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Cut in Tolmers

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offices likely

THE money-making office content of Camden's controversial Tolmers Square development in Euston is likely to be cut by a third, the council meeting was told on Wednesday.

The majority Labour group voted heavily two days earlier to cut the proposed office development from 300,000 square feet to 200,000, and a special meeting of the Community Planning and Resources Committee before the council meeting made the cut almost a certainty.

The committee recommended that negotiations proceed with one of three unnamed firms interested in joining Camden in the development on a reduced scheme, although a final decision will not be taken until after the council elections in May.

The arguments that swayed many Labour members were that the cut was likely to mean a gain of homes for 100 people, quarter of an acre of open space and less environmental

upheaval, for a financial loss of about £1,300,000.

But the move was bitterly criticised by opposition leader Councillor Alan Greengross, who told the council: "I honestly believe the Labour Party has some death wish about the whole thing. I think they have to prove that anything to do with the commercial sector must be a disaster."

Years after Camden could have built homes for 1,700 people on land bought in conjunction with Mr Joe Levy's Stock Conversion and Investment Trust for £100,000 an acre, the council was still discussing paying £250,000 an acre to provide housing for 1,300 people, and the latest decision meant the council would lose money, instead of sharing Stock Conversion's profit from an office development.

In a two-sentence reply, Councillor John Mills, the Community Planning and Resources Committee chairman, said that Camden believed it was pursuing the best option for the community.