Bellbridge Masterplan and Strategy
- Berringa Integrated and Community Services Hub
Our Bellbridge Masterplan - Berringa Integrated and Community Services Hub

Berringa Community Centre is a centrally located building primarily utilised for community gatherings and the delivery of pre-kindergarten services.

Towong Shire Council’s strategic Council Plan 2013-2017, is committed to pursuing extended childcare services across the Shire. Council in partnership with the State Government provided extensive community consultation facilitated by Melbourne-based architects Clarke Hopkins Clarke. This process was designed to assist the community of Bellbridge determine and shape the future of their township.

The ‘Our Bellbridge’ project will support sustainable township growth and bring the needs of the community and visitors alike. The master plan has set goals and initiatives that will be developed over the next 5-15 years with some projects identified as priorities to cater for immediate community need.

All projects are intended to make sure that Bellbridge is a prosperous town that is:

- catering for people of all ages
- to offer attractive residential options to new residents
- to support the community with a range of community services, including Kindergarten, Maternal Child Health, Long Day Care and Before and After School Care
- to celebrate its unique lakeside location
- where people can be part of a vibrant community
- to enable the locality to continue to grow and attract tourism and investment
- To engage and support broader family and community networks across the Bellbridge catchment area
- To provide infrastructure that caters for a range of community needs and demographics
- To offer early childhood services to the Thungha and Albury residents
- For Bellbridge to become a further attractive and vibrant township
- To support rural and remote children’s services
- To support future residential development strategies and capabilities by offering quality children’s services.
Phase 01 -

Project Identification and Strategy
**Current Situation**

- Towong Shire Council currently delivers 15 hours of Kindergarten at Bellbridge per week from the Berringa Community Centre.
- Maternal Child Health Services are also delivered by Council from the Berringa Centre.
- Playgroup and community meetings also frequent the centre.
- Community feedback suggests that a long day care model and after school care is ‘holding back’ progress and further development of the Bellbridge community. The lack of children’s services does not adequately cater for family and community needs.
- Over the past 5 years, parents and families of Bellbridge have written to Council seeking support for long day care and extended kindergarten hours. In addition, Council has explored external partnerships with children’s service providers to deliver services.
- During 2013, Council has worked closely with Community Early Years Childcare (external service provider) to explore the possibility of operating their services from the Berringa Community Centre. Community Early Years Childcare currently operates long day care services from the Talgarno Hall. The hall is derelict and located approximately 30 kilometres from the Bellbridge township in the opposite direction where people choose to work (Albury Wodonga). The locality of the Talgarno Hall is a significant inconvenience to families and not an economical or sustainable option long-term. An integrated community services model will better support the family needs of Bellbridge and the catchment area.

**Opportunity**

- Council has a very exciting opportunity to redevelop an existing community building to accommodate long day care and before and after school care.
- Maternal Child Health Services to be more complimentary to Kindergarten Services and Long Day Care options for families.
- Immunisations to hosted at the revised Berringa Integrated and Community Services Hub (provision for cross promotion across all service areas).
- To extend opportunities for community members and families to obtain employment in Albury Wodonga, making Bellbridge an attractive location for young families to reside.
- To develop a 0-8 Network to further support an integrated and Partnership model.
- To engage and support broader family and community networks across the Bellbridge catchment area.
- To provide infrastructure that caters for a range of community needs, all demographics.
- To offer early childhood services to the Thurgoona and Albury residents.
- For Bellbridge to become a further attractive and vibrant township.
- To support future residential development strategies and capabilities by offering quality children’s services.
Bellbridge has a high percentage of families compared to surrounding towns, this is due to its proximity to outdoor recreation areas and affordable housing stock. Currently over 20% of the population is under the age of 15 showing that there is a real need for an expansion to the childcare services within the town. The 'Our Bellbridge' project proposes to double the size of the town over the next 15 years and as such adequate community services are integral to attracting new residents.

Towong Shire Statistics (ABS 2011) – Total Towong population 5,958

**POPULATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14 years</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Towong Shire has experienced a decline in population however 28% of the population has moved to Towong Shire in the past 5 years, representing 1,679 people.

Key community and children’s services infrastructure remains pivotal to attracting and retaining residents of the Shire.

Indigenous – Total of 85 people – 67% represents people under 40 years of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24% of the total population are a couple with dependent children
18% of the total population are one parent families with children under 15 years of age

Department of Health, Hume Region Data - Children's 3.5 year old checks:

**Only 52.2% of 3.5 year old checks are completed across Towong Shire** compared to 65.8% across the Hume region and 62.2% across the State of Victoria.

- key community and children’s services infrastructure remains pivotal to attracting families to community services.

Bellbridge to the Talgarno facility is a 65km return trip for families living in Bellbridge

'67% of Indigenous people within the Shire are under 40'
1.2 SITE ANALYSIS
State Locality Map
1.2 SITE ANALYSIS
Regional Map
1.2 SITE ANALYSIS
Aerial Photographs - Existing Facility

Shop, Park and Community Building

- Shop
- Park
- Community building
Phase 02 - Community Consultation
The 'Our Bellbridge' website was set up as a way to connect with a diverse range of the Bellbridge Community and to keep them up to date with what's happening with the project.

The website provides all contact details as well as email addresses that allows the Community to contact the 'Our Bellbridge' team directly.

To date there are nearly 2000 hits on the website which is a fantastic result for a town with a population of around 350 people.

Welcome to the Our Bellbridge website. On this site you will be able to share and discuss your ideas, keep up to date with what's happening and find out how you can get involved in the masterplan for your town. You will also be able to contact the team directly via the email addresses provided in the "Contacts" tab.

The most important part of the process is you. You will shape your town's future so get involved and let's get the conversation started.

Community Open Day:
The Community Open Day was a great success with close to 100 people (20% of the Bellbridge population) attending. People braved the wet conditions to come along to the Berringa Kindergarten to meet the project team, find out about the project and help to shape the Bellbridge masterplan.

Overall the local community has a very positive view of Bellbridge, with some passionate discussions about what is good about the town and what could be done to improve it. It was clear to see that many surrounding towns are passionate about Bellbridge with some local residents from towns such as Bellingen also coming along and wanting to get involved to make sure that Bellbridge has a bright future.

To see the day in pictures please view the slide show at the photo gallery page of this website.

Some of the big ideas mentioned on the day are...
1.1 PROCESS
Community Consultation

THE PROJECT

As part of the Bellbridge Masterplan and Strategy, Towong Shire Council has appointed ClarkeHopkinsClarke, One Collective to work with the local community with the intention of developing a strategy, to be known as 'our bellbridge' to see Bellbridge continue to grow and thrive as a town.

The project is intended to see the town be sustainable and bring together the needs of the visitors and the community with the outcome being to set goals and initiatives that can be developed over the next 5-15 years with some projects to be identified as priorities for the shorter term.

All projects are intended to make sure that Bellbridge is a prosperous town:
- where people of all ages want to live
- that offers attractive residential options able to attract new residents
- which supports the community with a range of community services
- that celebrates its unique lakeside location
- where people can be part of a vibrant community
- that can continue to attract tourism and investment

The process for 'our bellbridge' is set out below.

3 KEY PHASES - ASK - SHAPE - MAKE

PHASE 1 - ASK

- Asking what is the vision for your town - who are we and what do we want it to be?
- Background / understanding / context phase - provides the backbone to the vision. This will include site investigation and documentation.
- Key tasks / outcomes:
  - Project communciation and community awareness
  - Community Forum
  - Reporting of findings / outcomes and key community priorities

PHASE 2 - SHAPE

- Shaping the vision - here's an idea, what's the big idea
- Interpreting the findings / outcomes of the Phase 1 and coming up with ideas / plans in response
- Vision phase - establishing the vision for the overall town / community
- Key tasks / outcomes:
  - Establishment of Vision (including overall Community / Master Plan)

PHASE 3 - MAKE

- Making the vision happen
- Implementation phase - breaking the overall vision into key projects and refining / developing the detail
- Key tasks / outcomes:
  - Identification of key projects
  - Development of detail and implementation strategies for key projects
  - Community Presentation / Review / Input of key projects
  - Refinement of outcomes in response to community input

THE NAME

We suggest a different name for the project to help with identity / branding?

- 'OUR BELLBRIDGE'

CONSULTATION / COLLABORATION – THE CYCLE

3 KEY STAGES - FORUM - FEEDBACK - ACTION

Consultation Collaboration Cycle

1. FORUM

Focus of community input
- Get community ideas
- Present ideas
- Get feedback
- Ensuring clear goals, process, timelines

2. FEEDBACK

Providing community with summary of findings / outcomes / interpretations of forum stage
- Feedback review / community forum / key issues / future direction

3. ACTION

Collecting, analysing, designing, ideas in response to feedback and discussion phases
- Establish teams and focus groups
1.1 PROCESS
Community Consultation

SUGGESTED CONSULTATION METHODS / PROJECT TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

TYPE 1 - MEET + SHARE

Meeting face to face, sharing ideas, and giving the community a voice, sense of involvement and empowerment

Information Booth / Stand – Ongoing

- Community can ‘drop-in’, get information / update, and provide comments
- More informal / personal than forum
- Updated at each stage.
- Suggest to be located in the shop, with secondary location in the Community Centre
- Include comment box / postcards for feedback

Community Consultation Day – 11th December 2011

- To be held on the lawn in front of the Yacht Club. Potential to use the Yacht Club internal if weather permits
- Attendance from consultant team, council representatives and community
- Important way to get initial contact details of attendees (to facilitate information updates) and to facilitate / gather surveys
- The key community information and feedback events
- Suggest a BBQ with food and drink to be provided by Council as well as potential children’s activities such as a jumping castle.

Surveys Returned – 18th December 2011

- Surveys to be returned by residents at either the opening day, drop box in the shop (or Community Centre is shop not available) or potentially Council offices also.

TYPE 2 - SEND + RECEIVE

Preliminary Marketing and Advertising – 21st November 2011

- Issue Information pack to Council for review. Pack will include, newsletter, survey and invite to community consultation forum

Council Response – 34th November 2011

- Council to provide feedback to CHC on marketing material in preparation for printing.

Marketing and Advertising – 28th November 2011

- Print and distribute information pack to town residents.
- Mail out preferred format as opposed to door knock as less evasive
- Information pack to be provided to residents of town to contain, newsletter, survey and invite to community consultation forum

Community Consultation – October 2013

TYPE 3 - ACTION

Community Consultation Report – November 2013

- Final report formally submitted to Council to include outcomes of Community consultation, survey results and photos etc.

Preliminary Designs / Final Masterplan Report – November 2013

- Preliminary masterplan report formally submitted to Council. Format to be advised.
- Council to provide feedback on masterplan report.

Preliminary Concept Report – December - January 2014

- Preliminary concept designs formally submitted to Council. Format to be advised.
- Council to provide feedback.

Final Concept / Master plans Reports Submitted – February 2014

- Final report formally submitted to Council. Format to be advised.
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
Marketing Material - Survey

OUR BELLBRIDGE
COMMUNITY SURVEY
As part of the Bellbridge Rehabilitation Strategy, the Waterloo Council has appointed a team to undertake an effort to understand the community view on developing a strategy for the town of Bellbridge. To help us understand how you view Bellbridge, we would like to know more about your experience and your expectations.

At a time when communities are under pressure, and we need to get an understanding of how you view Bellbridge – whether you are a long-term, little house resident, someone who works in the town, or a visitor, we want to know what you think.

Your input and feedback, including your responses to this survey, will be critical to the success of this project as we work to ensure that Bellbridge becomes a great place to live and work.

To the community, this project needs to have the full involvement, support, and ownership by the Bellbridge Community, because this is your town and your opportunity to shape its future.

Your feedback will be compiled into a report which will be available for viewing online. The survey will be conducted by the Town Planning Council Office.

Your feedback is critical and will be used for the Bellbridge Community's future planning process.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you on this project.

1. Everyone has a different view of Bellbridge, how do you perceive the town of Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Which of the following things do you think would make Bellbridge a better place to live?

Please select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More community facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>More transport options</td>
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<tr>
<td>More services</td>
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<tr>
<td>More infrastructure</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. In the future, where do you think Bellbridge would be best suited for?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>More services</td>
</tr>
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4. What is your main motivation for living in Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
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5. What do you think are the key challenges facing Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing affordability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. What do you think are the key opportunities facing Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative industries</td>
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7. What do you think are the key strengths of Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor destination</td>
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<td>Community strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural beauty</td>
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8. What do you think are the key weaknesses of Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transport options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What do you think are the key trends that are shaping Bellbridge?

Please select the most applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technological advancements</td>
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10. What do you think are the key challenges facing Bellbridge?

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11. What do you think are the key opportunities facing Bellbridge?

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12. What do you think are the key strengths of Bellbridge?

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13. What do you think are the key weaknesses of Bellbridge?

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14. What do you think are the key trends that are shaping Bellbridge?

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<tr>
<td>Technological advancements</td>
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</table>
The 'Our Bellbridge' newsletter was distributed to all Bellbridge households as part of the initial Community consultation process.

The newsletter introduced residents to the team, described the masterplan and concept design process and also invited them to the Community open day.

Coming soon the ‘Our Bellbridge’ display space

What's the big idea?
The 'Our Bellbridge' Community noticeboard has been set up at the Bellbridge Lake Hume Store.

The noticeboard will provide information on the project and its progression, whilst there is also a 'what's your big idea' board for Community members to write down their ideas for the town's masterplan.
Community Workshop Description

This was the Community Consultation Workshop for the 'Our Bellbridge' project at the Community Centre. These were conducted on the 26th February 2012 with the 'Our Bellbridge' masterplan project officially opened by Mayor (Cr) Debbie Gadd.

The purpose of these meetings was to meet with the Bellbridge Community and key stakeholders to get their ideas and views for the Bellbridge Masterplan project. It was also important for the Consultation team to gain a presence and trust within the Community.

The Community Open Day was a great success with close to 100 people (20% of the Bellbridge population) attending. People braved the wet conditions to come along to the Berringa Kindergarten to meet the project team, find out about the project and help to shape the Bellbridge masterplan.

Overall the local Community has a very positive view of Bellbridge, with some passionate discussions about what is good about the town and what could be done to improve it. It was clear to see that many surrounding towns are passionate about Bellbridge with some local residents from towns such as Bethanga also coming along and wanting to get involved to make sure that Bellbridge has a bright future.
Phase 03 -

Masterplanning

The results of the Community survey, site analysis and Community consultation have helped to shape the proposed Bellbridge masterplan. During these processes the team has considered how the strategy can make the best contribution to the quality of life in Bellbridge as well as making it an attractive place for people to visit.

One of the biggest issues with the town is that there are little to no services (retail, public transport, sporting etc.) due to the towns size and as such for the town to obtain these services the Community accepts that the town will have to grow in population.

The Community consultation has helped the ‘Our Bellbridge’ team break down the masterplan into distinct parts being:

3.1 - Foreshore and Landscaping
3.2 - Bellbridge Village
3.3 - Children’s Services
3.4 - Waste Water
3.5 - Residential Growth
Proposed Masterplan

Council continues to advocate on behalf of the community for the upgrade of Pines Road

LEGEND:
- 3.1 - FORESHORE + LANDSCAPING
- 3.2 - BELLBRIDGE VILLAGE
- 3.3 - EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES
- 3.4 - WASTE WATER
- 3.5 - RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

OUR BELLBRIDGE

1. Upgraded walking trail
2. Covered picnic area
3. Seating
4. Future development of early childhood services - including provision for future expansion of preschool playground area
5. Existing vehicle access retained
6. Formalised car park, including long vehicle car parking
7. Upgrade to landscaping on Roy Williams Park
8. OPTION ONE - Upgrade existing playground on Roy Williams Park
9. OPTION ONE - Retain and upgrade tennis courts on Roy Williams Park
10. OPTION ONE - New skateboard / BMX / informal half court on Roy Williams Park
11. OPTION TWO - New playground on foreshore (maintain existing playground at Roy Williams Park)
12. OPTION TWO - New tennis / netball / basketball court on foreshore
13. OPTION TWO - New skatepark / BMX / informal half court on foreshore
14. Viewing platform
15. Village Green
16. Boat club development
17. New Bellbridge entry sign
18. Traffic calming measure
19. Public art
20. Future decommissioning and removal of toilet block. Toilets to be integrated into boat club development
21. Erosion control measure
22. Increased waste water capacity
23. Future residential development. Proposed stages subdivision. Provisional design only
24. Long term retail growth (10-years plus)
3.3 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The lack of children's services - especially early childhood and daycare facilities - was a major issue for residents within the town. The lack of adequate facilities has meant that existing families have had to move away and new families are deterred from moving to Bellbridge.
Playgrounds:

Option 1: Upgrade existing playground on Roy Williams Park.

Option 2: New children’s playground on foreshore (maintain existing playground on Roy Williams Park).

Dedicated early childhood centre delivering a range of children's services including preschool and daycare.
Phase 04 -

Concept Design

The concept design looks to create an open plan space with a seamless connection with a new outdoor learning area all integrated within the existing elements of the building.
Design Evolution