Community Facilities Policy

1. Introduction

The Community Facilities Policy is a guide for the Council when it makes decisions about future investment in or disposal of community facilities. It outlines the Council's overall approach towards providing community facilities and where and when the Council will meet community needs by partnering with other organisations.

Community facilities are those spaces, buildings and amenities that support communities, groups, families and individuals to meet their social needs, make the most of their potential and achieve community wellbeing.

Community facilities are an important tool to help the Council meet its strategic objectives and develop and support community life. Facilities help bring people together, strengthen communities, and provide a platform to deliver the activities and services that contribute to community wellbeing.

The Council recognises that people use a wide range of facilities – not just those owned by the Council. Schools, churches and universities all make up the social fabric of the city and, increasingly, cafés and bars provide places for people to meet, socialise and do business.

The Council supports a range of social infrastructure assets across the city in a variety of ways, including direct provision, support through grants, and subsidised leases. Not all facilities require Council financial support.

This policy sets out the Council's general approach to supporting community facilities. While the policy focuses on providing physical assets, the Council recognises that the activities and services delivered in or from these physical assets are equally, if not more, important in achieving communities' social wellbeing. The policy also recognises the Council is not the only provider of community facilities and this is taken into account when making decisions on Council's own investment.

1.1 What are community facilities?

Community facilities form part of the city's 'hard' social infrastructure. The 'soft' social infrastructure relates to staffing, resourcing, grants and providing information that supports community wellbeing. People can meet, play and learn in community spaces, groups can form and information and knowledge can be shared.

Community spaces are used in a variety of ways. They can support a range of outcomes and be used for arts, cultural, educational, recreational and leisure activities; accommodation for voluntary groups and important gathering points in civil defence emergencies. Community spaces may support informal and formal activities and gatherings, and help strengthen communities by bringing people together, contributing to individuals' wellbeing and sense of community.

Community facilities are not just buildings but are also open space, playgrounds and sportsfields. Community spaces include:

- Arts and crafts centres
- Arts galleries
- Cafés
- Childcare centres
- Churches
- Cinemas
- Community centres
- Community halls
- Faith-based spaces
- Hobby clubs
- Libraries
- Marae
- Museums
- Parks and gardens
- Playgrounds
- Public spaces
- Recreation centres
- Schools
- Scout halls
- Sportsfields
- Sports pavilions
- Swimming pools
- Town halls

Community spaces can be located in single-purpose or multi-purpose buildings, indoors or outdoors, in parks and open space, distributed around a suburb or located side by side in a single area.

1.2 What community facilities does this policy apply to?

The community spaces and facilities covered by this policy are those with a primary purpose relating to the Council's social and recreation objectives and include:
- aquatic facilities
- community centres
- community halls (including town halls such as Ngaio and Khandallah town halls)
- libraries
- recreation centres (including the Indoor Community Sports Centre).

A range of other facilities are also part of the Council's community facility asset base, but their primary purpose relates to the Council's arts and cultural, economic or open space objectives. While their importance is acknowledged, they are not considered part of this policy. These facilities include:
- playgrounds
- sportsfields and sports pavilions
- community leases
- Michael Fowler Centre and Town Hall
- TSB Bank Arena
- arts facilities
- galleries
- museums.

The facilities covered by this policy are primarily housed in Council owned buildings; however there are circumstances where spaces considered part of the Council network of provision are not owned by the Council.

1.3 Strategic context

The Local Government Act 2002 requires the Council to promote social wellbeing, and the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan reflects this by outlining key objectives and priorities for social wellbeing in the city. The focus of the Social and Recreation Strategy is to promote social wellbeing at community level with an overall goal of building strong, safe, and healthy communities for a good quality of life. The Council's long-term approach to achieve this is to ensure that the social infrastructure is in place to meet residents' and the communities' needs. The physical assets – or facilities – are the platform for community development, activities and services to take place.

Community facilities contribute to a sense of place by creating potential focal points for community activity so that the space becomes a concrete symbol of a community's

sense of identity and place. Community facilities may also contribute to strong communities by supporting a sense of safety, security, trust and a good quality of life. Community facilities enable people to have many opportunities for involvement and engagement in formal and informal activities.

Safe communities are those whose residents feel a sense of safety, where people are safe in their homes and out in the community and city. The design elements of community facilities can contribute to a sense of safety by helping prevent injuries, accidents and crime.

Healthy communities provide for residents' mental, physical and environmental wellbeing and give people opportunities to pursue their personal aspirations. Healthy communities can be supported by providing activities and services that encourage physical activity and personal growth.

The Council wants Wellington to be a city that is:

- More liveable
  Wellington will be a great place to live, work and play, offering a stimulating and high-quality range of community amenities and services, including affordable housing.

- More inclusive
  Wellington's diverse population will be supported and embraced by a tolerant, caring and welcoming community.

- More actively engaged
  Wellington residents will be actively engaged in their communities and in recreation and leisure activities.

- Better connected
  Wellington will offer excellent access to a sound social infrastructure that supports good social cohesion.

- Healthier
  Wellington's population will enjoy a healthy lifestyle with high standards of public health.

- Safer
  Wellington will offer a living environment, where people feel safe.

- Stronger sense of place
  Wellington will have a strong local identity that celebrates and protects its sense of place, Capital City status, distinctive landforms and landmarks, defining features, history, heritage buildings, places and spaces.

2.   Overall approach

The Council's overall approach to supporting community facilities is to work with other groups, organisations and agencies to ensure communities have sufficient access to existing facilities and services to meet their needs.

The Council considers that community facilities and services are best located in urban commercial centres, as these are the focus of community economic and social life. The city has an established network of suburban centres, which are mirrored in the Centres Policy.

The Community Facilities Policy builds on the role of these suburban centres as focal points for local and regional services. It sets out the level of facility provision, which reflects the population served and position the suburban centre has in the Centres Policy hierarchy.

The Council's general approach will be to continue with the existing provision of community facilities, including libraries and community spaces. In cases where a gap

in service or a need is demonstrated in the community spaces network, the Council will work with others to enable better community access to non-Council facilities. The Council may develop partnerships or contribute funding to delivering community services from an existing non-Council asset. As far as the Council's own facilities are concerned, the focus will be to ensure consistency in the functionality, layout and quality of buildings to encourage appropriate use by a wide range of people and groups.

Disposal of assets may be considered where they are under-used, not fit for purpose and poorly located. Disposing of these facilities will be considered if there is alternative access to comparable facilities.

This policy is a framework to provide community facilities based on existing and planned suburban centres, plus the central city, and largely reflects the hierarchy established by the Council's Centres Policy.

2.1   Centre catchments

The city has three main population catchments for community facilities focused around the central city and the 'sub-regional' centres of Johnsonville in the north and Kilbirnie in the south. Each has a distinctive pattern of settlement. Johnsonville is surrounded by fewer large town and district centres, the central city is surrounded by smaller neighbourhood centres and Kilbirnie is surrounded by a range of centres of various sizes. All these centres are shown in Figure 1.

Catchments around the different types of centre are set according to a maximum travel distance. Within this area the catchment is determined by the existing patterns of settlement, the geography and topography of the city, the population density within an area, the relationships and connections between centres and anticipated growth patterns.

The maximum travel distances are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Maximum travel distances in catchments

Centre type	Maximum travel distance	Approx population range (to 2030)
City-wide		up to 230,000
Central city and sub-regional centres	5km	30,000–80,000
Town centres	2.5km	11,000–30,000
District centres	1.8km or 20–25 min walk	5000–10,000
Neighbourhood centres	1km or 10–12 min walk	up to 6000

2.2   Desired service levels

The desired service levels are summarised in Tables 2 and 3 overleaf.

The central city is Wellington's major employment and entertainment centre. It hosts a range of civic, cultural, social and recreational infrastructure at the highest standard. This infrastructure acts as city-wide and sub-regional facilities depending on their nature and type. The growth in inner city living has increased the need for local facilities in the inner city, and many regional facilities are used as local facilities by the
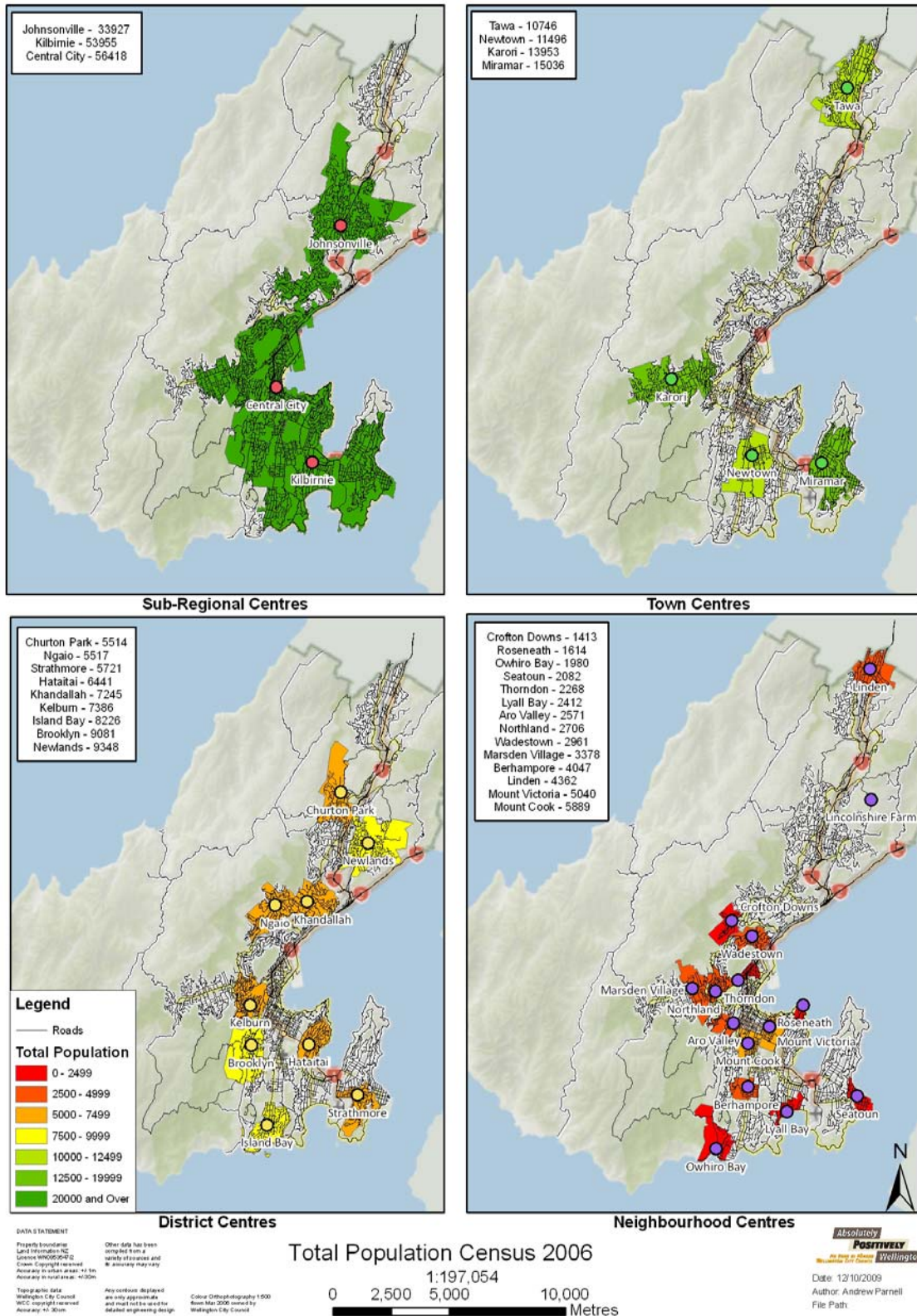
inner city community. In addition, people living in the inner city may use local facilities in surrounding suburbs, putting added pressure on these spaces.

The sub-regional centres of Johnsonville and Kilbirnie are important employment and retail areas. The community facilities in these centres will support a wide catchment of between 50,000 to 60,000 people from a number of surrounding town, district and neighbourhood centres. Most users will reach them by public transport or private vehicle. When the Council provides a range of facility types in a centre, ideally they will be located together in a community hub.

In town centres, services and facilities support the surrounding suburbs as well as the local community. Aquatic facilities will only be provided in centres more than 3km from a regional centre. Town centres, such as Karori and Tawa, are outside the catchments of their related sub-regional centres and so are expected to include a range of community

Figure 1: Centre catchments and population (2006 census)

Johnsonville - 33927
Kilbirnie - 53955
Central City - 56418

Sub-Regional Centres

Tawa - 10746
Newtown - 11496
Karori - 13953
Miramar - 15036

Town Centres

Churton Park - 5514
Ngaio - 5517
Strathmore - 5721
Hataitai - 6441
Khandallah - 7245
Kelburn - 7386
Island Bay - 8226
Brooklyn - 9081
Newlands - 9348

Legend

— Roads

Total Population
- 0 - 2499
- 2500 - 4999
- 5000 - 7499
- 7500 - 9999
- 10000 - 12499
- 12500 - 19999
- 20000 and Over

District Centres

Crofton Downs - 1413
Roseneath - 1614
Owhiro Bay - 1980
Seatoun - 2082
Thorndon - 2268
Lyall Bay - 2412
Aro Valley - 2571
Northland - 2706
Wadestown - 2961
Marsden Village - 3378
Berhampore - 4047
Linden - 4362
Mount Victoria - 5040
Mount Cook - 5889

Neighbourhood Centres

Total Population Census 2006

1:197,054

0   2,500   5,000   10,000
Metres

facilities of appropriate size for their catchments. Newtown and Miramar are located within the sub-regional catchment of Kilbirnie and so do not necessarily need to include a full range of facility types, as these may more effectively be delivered from a community hub in Kilbirnie.

District centres are expected to provide services to meet the health, learning and support needs of the local population. Facilities must be a walkable distance for the fit and active, or easily accessed by public transport and private vehicle. In district centres, a suburban library facility will only be provided where the centre is more than 3km from a

regional or town centre. To recognise the community development component of libraries, library services will be integrated with other community spaces.

While facilities in sub-regional centres are of a larger scale, they must be designed and function to act as local facilities for their local community as well as regional facilities for a wider catchment. Similarly, in town and district centres where catchments and communities are likely to overlap, facilities must also be accessible and meet local needs as well as the wider needs of the larger catchment.

Neighbourhood centres are focused around smaller retail areas and within walking distance of most people in the area. Neighbourhood centres will include some form of community space or hall, and will have good connections to public transport and facilities in nearby district, town, sub-regional centres and the central city.

The population in the rural settlements around Wellington is small and the social networks in these areas tend to be good. The older settlements of Makara and Ohariu have community facilities, unlike the newer settlement of Horokiwi. This is not anticipated to change within the lifetime of this policy.

The level of services planned for the future, as stated in this policy, does not imply the Council will provide all facilities, but outlines a the range of facilities required to achieve the Council's strategic goals.

2.3   Current provision

Existing community facilities provided by the Council (see Figure 2) are characterised by single-purpose facilities scattered around the city. Generally the buildings are single-purpose and individually located on sites that are not always in the suburban or activity centres.

The Council is the main provider of libraries, pools and recreation centres in the city. The network of 12 public libraries is located in the central city and larger suburban centres. They are in purpose-built buildings where the location and site characteristics have been carefully considered. Aquatic and recreation centres provided by the Council are located on flat sites and are generally located alongside sportsfields or other facilities.

Many of the Council's community centres and halls are in older facilities, often in 'surplus' buildings originally designed for other purposes and converted to a community centre or hall. Council's community centres and halls make up around 12 percent of all the community spaces available in the city, and their location is often away from the commercial centre, or on rear sites with no street presence.

The Council considers that making a transition between the current provision of and future desired levels of service, and relocating facilities into centres will take many years.

Table 2: Hierarchy of provision for community facilities

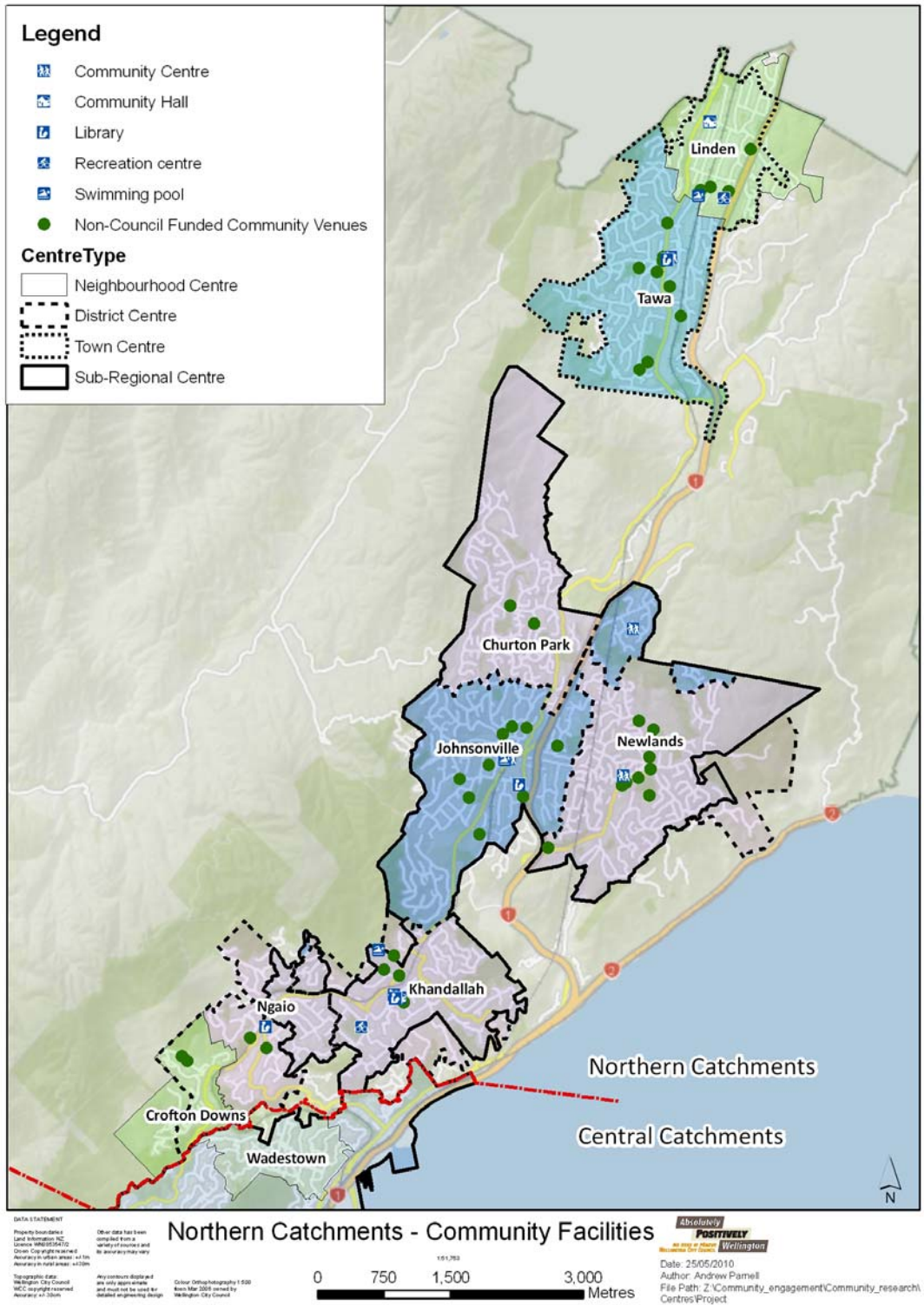| Central city (city wide pop)	Sub-regional (30k to 80k pop)	Town centres (11k to 30k pop)	District centres (5k to 10k pop)	Neighbourhood centres (up to 6k pop)
	(Central city) *Johnsonville* *Kilbirnie* (Hub model)	*Karori* *Miramar* *Newtown* *Tawa*	*Brooklyn* *Kelburn* *Churton* *Khandallah* *Park* *Newlands* *Ngaio* *Strathmore* *Hataitai* *Island Bay*	*Aro Valley* *Mt Cook* *Berhampore* *Mt Victoria* *Crofton* *Northland* *Downs* *Owhiro Bay* *Lincolnshire* *Roseneath* *Farm (future)* *Seatoun* *Linden* *Thorndon* *Lyall Bay* *Wadestown* *Marsden* *Village*
Aquatic facility	Aquatic facility	Aquatic facilities where a centre is more than 3km from a regional centre		
Central Library	Large suburban library	Large suburban library collocated with community spaces	~~L~~Small suburban library ~~service~~ unless the centre is within 3km of town, or regional centre with a library service. Where library services are provided, these will be located with community spaces.	
Extensive range of venues for: • passive recreation • active recreation • meeting space – formal and informal	Venues for: • passive recreation • active recreation • meeting space – formal and informal	Spaces for: • passive recreation • active recreation, • meeting space – formal and informal	Spaces for: • passive recreation • active recreation • meeting space – formal and informal	Space that is flexible and multi-use

Table 3: Indicative floor areas for Council community facilities

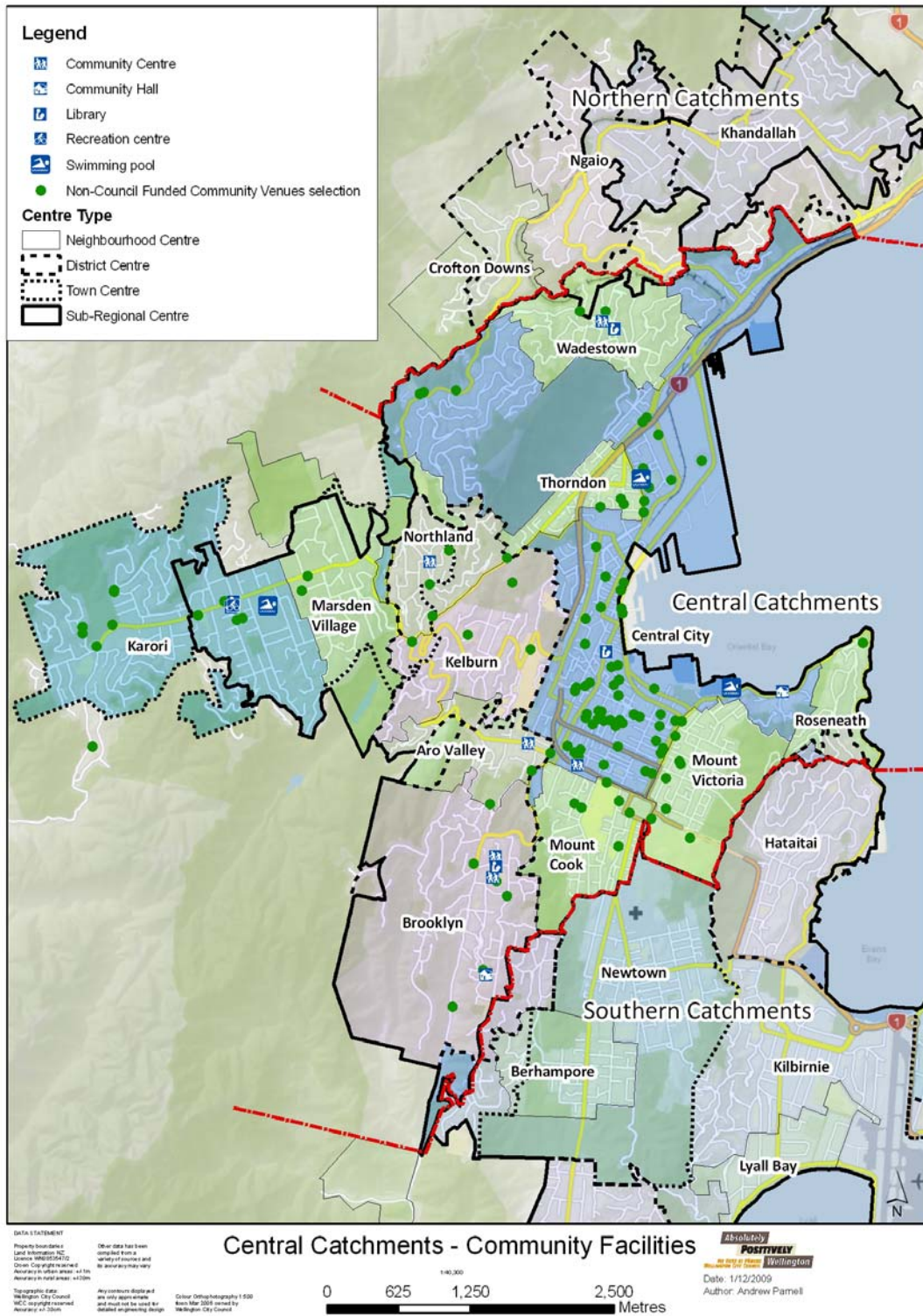| Population catchment facility type	Indicative minimum floor areas					
	City-wide	40k–60k	20k–40k	11k–20k	5k–10k	Up to 5k
Library	11,000m^2	1600m^2 to 2200m^2	800 to 1600m^2	450 to 800m^2	200 to 400m^2	No provision
Aquatic facility	Dependent on demand and land availability				No provision	No provision
Community space, including active and passive recreation and meeting spaces		Over 1000m^2	600 to 1000m^2	400 to 600m^2	200 to 400m^2	Up to 200m^2

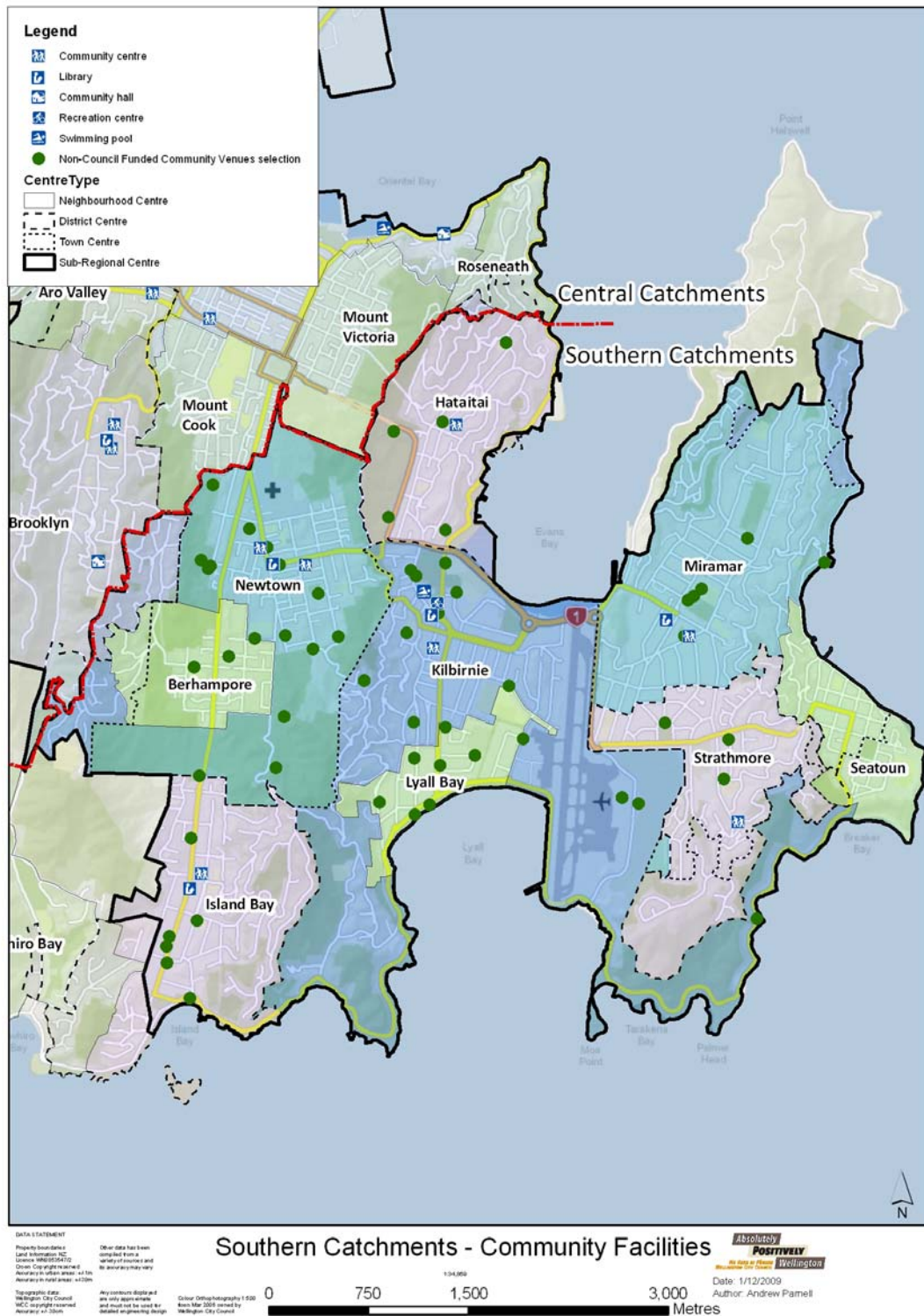**Figure 2a: Distribution of Council and non-Council facilities (Northern suburbs)**

Northern Catchments - Community Facilities

Figure 2b: Distribution of Council and non-Council facilities (Central suburbs)

Central Catchments - Community Facilities

Figure 2c: Distribution of Council and non-Council facilities (Southern suburbs)

Southern Catchments - Community Facilities

3. Council support for community facilities

The Council supports community facilities through the following range of mechanisms which are:

- provider
- funder
- partner
- advocate
- informer
- regulator.

3.1 Provider

There are a number of ways community facilities are directly provided by the Council. It provides:

- both the land, building and delivers the services – examples are libraries, recreation centres and pools
- the land and building and another entity delivers the services – examples are some of the community centres
- the land and building as a venue for hire – examples are community halls
- the land only, for community organisations to construct their own buildings – examples are some halls and community centres.

The Council may provide stand-alone or grouped facilities. Where facilities are grouped together this is known as a community hub. A hub can be a single multi-purpose building that accommodates a variety of services, programmes and activities. A hub may also be a group of buildings that, although physically separate, cluster together to create an activity centre and access point for meeting a diverse range of community needs.

Generally, when the Council owns and provides a facility for community use, it also supports it by directly providing or funding the facility's management, maintenance, and/or activities.

Associated policies and plans are:

- Social and Recreation Strategy
- Urban Design Strategy
- Recreation Framework
- Centres Policy
- Library Policy
- Centre plans
- Reserve management plans.

3.2 Funder

The Council may support other providers of facilities by making grants for building maintenance, upgrades and/or operations, or through contracts to provide services that will help the Council achieve its strategic goals.

Associated policies and plans are:
- Grants Framework
- Community Access to Venues Policy
- Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy.

3.3 Partner

The Council may partner with other organisations and providers in a variety of ways including:
- access to land – providing ground leases so that other groups, agencies or organisations can create or build their own community facility
- facilitation – bringing together a number of other groups, agencies or organisations to achieve a common goal
- collaboration – working with another agency or organisation to achieve a common goal.

The Council provides or supports community facilities through partnerships with schools, community and recreation groups and other organisations. Examples include the Tawa Recreation Centre (a partnership with Tawa College), community buildings on reserve land and Council financial support of community-owned community centres.

When there are gaps in providing community spaces, particularly in neighbourhood areas, the Council will work with existing facility owners and providers to increase community access to their facility. Amendments to the Grants Framework reflect the Council's partnership focus.

Associated policies and plans are the:
- Grants Policy
- Leases Policy for Community and Recreational Groups
- Road Encroachment and Sale Policy
- Pools working paper
- Reserve management plans.

3.4 Advocate

The Council will continue to advocate for public facilities with and on behalf of communities. This advocacy may include talking with the Ministry of Education to explore giving local communities greater access to schools outside core school hours, or working with user groups or umbrella organisations to develop greater understanding of the needs of local communities.

3.5 Informer

The Council's Community Directory Venues database provides information on venues available to the community. Community profiles can be provided to community groups on request.

3.6 Regulator

The Council regulates development within the city. This involves ensuring that the form, design and quality of a building meet the requirements of the District Plan and Building Code.

Associated policies and plans are:
- Wellington City District Plan
- Wellington City Bylaws.

4.   Principles and objectives

The overall objective is for facilities and services to be in place for everyone in Wellington to have the opportunity to engage in activities and services to meet their needs.

The Council wants to foster a network of community facilities that:
- are consistent with the future services levels set out in this policy
- are multi-use, designed to be flexible and cater for a wide range of needs and interests, planned and unplanned interactions
- are safe and easy to use
- are affordable and accessible
- are well-managed and well-maintained
- support community identity and sense of belonging.

The key principles the Council will consider when making decisions about community facilities are:

Process and approach

- **Developing partnerships**
  The Council will deliver services and facilities in partnership with the community, respecting the contribution community and voluntary organisations make to building strong communities.

- **Making the best use of existing facilities**
  The Council will work towards making the best use of existing facilities and work with the owners and operators of non-Council facilities to increase community access to these venues.

- **Ensuring the effectiveness of investments**
  The Council will give priority to investments that best meet its strategic priorities and the greatest levels of need. The Council may dispose of existing assets and reinvest in alternative facilities to better meet the needs of a community.

- **Self-sustaining**
  The Council will support initiatives that enhance or sustain community benefits beyond the duration of the Council's involvement and meet the objectives and principles of the Community Facilities Policy.

- **Building strong communities**
  The community will be encouraged to participate in the planning and redevelopment of community facilities.

Location

- **Improving access to facilities**
  The network of community facilities will be located and designed in a way that provides best access by the community. Facilities will be visually appropriate, easy to find and have good access to public transport.

- **Supporting existing centres**

Community facilities will be located in suburban centres and should be located on sites where they can contribute to the area's vitality and viability and enhance a sense of place and the feeling of safety of users.

- **Balancing local and city-wide provision**
  The needs of the broader city community will be considered when responding to local needs.

- **Location**
  Where possible, facilities in sub-regional centres will be located together, preferably integrated, and appropriately designed to reinforce a strong sense of place.

Quality, design and functionality

- **Welcoming and attractive facilities**
  Facilities will be functional, people-orientated, user-friendly, welcoming and attractive.

- **Providing consistent quality across facilities**
  The network of community facilities will meet consistent quality standards across the city while maintaining the uniqueness and history of buildings. The concept of quality encompasses the technical performance, functionality and amenity aspects of a building.

- **Sustainable facilities**
  Facilities will be designed with particular emphasis on energy efficiency, waste minimisation, and integrated land use and transport planning. Reuse of heritage buildings and spaces will be encouraged.

- **Multi-use facilities**
  Facilities will be multi-use and provide different spaces and functions that support a wide range of experience and choice for users and the community.

Managing demand for community facilities

- **Meeting the needs of the community**
  The services delivered through and beyond the community facility network will be appropriate for the needs of the community and recognise the social, economic and cultural diversity of residents, workers and visitors.

- **Flexible and adaptable**
  Investment and divestment choices need to anticipate future trends. Facilities will be designed in a way that reflects the dynamic and shifting nature of communities. The layout and functionality of facilities will be robust and flexible, enabling the facility to be used in a way that responds to changing community needs.

5. Prioritising future investment in facilities for Council as provider, funder or partner

When potential investment in community facilities has been identified and quantified, the Council must consider which projects have the highest priority for funding. The Council will consider the following when prioritising investment:

- any difference between current provision and future desired levels of service
- where investment will have the greatest impact
- the quality of existing buildings and their fitness for purpose
- any changes in the need for and use of services and activities provided
- the Council's strategic priorities.

5.1   Fit with desired levels of service

The desired future service levels are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 above and are intended to give all communities appropriate access to facilities and venues.

Priority will be given to facilities that are:
- substantially undersized
- located in commercial centres.

In cases where the Council identifies gaps in providing facilities, it will focus on developing partnerships with other organisations, such as schools and churches, to enable greater community access to existing facilities.

The Council will extend its grants scheme so that it can provide venue assistance for community organisations located in non-Council, leased buildings. In addition, a Community Facilities Partnership Framework has been developed to encourage partnerships with other community-based, not-for-profit organisations to provide or upgrade facilities and venues for the wider community.

5.2   Best use of investment dollar

Priority will be given to Council-owned facilities that:
- are regional and city-wide facilities
- have a growing level of use and have clear opportunities to increase use
- are in areas of high population growth
- have the highest levels of use per capita
- can be upgraded to become multi-purpose buildings.

5.3   Quality of existing buildings and fitness for purpose

A building is 'fit for purpose' when it:
- meets the minimum requirements of the current building code for fire safety, energy efficiency, washrooms and universal access
- meets basic safety and security requirements
- is suitable for use by a range of users for the facility's main purpose.

The Council will ensure that all existing facilities are 'fit for purpose'. Ongoing condition assessments of the buildings will ensure they are maintained to the appropriate standard.

5.4   Changing needs and use patterns

A number of factors influence demand for facilities, including demographic changes, changes to land use, consumer expectations and technology changes.

When the Council plans to invest in new community facilities, it will work with local and related communities to understand issues, needs and the future impacts of the proposed facilities.

The Council considers the greatest impact of technology changes will be in library services. The library collection is the core of the library service, and format changes for the library collection are beginning to happen. While the printed book format will still be relevant, the use of personal reading devices is likely to increase as they

become more advanced. In the future, it will be possible to download newspapers, magazines and books, as well as music, films and audiobooks. Libraries will need to change to reflect these advances, and technology will become more central to the way libraries operate and distribute their information. Given the pace of change, library buildings will need to be flexible and adaptable to enable the services they deliver to make the most of new technology.

5.5   Fit with Council's strategic direction

The Council outlines its outcomes, objectives, priorities and actions through the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). Investment in facilities will be aligned to the key outcomes and objectives of the Social and Recreation Strategy and associated strategic priorities. The key outcomes outlined in section 1.3 are for the city to be more liveable, inclusive and engaged, better connected, healthier, safer and with a stronger sense of place.

The Council's overall strategic priorities in the social and recreational area for 2009-2012 are:
* promoting participation in sport and recreation activities
* facilitating tolerance and inclusiveness
* increasing advocacy roles.

The strategic priorities for aquatic facilities are to:
* manage demand and make the most of existing and available pool space
* improve opportunities for aquatic education and learn-to-swim programmes
* provide facilities to meet the demand and growth in aquatic sports.

The strategic priorities for library services are to:
* increase community access to digital information
* integrate community development and library services
* strengthen service delivery in high-growth areas.

The strategic priorities for community spaces are to:
* develop partnerships to manage demand for additional community space
* ensure regulatory compliance of existing buildings and building accessibility.

Investment in Council's facilities must have a level of fit with the Council's strategic outcomes and priorities.

6.   Terminating partnerships and disposal of assets

The Council will consider whether to dispose of a facility or exit from a partnership arrangement where:
* the level of Council provision is inconsistent with the levels of service outlined in Table 1, and
* there is low use of the facility, and
* the facility is located in an area of low population growth, and
* the facility is located outside an activity centre, and
* there is demonstrated capacity in the existing facility network to meet local community needs.

Before the Council makes any decision to close or dispose of a facility, it will consult with stakeholders and the community on the proposal and the options it is considering.

If disposing of a facility, then the Council will consider whether the funds from the sale of the asset may be reinvested in existing facilities, particularly where there may be an opportunity to reinvest in a facility located within a suburban centre or to create a community hub.