

July 2024

Civic Administration and Depot Operations OPTIONS AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

With large parts of the Euroa Civic Centre closed due to safety concerns and significant investment needed, Strathbogie Shire Council commissioned a feasibility study to:

- **Identify a preferred civic and works depot operating model**
- **Develop options for the civic centre including the option to stage works over several years**
- **Understand the scale of future works needed for the Euroa and Nagambie depots**

After analysing many options, the study has recommended redevelopment of the civic and administrative facilities at Binney Street Euroa and upgrades to the existing depots at Nagambie and Euroa.

A summary report was presented to the July Council meeting for noting.

Options and funding models will be discussed further with the incoming Councillors and the community after the October Council election.

BACKGROUND

Council has not invested in asset maintenance or renewal of civic, administrative, and depot assets for many decades.

Financial constraints and higher priority asset renewal projects such as roads and bridges have resulted in insufficient renewal, upgrade, and replacement funding directed to these buildings.

The existing civic and administrative buildings are not fit for purpose and require significant renewal and upgrade investment.

This has led to a critical need for larger scale investment to ensure continuity of service.

The study identified that 'do nothing' is no longer a viable option.

An options report has been developed to provide guidance for medium to long term plans.

WHAT IS NEEDED

Council service and administration facilities to provide accommodation for Council staff engaged in delivery of services and programs.

Depot administration and staff accommodation to support delivery of physical and outdoor maintenance and emergency services.

Facilities for Civic and Councillor functions including Council Chamber as well as meeting spaces and work spaces for Councillors.

OTHER KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Urgency of required works
- Cost and ability to stage work
- Potential funding sources

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Improved customer service and access
- Civic and governance functions
- Preservation of cultural heritage, in particular the Public Hall/Cinema
- Productivity, attraction and retention of staff
- Future ways of working including hybrid and activity based working
- Environmental standards
- Legislative requirements such as flood levels, accessibility and safety
- Changing service needs and expectations including population growth in the south
- Access and response needs across the shire for emergency and urgent service requests.

CONDITION REPORTS

Condition reports have been prepared for the civic centre and works depots outlining current condition, limitations and critical needs.

OPERATING MODEL

The report confirmed the community will be best served through a distributed operating model to service the east-west nature of the municipality.

This model is also supported by the need for a presence in Nagambie and Euroa, with future growth and service demand projected for the south in Nagambie and Avenel.

Civic and administration

- Retain civic operations at current Euroa site
- Continue refurbishment and explore options for future potential expansion in Nagambie

Depot operations

- Redesign and develop the existing Euroa and Nagambie Depots
- Maintain existing sub-depots in Violet Town and Strathbogie

WORKS

Euroa Civic Centre

The existing civic buildings in Euroa was due for major upgrade, renewal or replacement at least 20 years ago.

The top floor of the main building is closed due to safety concerns. Water damage is impacting the top and bottom floors. Temporary office space is being leased nearby for around 15 staff until the refurbished Nagambie office is available.

In addition to safety concerns, the building layout and outdated facilities do not meet the needs of modern service provision for safe, efficient and effective ways of working in the 21st century.

The current civic centre is at the end of its useful and economic life and requires major investment to continue to function. Any significant work will require the floor to be raised above the 1-in-100 year flood levels.

This means the roof will also need to be raised and the whole building will need to be upgraded to meet other modern building code regulations.

Three options have been developed that:

- retain the Public Hall (Cinema)
- reinstate the original façade and foyer
- include relocation of maternal and child health to allow for preschool service expansion
- include relocation of Visitor Information Centre close to the travellers rest area near Seven Creeks
- retain a small youth space and storage
- increase Councillor and civic spaces to support good governance
- enhance customer service area to provide better service to the community.

Two options also include potential co-location of library services.

No final decision has been made on the transition of any services. Further stakeholder consultation and engagement will occur before any final decision.

Option One

- Demolish the civic extension from the 1980s and two additional buildings at the rear
- Preserve the Public Hall/Cinema
- Reinststate the Foyer
- Refurbish the original civic building for use as a library including raising the floor-level to achieve flood resilience
- Build a new two-storey civic and administrative hub at the rear
- Includes consideration of co-location of library services

Estimate \$17.25m

Option Two

- Demolish all original civic buildings
- Retain the Public Hall/Cinema
- Reinststate Foyer
- Build new single storey building next to the Public Hall
- Civic and administrative functions designed around a welcoming customer service foyer adjacent to the Council Chamber
- No library included

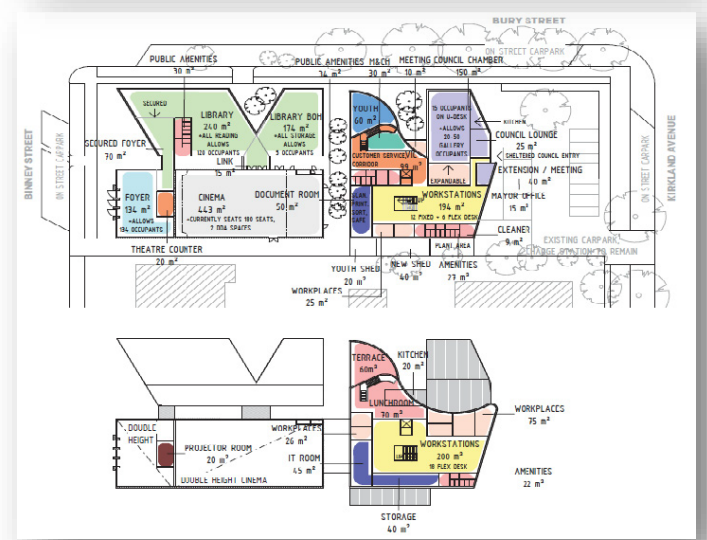
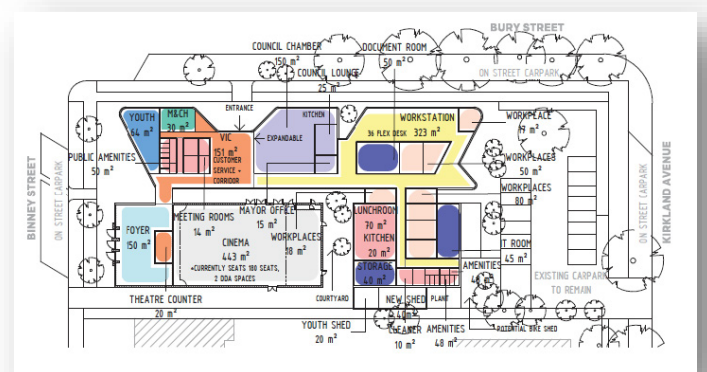
Estimate \$17.85m

Option Three

- Demolish all original civic buildings
- Retain Public Hall/Cinema
- Reinststate Foyer
- Build new library adjacent to the Public Hall
- Build new two-storey civic and administrative hub to the rear
- Includes consideration of co-location of library services

Estimate \$17.47m

Note - these costs do not include any Library or Public Hall related expenses which would be developed through a separate project.



Depots

Masterplans have been developed for Euroa and Nagambie depots to help guide long term redevelopment proposals and address urgent improvements for employee accommodation and safer travel routes at both sites.

Euroa depot

- Demolition of existing staff facilities and replacement with new administration building with staff amenities
- Significant upgrade to the layout, hardstand, buildings and associated infrastructure (e.g., bulk materials storage etc).
- Redesigned traffic flow to promote safety for staff and visitors

Indicative cost \$5.08 million

Nagambie depot

- Demolition of existing staff facilities and replacement with new administration building with staff amenities
- Better control of traffic and separation of staff and visitor parking to improve safety
- Significant upgrade of hardstand and associated infrastructure.

Indicative cost \$2.61 million

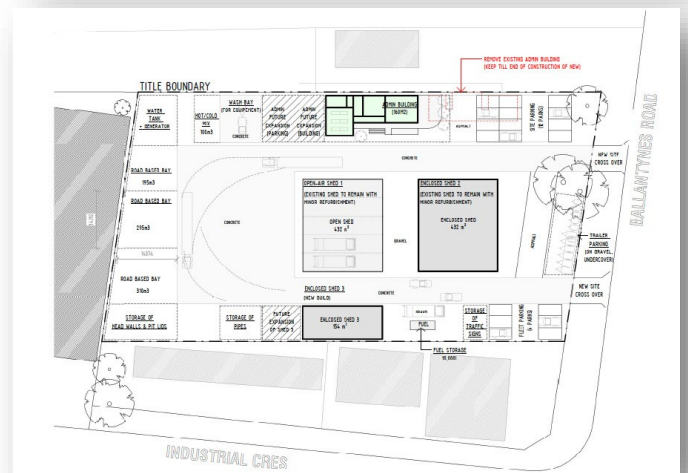
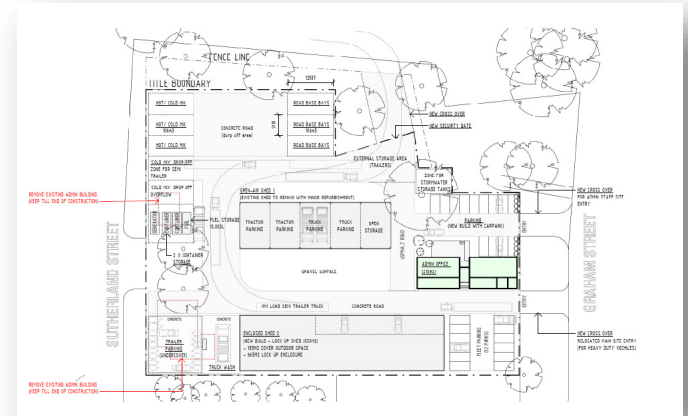
Nagambie customer service

The former library building was closed last year due to structural problems with the building heaving.

With the library relocating, the building is currently being refurbished to provide customer service and office space to meet population growth in the south.

The refurbishment was reviewed as part of the project with some minor modifications made to the internal fit out to better support service needs and hybrid working environments.

Further structural work will be required in the future. This has not been costed as part the scope of this study.



FUNCTIONAL DESIGN BRIEF

The following principles were used to determine functional design needs.

Customer relationships

- Welcoming and spacious customer service area
- Access to appropriate meeting rooms for consultation and sensitive or confidential discussions
- Improved technology for online access to specialist staff
- Booking of appointments and encouraging onsite engagement to provide better service standards across the municipality
- Take advantage of new technology and systems to enable better customer service to community, service users, and applicants
- Consulting spaces for visiting specialist staff and community engagement

Productivity, attraction, and retention of staff

- A quality contemporary office environment with suitable meeting rooms, and the flexibility to work from home or other places as required
- Comfortable and inclusive work areas that enable collaboration and increased productivity
- Good natural light and fresh ventilation with access to outdoor spaces
- Shower and end-of-journey facilities to encourage active transport options for staff
- Flexibility with certainty for community and colleagues
- Adaptive spaces to support training and development, project management, and community meetings
- Hybrid and flexible work - supporting better customer and community outcomes, conditions for staff, and efficiencies in building design Build for 70% capacity – 70% workstations and 30% workplaces

Internal relationships

- Hybrid and flexible model of work will support better adaptation to internal relationships
- Project and task teams will be able to collaborate in designated spaces
- Flexible workstations and workplaces will support changing needs of work and internal relationships
- Single workspace/building with open space will promote internal collaboration

Environmental standards

- A building with high environmental standards
- Solar generation – maximise solar generation on available roof space
- Acoustic treatment to be explored through schematic design
- Rainwater harvesting and reuse for landscape and internal
- Waste management – external space allocation for waste separation
- Power and technical
- Energy independence including battery back-up and secondary generation capacity
- Standalone functionality for solar battery charging
- Battery and solar to provide UPS capacity for building

FUNDING SOURCES

This project represents a once in 50-year renewal required to support core civic and administrative functions.

While the works are modest, this is a major project for a Council of Strathbogie's size. There will be a significant impact on Council's long term financial planning.

The plans have been developed to support a staged approach over the medium to long term.

The impact on Council's long term financial plan will be significant and will require careful planning and several sources of funding including:

- Council's ongoing capital works program
- Savings and efficiencies in operational budgets
- Loan borrowings to spread the cost across several years in recognition that the project will provide benefits for 20 to 50 years, and is catching up on at least 20 years of under investment
- Grants from State and/or Federal government.

NEXT STEPS

The report will be referred to the incoming Council as part of its induction and strategic planning processes including the Council Plan, long term financial plan and asset management plan.

Further reading

Existing Condition Report
Design Principles
Functional Brief
Council Report

More information

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