



2024-34 LONG-TERM PLAN SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Town Hall, Library and Archive

DRAFT

Background

Town Hall and Municipal Buildings

In June 2016 Masterton's Town Hall and most of the rest of the Municipal Building was closed following an assessment which found that the building had an earthquake rating below the required standard and was no longer fit for purpose.

Council was issued an 'earthquake-prone notice' in August 2018 as parts of the Town Hall and Municipal buildings were less than 20% National Building Standard (NBS) and posed a life-safety risk to users. Under legislation, Council must remedy the building within 7.5 years of being notified. Remediation can include strengthening or demolition. For the Town Hall and Municipal Building, action must be complete by February 2026. Failure to meet the deadline for demolition/remediation could result in fines or potential legal action with financial implications.

There has been extensive community engagement over several years to seek direction and input from the community about their desires for a replacement to the Town Hall:

- **2017:** Public consultation was undertaken which identified that two thirds of the Masterton community were in favour of the demolition of the Town Hall, with a new Civic Centre being built to replace it. There was uncertainty around the level of support for the façade.
- **September 2018:** Expressions of Interest (EOI) sought for developing the Town Hall and Municipal Building into a Civic Centre. Only one EOI met the criteria.
- **December 2018:** A Steering Group was established to examine options and make recommendations to Council on the Civic Centre Project Proceeding. Howarth HTL was engaged to assist MDC with advice in relation to the replacement or redevelopment of the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Building. This included a market demand analysis and an economic impact assessment.
- **June 2019:** the Steering Group recommend not proceeding with the Civic/Events Centre due to the results of the demand analysis and costs. Council resolution to consult with the public on proceeding with three options: demolish, rebuild or strengthen.
- **October 2019:** Local Government elections
- **February 2020:** Council revokes June 2019 resolution. Instead seeks to consult on two options; to demolish the Town Hall and retain the Municipal Building and build a new multi-purpose building on the site, including a new library.
- **July 2020:** Elected Members undertook a Lower North Island visit to similar civic facilities across the Wellington, Manawatu and Hawkes Bay regions to develop ideas about what a facility should incorporate.
- **August 2020:** following the July visits, Council clarified the features the new Civic facility could include and agreed that alternative locations should be explored.
- **December 2020:** – decision made to proceed with consultation through the LTP on the Council's preferred options of building a new facility (including theatre, library and archives). Council determined the preferred location was the land owned by Masterton Trust Lands Trust (MTLT) at 10 Queen Street.
- **June 2021:** Council agrees to proceed with the preferred option (new facility on new site).

- **30 June 2021:** Hands around the Hall protest. Press reports more than 1000 in attendance
- **August 2021:** Council resolves to purchase the MTLT land at 10 Queen Street. There were problems trying to obtain the land. Resistance from leasers extended the entire process, created uncertainty and ongoing media attention.
- **Dec 21** – Following an independently managed tender process, an architect was appointed by Council. Design process commenced. Meetings and interviews were held with subject matter experts and Iwi.
- **March 22:** Negotiations with MTLT end with no successful purchase. Council resolves to cease negotiations and that this site is no longer the preferred site. Agrees to carry out further investigation of Council owned land, including 2 Dixon Street as an alternative site.
- **April 22:** Protest against the possible use of the Rec Centre and surrounding land. Press report more than 1000 people in attendance.
- **May 2022:** Council was advised that the estimated cost of the project as scoped in 2021 had escalated to \$57.14 million, with a recommended contingency of \$14.2 million, lifting the total cost to \$71.3 million. Council considered that this was unaffordable, and the project was put on hold. It was acknowledged that significant changes to the scope of the project or budget would be required for the project to proceed.
- **May 2022:** Given the cost estimates, differing views of elected members and negative public sentiment, MDC appointed an independent Working Group to review all decisions made on the civic facility project since 2016. The purpose of the review was to provide the incoming Council with information to enable an informed and agreed position/decision on the future of the project.
- **October 2022:** Local Government elections
- **September 2023** Project Advisory Group (PAG) established (comprising a mix of Elected Members and subject matter experts from the community). The role of the PAG is to support MDC by providing an 'on the ground view' relevant information, and guidance on matters pertaining to the Civic facility option development.

Library

The library building is not water-tight, which means approximately 30% of the building is unusable and mould is causing health and safety issues. Along with this issue the building is over 40 years old and is not fit for modern public library needs. The lack of available space limits the ability to provide services that better reflect the needs of the community.

Archives

In 2020 a Detailed Seismic Assessment (DSA) was completed for the archives building at 79 Queen Street. The building was assessed to be less than 20% of National Building Standard. The Archive was then relocated to modular buildings next to the library, with the collection remaining at 79 Queen Street until another building could be secured.

In March 2022, MDC secured the building at 3 Albert Street and began renovations. Staff and the collection moved into the Albert Street premises in November 2022. These premises were intended to provide temporary accommodation, while a larger and more long-term solution could be found.

Feedback through the Annual Plan process

Council utilised the 2023/24 Annual Plan consultation process to seek feedback from the community (31 Mar 23 – 1 May 23) to inform the development of options for a reduced scope Civic Facility (including library).

For the Civic Facility and Library, our community were asked:

- whether they agreed that the revised estimate of \$71.3 million (including contingency) for the civic facility as scoped in 2021 was unaffordable.
- for feedback on which features were important in a new civic facility (to help inform a reduced scope)
- where they would prefer a new facility be located.
- whether they would support an upgrade of the library on its existing site if the library wasn't included in the civic facility scope; and
- What features of a library were important to them.

An average of 180 submitters responded to each question. The feedback received signalled a change in direction from what was scoped and included in the 2021-31 LTP. Feedback indicated our community would like Council to explore:

- Developing a Civic Facility with a reduced scope (excluding at least the library) on the existing Town Hall site.
- Expanding the existing Library on its current site.

Development of options for consultation through the LTP

Council appointed a Project Advisory Group to oversee the development of options for consultation through the Long-Term Plan. An architect was engaged in October 2023 to provide an architectural masterplan that encompasses a specialist theatre, library and archives. They were asked to consider options for the following:

- An upgraded and expanded library and archive facility at the existing location (54 Queen Street)
- Demolish the existing town hall and build a new performance space on the town hall site (64 Chapel Street)
- Refurbish the municipal and civil defence buildings at the town hall site and ensure that these meet seismic requirements

During this process, the architect proposed an alternative option for the treatment of the Town Hall and Municipal Building as it offered an alternative solution that would likely be more cost effective, while providing a better outcome. In December 2023, Council agreed to include this option for consultation.

The project has been split into three separate projects. The projects are not co-dependant and separation enables construction and financing to be phased.

The three proposed projects are:

- 1 Library and Archives
- 2 Town Hall (multi-purpose theatre)
- 3 Municipal Buildings (Council offices, Council chamber and Civil Defence facilities)

Our aspirations – Library and Archives

The Project Advisory Group outlined its aspirations for the Library and Archives in order to guide the development of the options.

Our aspiration is to provide a modern Library and Archive facility that is a centre of literacy, knowledge and documentary heritage that connects people to each other, services, and information to create a thriving and sustainable community.

We have explored the role and function of a modern library. The community's requirements for the new facility include:

- Informal learning spaces and activity areas
- Multi-purpose areas for functions, community and cultural events
- Accessible and welcoming spaces for the entire community

The Archive will be a quiet, friendly and open environment that allows the heritage collection to be safely stored and accessed and be supportive of mana whenua depositing items. This facility will include:

- Fit for purpose archival fault and supporting technical facilities
- Inviting reading rooms reflective of the district's diverse culture

Options for Council Adoption – Library and Archives

The Project Advisory Group has explored a range of options for Council adoption.

Status quo – Library and Archives remain in the current building with no changes

At the Project Advisory Group meeting on 24 Jan 2024, the decision was made not to proceed to consultation with this option, as it is not really an option. Something must be done, and essential repairs and maintenance is the minimum viable option.

Undertake essential repairs and maintenance

Essential repairs and maintenance includes:

- replacing the roof
- addressing water damage and leaking issues
- heat and cooling system replacement
- improve accessibility (at front entrance) to the existing Library Building

This option:

- ✓ extends the life of the Library Building
- ✗ Does not provide the community with a modern library and archive facility.
- ✗ leaves the Archives in the current leased building with no long-term arrangement for accommodation.
- ✗ leaves the library and heritage collection in a holding pattern with an uncertain future.

Capital cost \$2,228,143

Upgrade and expand library (including archives)

This option addresses the immediate issues of the building and provides a permanent location for archives in a custom space as well as additional space for library programmes, community events and activities.

- ✓ Basic and deferred maintenance addressed and other building improvement to ensure longevity of building (i.e. windows replaced)
- ✓ Provides the community with a modern library and archive facility
- ✓ Library spaces expanded to provide additional room for programmes
- ✓ Archives moved to library site with permanent purpose-built space

This option provides an additional 1,080m² of library and archives space.

Capital cost \$14,146,750

At the Project Advisory Group meeting on 24 January 2024, they requested this this option is split into two separate options with the additional option to show two separate stages, Stage 1 Library upgrade and extension and Stage 2 the Archive extension.

Silverwoods (the Architect) revised the drawing to clearly show Stage 1 and Stage 2. The updated drawing was sent to the Quantity Surveyor for costing. The estimated cost for the library only option is \$10,381,729 including 20% construction contingency and 10% design contingency.

Revised options for LTP consultation

Based on the above, Council agreed at the March 2024 meeting that the options to be taken forward for LTP consultation for Library /Archives building are now:

- **Preferred option:** Upgrade and expand the library only.
- **Alternative option 1:** Upgrade and expand the library *and* archives.
- **Alternative option 2:** Undertake essential repairs and maintenance.

Our aspirations - Town Hall and Municipal Buildings

The Project Advisory Group outlined its aspirations for the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings in order to guide the development of the options.

Our aspiration is to provide:

- a dynamic and adaptable venue that can support a wide range of cultural events and provide a point of difference to other venues in the district
- a modern, safe workspace for staff while providing an accessible 'front door' to Council services and community meeting facilities
- a fit for purpose Regional Civil Defence facility

Town Hall

After engagement with the community, the requirements for a new Town Hall include:

- Multi-purpose space that caters for performing arts events, kapa haka, dance, concerts and meetings
- A multi-purpose, 700 person seated theatre (1,000 standing)
- High-quality acoustics and sound system
- Pre-function space and hybrid kitchen

Indicative concepts indicated that the new multi-purpose facility will require a floor area of 2,600m²

Municipal Buildings

Based on business needs, government guidelines and staff numbers, Council have explored what a modern Council workplace should provide. The aspirations for a facility include:

- Modern, safe workspaces for 150 staff
- Dedicated Council Chambers
- Dedicated regional Civil Defence facility
- Front counter for customer services and storage facilities
- Considering these requirements, initial designs by architects have indicated that the new Council facility will require a total floor area of 2,300 m². The current area of Waiaata House is 1,500 m².

Heritage listing

Both the Town Hall and Municipal Building have a heritage listing in the District Plan which means a resource consent is required to demolish or partially demolish the building (front or back). The 'earthquake prone' notice does not alleviate this situation; however, we have been advised it will be rationale for approving the resource consent.

Retaining the façade

Given previous community interest, we have considered the ability to retain the façade of the buildings. Retaining the façade is possible for both options 2 and 3. However, it should be noted that the façade encompasses all exterior walls (rather than e.g. the surface of the walls).

The cost to retain the façade is approx. \$1,628,224. This includes extra demolition costs (more care to be taken), allowance for structural steel for propping the façade, making good (including windows), painting and contingency.

Options for Council Adoption – Town Hall and Municipal Buildings

Council have explored a range of options that meet their obligations to remove or restrengthen the existing Municipal Building and Town Hall by 2026 and fulfil their vision for a multi-purpose theatre on the site as well as provide a safe workplace and an accessible 'front door' to Council services. These options are outlined below and Council agreed at the March 2024 meeting to proceed to consultation with them.

Preferred Option – Demolish Town Hall and Municipal Buildings, build new Town Hall (theatre space) and expand Waiata House

- **Demolish** the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings
- **Build** new Town Hall/performance space on existing site
- **Extend** Waiata House to meet the Municipal building's function - construct an 800 m² addition on the eastern side of Waiata House to provide space for council public meeting chambers and the regional civil defence facilities.

This option is our preferred option because it:

- ✓ provides more certainty over final costs.
- ✓ is more cost effective to retain than re-build the equivalent space. Waiata House provides good office accommodation but is too small for the current staff numbers and does not support community engagement with Councillors. The extension is a cost-effective way to meet our current and future accommodation needs.
- ✓ provides a cost-effective way of creating a fit for purpose Civil Defence facility. Civil Defence facilities must be built to a higher building specification (IL4). The extension to Waiata House will be a separate structure (connected by a corridor), so can be built to this standard without the need to upgrade the whole building to that standard.
- ✓ reduces expenditure on leased premises.
- ✓ retains more carparks by retaining Waiata House
- ✓ allows for construction to be phased over time.

Estimated total capital cost \$38,671,780 (including the cost of retaining the façade). This includes contingency, furniture, fixtures & equipment, and specialist lighting and rigging for the theatre.

The phasing of construction can be staggered depending on affordability. The split of the estimated capital cost is broken down as:

Development (including contingency 25%)	Cost
Town Hall	\$30,739,498
Waiata House (refurb and extension)	\$7,932,283

Alternative Option 1: Build new Town Hall (theatre space) and refurbish the Municipal Buildings

- **Demolish** Town Hall
- **Build** a new Town Hall/performance space on existing site
- **Refurbish** the Municipal Buildings (retaining existing footprint)
- **Retain** Waiata House as the refurbished Municipal Buildings will not be big enough to accommodate all Council functions including Council Chambers, Civil Defence and customer services

This is not our preferred option due to:

- **High level of cost uncertainty:** The costs for this work are based on the available drawings, but considering the age and nature of construction of the era in which it was built (and upgraded), it is highly likely that conditions may be different when works begin. This will cause cost and time escalations, which may be significant.
- **High risk:** Engineers have advised that there are known risks with demolishing the town hall and leaving the municipal building. Structural assessment has been undertaken to better understand the connection between the existing Town Hall and the Municipal Building. The Town Hall is structurally connected to the Municipal and Civil Defence buildings in multiple locations and considerable consideration must be given to how these could be disconnected without compromising the Municipal and Civil Defence buildings. Any demolition of the Town Hall risks the structural integrity of the floor, walls, and roof of this foyer space.
- **Waiata House would need to be retained.** Based on 1 desk per 7m² of open plan office area, approx. 100-110 desk can be accommodated
- The architect does not, in principle, support this scheme. See comment below from the architect.

Architects note on option 1:

"While the scheme has been drawn for the purpose of scoping the option, we do not in principle support this level of building intensification on this site. We believe there is insufficient site area to support both the Town Hall operations and the Council operations proposed to be accommodated within the Municipal & CD Building. In particular, there is insufficient space for accommodation of fleet vehicles as well as truck and bus manoeuvring and car parking."

Estimated capital cost \$45,355,776 (including the cost of retaining the façade)

The split of the estimated capital cost is broken down as:

Development (including contingency 25%)	Cost
Town Hall	\$28,409,611
Refurbish Municipal Buildings	\$16,946,166

Alternative Option 2: Demolish the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings (including façade), retain Waiata House and Queen Street premises.

This option is the most cost-effective way for Council to meet its obligations to restrengthen or remove the earthquake prone Town Hall and Municipal buildings by 2026 but it does not address:

- × Masterton's lack of a performance venue
- × the public accessibility of the Council meeting chambers
- × the lack of a fit for purpose Regional Civil Defence facility
- × Council staff housed in one premise (including the ongoing cost/uncertainty of leasing Queen Street)

Estimated capital cost \$3,345,205.