

Group seeks Cheyenne improvements

A London city council committee's help is being sought in a plan to purchase and renovate or rebuild four buildings as co-op housing units.

By Chris Clark and Don Murray
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The tenants' association at a controversial Cheyenne Avenue apartment complex faces its first hurdle tonight in a bid to convert the units from rental to co-op housing.

A delegation will be asking council's community and protective services committee to endorse a pilot project which would involve either renovation or the demolition and rebuilding of 75, 85, 95 and 105 Cheyenne.

If such an endorsement was accepted later by city council, it would lend weight to a pitch to the province for financing, which would cover most of the estimated \$5-million cost, said Marnie Coulson, a member of the delegation and chairperson of council's community housing advisory committee.

In a letter to the committee, community worker Susan Eagle said the city might be asked for help in temporary rehousing of residents.

Citing years of housing bylaw violations, tenant overcrowding and the steady deterioration of the buildings, Eagle said the project "could serve as a test case for future co-operation between the city and province."

Coulson said Cheyenne's woes "have been going on far too long . . . the city has to look at how it can take some responsibility . . . let's stop it here and do something about this problem."

She said the concept seems to have won support from some city politicians.

ONGOING PROBLEMS: "This will officially bring it to council, then maybe council can do something," said Controller Jack Burghardt, a member of the committee. Living conditions at the complex have been an "ongoing problem for the last five or six years," he said.

Financing for the ambitious project must come from the province, said Councillor Joe Avola, committee chairperson. "It's the province's responsibility. We've always steered clear of this type of commitment."

Two of the buildings — at 95 and 105 Cheyenne, owned by Elijah Elieff — are on the market for \$1.2 million. Elieff could not be reached for comment.

The other two buildings are owned by an Ottawa company and Eagle's letter indicated they, too, are for sale.