank Brisbane – forest walk*
- *Centennial Park - Wild Play nature play*
- *Burwood Park - The Picnic outdoor dining*
- *Burwood China Town – active spaces*
- *Grounds of Alexandria – themed events and attractions*

Support for businesses

One member of the Panel was a local business representative, who suggested that the local business chamber could support with place activation, such as:

- organising Police walkabouts
- bringing in local football and basketball teams
- activating spaces and supporting nighttime economy
- linking to the UWS youth expo.

It was noted that it is important that businesses that are within the new development maintain street frontages on Priam and Bent Streets.

This will ensure that the Square is not only inward facing, but also supports existing businesses in the immediate area to thrive as part of the changes.

Public safety

While many participants felt that improved spaces would support Chester Square as a destination, some were concerned about safety. Participants felt that safety issues could be addressed with:

- improved lighting
- a safety / help point in the public domain
- activation of public spaces, including nighttime activity
- activities that share the public space, such as outdoor dining
- improvements to the access path between Waldren Road and the shopping centre, such as better lighting
- improved pedestrian accessibility on Frost Lane.

It was also noted that publicly accessible facilities, such as toilets and changing rooms, should be included in the space.

It was noted that public spaces that are active and family friendly feel safer for the community.

6. Conclusion

The Chester Square Community Voice Panel provided the opportunity for community representatives to provide valuable feedback to Council on the potential community benefits that may arise from the planning proposal for the development of Chester Square.

The benefit of placing a new community facility in the heart of Chester Square, in close proximity to shops and services, and alongside new public community spaces was recognised as an important part of the new development.

Participants noted a need for a community facility that can provide important community functions as a place to access services, and a place to gather within the community.

Participants noted the value of new public domain and community spaces that will serve both the residents of new apartments, and the wider Chester Hill community.

The new public domain is seen to offer a range of benefits including increased vibrancy and activation, support for local businesses, and a place for recreation and connection within the community.

Next Steps

The feedback received from the community will be provided to Council as part of the consideration of the planning proposal.

Following the consultation with the Community Voice Panel, the planning proposal will be placed on public exhibition in late 2025.

Following public exhibition process, a review of community feedback and any additional information, any required updates and amendments will be made to the planning proposal.

Council will then consider this feedback before deciding whether the planning proposal is submitted to DPHI to request finalisation of the LEP Amendments, whether to adopt the draft site specific Development Control Plan and whether to enter to a planning agreement with the Applicant.

Council has been working with the project applicant to ensure community needs and concerns are prioritised. The feedback provided by the Community Voice Panel will help Council evaluate the planning proposal and inform decision-making.



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

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