

MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Small Townships

PROGRAMME

Grovetown Township Plan

DRAFT

Part One: Introduction

Marlborough's Small Townships Programme

In 2013 the Council adopted the Growing Marlborough District Wide Strategy which provides a strategic overview to guide Council's investment and development decisions through to 2031.

Council approved funding for a new Small Township Programme in the 2015 – 2025 Long Term Plan to improve public amenities and build identities for townships as part of Council's commitment to implementing the Growing Marlborough Strategy.

A Small Townships Sub Committee was established with delegated authority to develop criteria, approve new projects and monitor implementation of the programme. This Sub Committee is currently chaired by Councillor Barbara Faulls.

The Small Townships Programme recognises the unique qualities of smaller communities as well as their challenges. The overarching goal of the programme is to foster sustainable growth and enhance the wellbeing of residents in the township.

The process for developing a Township Plan involves engaging with iwi and stakeholders to gain an understanding of the town's unique identity, key concerns, issues, and aspirations. Stakeholders include local residents and businesses, as well as community organisations and government agencies.

The Township Plan provides a reference for the Small Townships Programme's future investment in the area. Council's contributions usually relate to public spaces and infrastructure. However, a Township Plan can also offer a reference point for the community who wish to work on projects in their area. Having an agreed list of projects in the Plan will enhance coordination and may assist when seeking funding from external agencies.

Tangata Whenua

Te Rūnanga o Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Rārua and Ngāti Toa Rangitira are the tangata whenua of the area.

Council has shared an initial introduction to the Small Township Programme with local iwi representatives, inviting feedback on any aspirations iwi have that may align with the kaupapa (principles and ideas) of the Grovetown Township Plan along with any Mātaranga Māori (Māori knowledge) of the area that they wish to share.

The cultural narrative of the area is captured in Ngā Kōrero Tukuiho, a resource that was developed through Te Tātoru o Wairau Project.

Council and iwi will have further conversations to discuss the community feedback and to consider how this relates to iwi aspirations.

Purpose of this Plan

Council, iwi and the community have worked together to develop this Grovetown Township Plan. It identifies what makes Grovetown special and gives the community a voice at the Council's decision-making table.

Having a clear understanding of the most important challenges facing the community makes it easier for iwi, residents, community organisations, government agencies and Council to work together to achieve our shared vision for Grovetown and to address some of the challenges we have identified in this Plan.

Scope

The Grovetown Township Plan is primarily focused on investments and actions which support social wellbeing, such as open space, safety, and connectivity improvements. However, communities do not see their community in isolation, so feedback can often be much wider in scope than physical works, covering social dynamics, community development, business, tourism and more.

Stakeholders

The following organisations were invited to contribute their ideas:

- Grovetown Residents Association
- Grovetown School
- Grovetown Hotel
- Grovetown Tennis Club
- Grovetown Lagoon
- KiwiRail
- Koru Native Wildlife Centre.

The Council's Parks and Open Spaces, Rivers and Environmental teams have also provided feedback on the proposed projects.

Budget

An initial budget of \$200,000 has been allocated for the implementation of the Grovetown Township Plan.

Development of this Plan

Public feedback on this draft Grovetown Township Plan will be invited in August-September 2023, and will be used to create a 'final' version of this Plan. However, it will be a living document, with changes to be made over time as projects are completed and if the community's needs or priorities change.

Implementation of this Plan

The community consultation drop-in day and 'have your say' surveys, as well as anecdotal information gained from engagement meetings with groups and individuals, identified Grovetown's unique qualities and generated a list of ideas of how to make it even better.

The ideas shared through the engagement process are all listed in Part 3 of this Plan. Some of these actions can be funded through the Small Townships Programme (STP) budget, which is particularly focused on recognising and enhancing the unique identity of Grovetown and enhancing outdoor public spaces to improve connectivity and liveability within the community.

However, improvements in Grovetown don't need to be limited to actions which are directly funded by Council. The full list of ideas has been included to give people the opportunity to work with others to make things happen in their community, which may include applying for funding to support a project.

Timeline

August 2022:	The Small Township Programmes (STP) Sub Committee decided to develop a Small Township Plan for Grovetown
October 2022	Engagement with tangata whenua
October 2022	Engagement with stakeholders commenced (see list below) Council mailed the following information to Grovetown residents and businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An introduction to the programme- An invitation to a community consultation event- A survey
January 2023	The STP Sub Committee visited the township to learn more about the area
March 2023	A community consultation event was held

Part Two: Grovetown

Where is Grovetown?

Grovetown is a small settlement about 2.5km north of Blenheim. The core part of Grovetown is on the eastern side of State Highway 1 which includes a local hotel and a primary school. The Rangitāne cultural centre, Ukāipō, is situated on the site of the former community hall.



About Grovetown

The Wairau River is accessible through Grovetown via Fell Street and Steam Wharf Road. The area is of cultural significance and is also highly valued as a recreation area by the wider community, including by the Wairau Rowing Club.

There has been a big focus on the Grovetown Lagoon Restoration Project in recent years through the combined efforts of the Grovetown Lagoon Trust, Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game, local iwi, the Grovetown community, Marlborough District Council and the Department of Conservation.

A popular off-road shared path provides a safe travel option for cyclists and walkers from Spring Creek to Blenheim. This is used for both recreation and commuting.



Cultural significance of Grovetown

Grovetown is a culturally significant area for Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Toa and Rangitāne, as confirmed by Treaty Settlements.

Tua Mātene Marae is located in the Grovetown area, as is the Rangitāne cultural centre, Ukāipō.

Grovetown's recent history

Grovetown was previously known as 'Big Bush' due to the former stands of native bush in the area.







Grovetown School was established in 1866 and in 2016 the school celebrated 150 years of educating the children of Grovetown.

The school continues to retain the character of a small rural school. The school operates four classrooms, which are named after boats that used to travel up the Wairau River to Grovetown – Opawa, Waihi, Osprey and Waverley.

Since about 1920 the Grovetown school has had a war memorial in its grounds. When the new school was built on Vickerman Street the same tradition was continued, initially with a grove of kowhai trees planted and later in the 1950 when work was undertaken to build the memorial that stands today. This cenotaph lists those who died in the two World Wars on two marble panels.

The Rangitāne cultural centre, Ukāipō, was opened in 2012. The cultural centre was developed by Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau Trust as a meeting place and a showcase for Rangitāne culture and art. Ukāipō is a modern, architecturally designed building, and the centre is available for use by both members of Rangitāne and the wider Marlborough community, continuing the tradition of community gatherings on the site.

Who lives in Grovetown?

	Usually Resident Population	
	2006	417
	2013	429
	2018	492
	Census Night Population	
	2006	405
	2013	426
	2018	519
	Community Age	
	Under 15	90
	15 to 29	63
	30 to 64	258
	65+	81
	Home Owned	
	Home in Trust	48
	Don't Own Home	
		114
	Ethnicity	
	European	459
	Māori	57
	Pacific	3
	Asian	15
	Other	3
	Employment	
	Full Time	225
	Part Time	60
	Unemployed	9
	Not in Labour Force	99

Part Three – Vision, Issues and Actions



Introduction

The following statements are based on the feedback provided to Council during the Small Townships Programme consultation process. They will continue to be refined through ongoing discussions with the community.

Vision for Grovetown

We enjoy the best of both worlds – a rural lifestyle with easy access to urban services.

We value:

- our friendly, helpful, safe community, including the role of the school as a community hub;
- safe pedestrian and cycling options; and
- our environment and green spaces, including ecological restoration of Grovetown Lagoon.

Living in Grovetown

Grovetown has a small-town feel that offers residents a peaceful place to live with a great rural outlook and lifestyle, and a friendly community, while also being very close to Blenheim and its amenities.

The green spaces and plentiful natural spaces, including the lagoon and the walking and cycleways, are highly valued and are a defining feature of the area for the residents.

Residents also appreciate the presence of the local school and hotel.

Key issues identified

State Highway 1 and the railway line

Both State Highway 1 (SH1) and the railway line are a huge presence in the day-to-day life of the Grovetown community. The community would like to have a stronger relationship with Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail, so that progress can be made on finding solutions to the local issues associated with SH1 and the railway.

Specific concerns:

- The railway fence, and safety issues with navigating this area, particularly for pedestrians.

- The presence of SH1 impacts on the connectivity of the town. It feels dangerous to cross the state highway if walking or biking due to traffic speeds.
- Entering or exiting SH1 by car is challenging, with residents feeling vulnerable when doing so.
- The northern side of the entrance to Fell Street is unsightly.

Maintenance of roads and stormwater systems

The community would prefer a different approach to the maintenance of roads, drains and stormwater systems. Maintenance of infrastructure affects the community's sense of wellbeing and the aesthetics of the township.

Vineyards

More control over grape spraying and better communication from vineyard managers when they are undertaking work, with accurate signage, would be appreciated.

Housing

There is a need for more (and more affordable) housing.

Recycling

The area's recycling facilities are often at capacity and are frequently used by Blenheim residents.

Ideas to achieve the vision and values, and address key issues

Enhance our green spaces

- Invest in native plantings to protect natural green areas.
- Develop the unused area at the corner of Vickerman Street and SH1 as a reserve/green space.
- Create a larger 'big bush reserve' which ties back to the history of the area.
- Continue to restore and enhance Grovetown Lagoon, creating park-like surroundings next to paths, and places to picnic.

Protect current amenity

- Carry out good town planning and do not allow heavy industries to establish in the area.

Invest in the school's facilities

- Invest in the school's pool and tennis court facilities, which are both in need of significant work.

Playground

- Develop a playground on Vickerman Street.

Improve connectivity

- Enhance connectivity to both the school and other existing facilities, such as cycleways and the lagoon.
- Improve active travel connections with Rārangi and Tua Marina.

The changes that would make the most difference to the quality of life in Grovetown

Top priorities

- A) Address the two key safety issues:
 - SH1/Fell Street township entry
 - Fell/Vickerman Streets intersection.
- B) Invest in the school facilities (pool and tennis court).

Projects to be actioned in 2023/24

	Action	Why	How*	When	Who
1	Footpath 71-75 Vickerman Street	Support connectivity to school and community facilities Improve safety (GMS) Opportunity for place making – landscaping.	STP	2023/24	MDC Small Townships Marlborough Roads
2	Pool and tennis courts	Community identified these as highly valued amenities (GMS)	Co – funding	2023/24	Grovetown School Grovetown Tennis Club MDC Small Townships
3	Landscape northern side of Fell Street cycleway	Entry point of township - placemaking. Aesthetic value, native corridor	STP	2023/24	MDC Small Townships Marlborough Roads
4	Chorus Cabinet Art	Aesthetic value	\$1800	2023/24	Chorus
5	Recreation Reserve Playground	Recreation value (GMS)	MDC Parks and Open Spaces	Recreation Reserve Playground	MDC – Parks and Open Spaces

Notes:

- The GMS references relate to Grovetown actions listed on pages 54–56 of the Growing Marlborough Strategy.
- MDC = Marlborough District Council.
- STP = Small Townships Programme.
- TBC = To be confirmed.

Future opportunities

Action	Why	How*	When	Who
Kea crossing at school and other traffic calming infrastructure	Improve safety (GMS)	None at present	TBC	Marlborough Roads
Cycleway from Fell Street to Steam Wharf Road	Support active travel options to Grovetown Lagoon (GMS)	None at present	TBC	MDC
Path and planting on road reserve area at the corner of SH1 and Vickerman Street	Support safe walking and cycling connections from the existing pathway to Vickerman Street (GMS)	None at present	TBC	MDC Marlborough Roads
Footpath – Vickerman Street	Support connectivity to school and community facilities	None at present	TBC	MDC Marlborough Roads
Consideration of speed limit on SH1. Pedestrian crossing over the railway line at the corner of Fell Street and SH1.	Improve safety (GMS)	None at present	TBC	KiwiRail Marlborough Roads MDC Waka Kotahi
Gateway signage	Promote the township's unique identity	None at present	TBC	STP Marlborough Roads Waka Kotahi

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Appendix – Background information

Reference Documents

- Te Tātoru o Wairau – Ngā Kōrero Tukuiho
- Te Whanau Hou Grovetown Lagoon Community Management Plan 2003
- Growing Marlborough Strategy 2013 (GMS)

Stormwater management

The historical approach of stormwater disposal via open swales presents challenges regarding future investment in footpaths and safe walking and cycling paths.

SH1/Fell Street township entry

The Growing Marlborough Strategy recommended the closure of Fell Street and Ross Lane for vehicles as the preferred option to solve the dangerous railway crossing.

It also identified that this area constrains the connectivity between the eastern, residential side of the town and the western side where retail and recreational facilities are located.

However, at the time this recommendation was made, this closure was not supported by the community.

Fell/Vickerman Streets intersection

This is the main intersection in the township. Currently, the give way sign impedes traffic flow along Fell Street. There is discussion as to whether the give way sign would provide more benefit if it was on Vickerman Street. This would slow traffic on the longer, wider road, slow traffic outside the school and offer better connectivity to the Grovetown Lagoon recreation area for active travel modes.

Grovetown School facilities

Students mostly come from the Grovetown village, surrounding farms and the northern area of Blenheim. The roll presently averages between 70 and 80 students, taught in four classrooms.

The school is well supported by parents and the local community. It is well resourced with modern equipment and facilities, many of which are open for community use throughout the year.

- The pool has needed ongoing maintenance since the 2016 earthquakes. However, the regular 'patch jobs' are no longer managing the leaks, and the school has now stopped using the pool.
- There are two full tennis courts which are used by the Grovetown Tennis Club. The Club has installed netting and windbreak/shade cloth around the exterior of the Courts and carries out regular net replacement.

With earth movement over the years the courts now have uneven surfaces which means the courts are not useable for competitions. The tennis club has begun to look for funding and has had some work quoted. Another issue to be addressed is the lack of a memorandum of understanding regarding the use and upkeep of the tennis courts.

Grovetown cycleway

There is now a fully sealed off-road cycleway connecting Blenheim and Grovetown through to Spring Creek. The path brings residents into the Blenheim cycling network and provides off-road access to the Spring Creek and Grovetown schools, both within 500m of the route. This project also provides a path for people who would otherwise have to cycle on State Highway 1.

Marlborough Roads and Marlborough District Council completed this project in 2016, with funding assistance from the Urban Cycleways programme. Marlborough Roads is responsible for cycleway maintenance but responsibility for maintenance of the plantings is less clear.

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