



CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Making better use of the **CAMBRIDGE TOWN HALL**

October 2020

0800 WAIPADC (924 723)
waipadc.govt.nz

BACKGROUND

Cambridge Town Hall, opened in 1909, is a much-loved building in the heart of Cambridge. For many years it has been the thriving hub of community, civic and arts activities in the town.

This Edwardian building has a Category II listing under the Heritage Places Pouhere Taonga Act (2014). It is listed in Waipā District Council's District Plan as a Category B+ building.

Cambridge Town Hall is still used for key events such as ANZAC commemorations. But even though it is available to hire, use of the Hall has steadily reduced over the last decade with only 27 per cent of available days used in the 2018/2019 year. (Even fewer days were used in the Covid-impacted 2019/2020 year.)

The money received by Council for hireage fees ranges between \$25,000 - \$35,000 each year. In the year ending June 2020, the cost to Council to operate the hall was \$148,000.

Currently Waipā District Council manages the Hall and contracts Destination Cambridge Inc to act as a booking agent. Destination Cambridge also leases part of the building for the Cambridge i-SITE.

Council is concerned about the deteriorating physical condition of the Hall and the resources needed to bring it up to standard so it can be better used in the future. Much work is needed, including:

- Repairing leaks in the roof and ceilings
- Potential further earthquake strengthening
- Improvements to the heating and air conditioning systems
- Improvements to acoustics, lighting and other resources for performances
- Installation of modern technology for large events, meetings and seminars
- Considerable work to the upstairs gallery and the auditorium windows (closed and covered since 1990)
- Improvements to the kitchen layout and serveries
- Significant improvements to accessibility, including accessibility for people with disabilities
- Updates to the interior décor.

The reality is that a major injection of capital is needed to bring the Cambridge Town Hall up to standard so the Waipā community can make the most of this facility.

Council set aside \$3.8 million for the Hall in the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan and will consider carrying that money over into the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan to be signed off next year. But this might not be enough.

Before making major funding decisions for the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, Council wants to consider how best to manage the Cambridge Town Hall so the community gets the most from this community asset.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

Waipā District Council is considering establishing a charitable trust to undertake the re-development of the Cambridge Town Hall and to develop a sustainable business model to manage the Hall in the future.

This document only proposes establishing a charitable trust. There will be opportunities at a later date to provide feedback about future use and development of the Town Hall itself.

OPTIONS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council has considered four options.

Option 1

Setting up an independent Charitable Trust (This is Council's preferred option.)

Waipā District Council is considering setting up an independent Charitable Trust to manage the Cambridge Town Hall on behalf of the community. Council would continue to retain ownership of the Hall on behalf of its community, and would continue to contribute to maintenance costs. A Charitable Trust, which would be independent of Council, would be able to:

- prioritise community and public benefit,
- engage closely with the community to activate the venue and market it so that it is used more frequently and for a greater range of activities,
- nurture and protect the heritage status of the building,
- partner with Council to undertake the major capital works required,
- seek philanthropic funding which, combined with money from Council, would allow for the re-development of the Town Hall,
- provide donee status (and tax credits) for private citizens wishing to donate to the redevelopment of the Hall, and
- develop a financially sustainable model for the management of the Hall.

The draft purposes of the proposed trust would be

- To promote, manage and operate the Cambridge Town Hall for the benefit of residents and visitors to Waipā District.
- To ensure Cambridge Town Hall is a venue which provides opportunities for community, civic, arts and other gatherings to be offered in Cambridge.
- To engage with the community to identify community, civic, arts and other activities which would be welcomed by the community and enabled through the Cambridge Town Hall.
- To undertake any other charitable purposes within New Zealand relating to the provision of community, civic and arts facilities and opportunities.

An independent Charitable Trust would have six to eight trustees appointed for 3-year terms. The initial trustees would be appointed by a joint group acting on behalf of Council and made up of experienced directors/trustees and community representatives. Trustees would carry out their roles voluntarily although their costs would be reimbursed. They could be paid for specific tasks undertaken on behalf of the Trust, but only with the prior approval of the Trust. Elected members and staff members of Council or related entities would not be eligible to be trustees.

Option 2

Waipā District Council continues to manage Cambridge Town Hall

Under this option, Council would retain in-house management of the Town Hall and continue to contract Destination Cambridge Inc to take bookings. It is unlikely Council could afford to fund what is needed to bring the Town Hall up to standard. Council would not have the same access to philanthropic grants that a charitable trust would.

Council currently does not have the specialist skills in-house required to market and activate the hall to maximise community use.

Option 3

Partner with, or contract, a private sector entity

There is no private sector market for managing public amenities such as town halls. That is because it is very difficult to generate a profit from these facilities in New Zealand.

This option is not considered realistic.

Option 4

Develop a mixed commercial and public sector model

Council could establish a Council Controlled Organisation, Council Organisation, or Council Controlled Trading Organisation to manage the Cambridge Town Hall.

All of these entities are a form of corporatisation. They act commercially but ownership and control of the Cambridge Town Hall would be retained by Waipā District Council.

Any commercial entity seeks to generate a commercial return. However, making a profit is highly unlikely for any town hall and particularly one already requiring a lot of money to bring it up to standard. Council believes the Cambridge Town Hall should be a not-for-profit, public-good facility which would be best served by a not-for-profit model like an independent Charitable Trust.

This option is not considered realistic.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council had already set aside \$3.8 million in its 2018-2028 Long Term Plan for redevelopment of the Cambridge Town Hall. But given the amount of work required, it is unlikely this will be sufficient for the work required. This money would come from a loan, with principal and interest payments paid from a combination of localised Cambridge ward and district-wide rates.

Next year, Council will consider its 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, review the commitments made (particularly in light of Covid-19) and make further funding decisions. Before any funding decisions are made about the Cambridge Town Hall, Council wants to decide how best to manage the Hall in the future.

Whatever happens, Council will retain ownership of the Cambridge Town Hall on behalf of its community. Council also expects to continue to contribute to the maintenance cost of the Hall, even if an independent Charitable Trust is established.

However any Charitable Trust would be expected to develop a financially sustainable model for the management of the Hall. This should include:

- operating **and** maintenance contributions from Council given Council's ownership of and interest in the public amenity,
- increased revenue streams through increased use of the Hall,
- attracting funding streams Council may not have access to.

What next.... and how to have your say.

Waipā District Council is seeking your feedback on the options outlined here. The submission form overleaf allows you to have your say on what option you prefer so that our community can make the most of the Cambridge Town Hall.

Submissions can be made in the following ways:



Filling in a short form online:

www.waipadc.govt.nz/haveyoursay



Delivered to:

Waipa District Council, 101 Bank St, Te Awamutu
Waipa District Council, 23 Wilson St, Cambridge



Emailed to:

submissions@waipadc.govt.nz

(Please write 'Cambridge Town Hall submission' in the subject line)



Posted to:

Waipa District Council
Attn: Cambridge Town Hall submission
Private Bag 2402
Te Awamutu 3840

Feedback form



Contact details

Full name

Organisation (if applicable)

Street address

Email (optional)

Phone (optional)

Your feedback

Which option do you prefer? (Tick one)

- ☐ **OPTION 1:** Setting up an independent Charitable Trust to manage the Cambridge Town Hall
- ☐ **OPTION 2:** Waipā District Council continues to manage the Cambridge Town Hall
- ☐ **OPTION 3:** Partner with, or contract, a private sector entity to manage the Cambridge Town Hall
- ☐ **OPTION 4:** Develop a mixed commercial and public sector model to manage the Cambridge Town Hall

Comments:

Are you happy for your name to be released to the public in association with this submission? (tick one)

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

All submissions must be received by 5pm, 24 November 2020.

PRIVACY STATEMENT: Submissions under the Local Government Act 2002 are public documents. They are made available in a report to the Council, on the Council's website and to members of the public on request. Personal information will be used for administration purposes and as part of the consultation process. You have the right to correct any errors in personal details contained in your submission.



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