

Organisational Change – South Wairarapa District Council Libraries

Consultation proposal for library services

Consultation Document

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In May 2025 the decision was made by the Elected Members of each Council to discontinue the Wairarapa Library Service (WLS) operating between Carterton and South Wairarapa and to return the operation of libraries services to each individual Council because despite continuous efforts to improve operations, significant issues continued to hinder WLS from functioning as a modern library service.

Following this decision, we want to ensure South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) delivers a fit for purpose staffing and operating library model that will continue to deliver a high-quality service to customers.

Following a review of our structure, we are proposing to implement a functional structure which is consistent with New Zealand professional library practice. A functional structure in essence assigns critical professional functions within a library to senior roles, enabling oversight and leadership to occur in each specialist area. We consider there are many benefits to running a library service in this way. Firstly, it benefits staff by providing opportunities to learn and develop specialist professional skills and it also creates a pathway from junior to senior roles. Taking a functional approach means customers receive a more professional and contemporary range of services, consistent with improvements visible in libraries across the country. It also future proofs our services, as in our view, this proposal would establish the SWDC library service on a firm and sustainable footing for the next decade. We believe it would position SWDC to better leverage potential future changes as Councils may move to amalgamate over time, and a functional structure would be in keeping with contemporary services.

However, we have not made a final decision on this structure. We want to hear your thoughts, alternative solutions, feedback on our proposal before we come to a final view. So, please have a careful read through this document and what is proposed and let us know your thoughts in response.

If we do proceed as proposed, it may mean some existing roles are disestablished. However, we have made a concerted effort to develop a proposed structure where most employees would be either reconfirmed into very similar roles or suitable for redeployment to new roles that suit staff capabilities. The proposal to disestablish roles has not been considered lightly. We are acutely conscious that where roles are disestablished and there is no suitable redeployment, such a decision would have an impact on people, their colleagues and families.

I want to emphasise that this proposal is not a reflection on the people in these roles, who work hard to deliver excellent service for our customers within our communities. Where employees are directly impacted, we will provide support and assistance.

I know that change proposals like this bring uncertainty for people and are challenging. We are committed to undertaking a fair review and consultation process and we will consider your feedback and alternative options before any decisions on a finalised structure are made.

Your well-being is important. Please reach out if you need support or assistance as you work through this proposal.



Janice Smith
Chief Executive Officer

How to provide feedback

This document sets out what we are proposing. However, we are consulting with you before any decision is made on the future structure. Please provide your feedback on or before **1200 noon on Tuesday 3 June 2025**. We welcome individual or group feedback, and we ask you to please submit your feedback in writing. We are seeking feedback from SWDC library staff, as staff directly impacted.

Feedback to this proposal must be in writing, via email, to: OrgChange@swdc.govt.nz Your feedback will remain anonymous, unless you have no issue with your details being shared with decision makers. If that is the case, please set that out in your feedback submission.

If you have any questions about this proposal, we encourage you to discuss these with the Library Manager or Group Manager, Infrastructure and Community Operations. You may also contact People and Culture. Please ask such questions well before the feedback cutoff date so you have time to seek responses before the feedback period concludes.

The decision makers will consider all feedback received and will do so from 4 June until 10 June 2025.

The PSA have been provided with a copy of the consultation document and staff may wish to liaise with the PSA as part of considering the proposal and providing feedback.

Where to go for Support

We understand that organisational changes can be challenging, and we are committed to supporting you throughout this process. If you feel at any point that you need support, please reach out as follows:

- You can talk to your manager, or Group Manager, Infrastructure and Community Operations.
- Any member of the Strategic Leadership team.
- Principal Advisor, People and Culture.
- If you are a PSA member you can approach the PSA delegate.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to provide free, confidential support and can be contacted on 0800 327 669.

We want to help as much as we reasonably can. If you have suggestions for other ways, we might be able to support you, please let us know and we will consider your request.

Drivers for change

Although WLS had shifted towards an integrated operating model for collections, technology, programming and communications, the staffing structure does not align with the operating model and instead consists of a more traditional site-by-site approach. In our view, this staff structure does not approach or promote efficiency or consistency of workflows and standard. Instead, it enforces a siloed culture and service delivery, rather than coherence. It also constantly requires workarounds to sync the direction the libraries are moving in with the existing structure and roles.

Currently critical functions for the libraries are split amongst staff in an ad hoc manner. Most staff have assigned projects or longer-term responsibilities incorporated into their existing roles. Doing it this way has allowed the libraries to progress a range of work, but these pieces of work are invariably done during time on the customer counter. This means there are constant interruptions, the work is given lower priority, and consequently there is far slower output delivery. Within the existing structure, accommodating these tasks requires a lot of give and take from staff and their input and impact is not fully reflected in position descriptions.

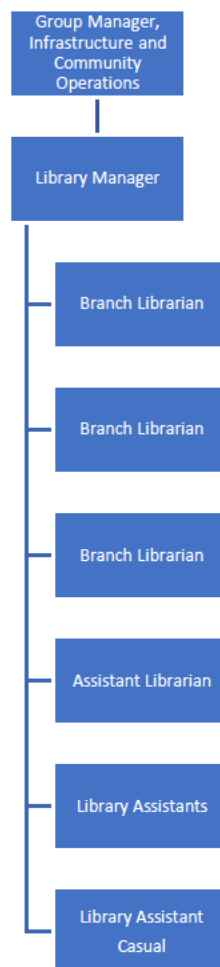
Given the above issues, it is our view that a planned and focused concentration on the critical functions of the library service would help us train and develop staff to deliver a more professional service. Functional leadership would facilitate the modernisation of the library service, progress systems improvements, branding, collection reviews, programme delivery, content creation and community engagement. This would lead to tangible benefits for customers who would see more diverse and better presented collections, a more age diverse range of programmes, technology enhancements, and more improvements in how library services are delivered.

Modern libraries require a mix of specialist skills to operate efficiently and effectively. The current structure does not provide for the ability to bring together a focused group of specialists and non-technical roles, to function well.

Additionally, a further factor in our thinking is that the population of the Wairarapa is transforming, marked by a projected increase in numbers, a diverse mix of ethnicities, growing international influence and a wide range of ages. So, the library service is experiencing evolving demands and expectations from the community, and this trend is expected to continue. As the community evolves, our services need to evolve too. By strategically positioning SWDC library services with a fit for purpose structure, staffing mix and resource levels we would be able to ensure the long-term sustainability to meet the needs of the whole community.

Current structure

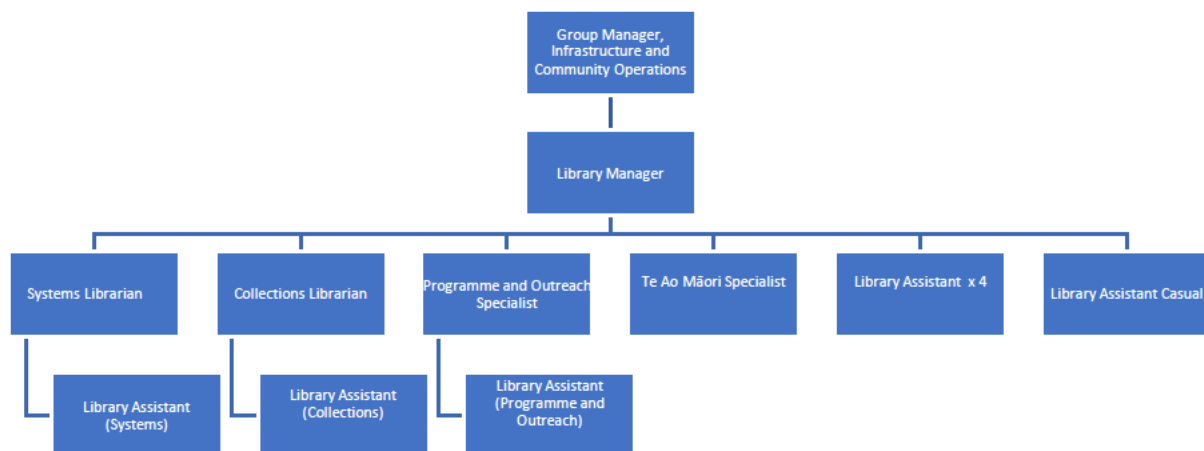
The current staff structure of SWDC Library Service is illustrated below. The current structure uses a traditional-site-by-site approach rather than a functional skill-based approach. In our view, the current structure promotes silos and inefficient service delivery, rather than an up-to-date coherent SWDC network service. We consider the current structure fails to capitalise on staff professional development or career opportunities and needs to be modernised to better service our community.



Proposed structure

The proposal aims to:

- Align SWDC with other libraries in New Zealand.
- Have skilled based leads instead of site-based leads.
- Ensure SWDC has the necessary staff expertise and adopts a network-wide approach to work, reflecting modern library practices.
- Support professional development, career progression and succession planning.
- Foster and strengthen community engagement, networking, and community skill-building.



Functional responsibilities

The emphasis of the proposed structure is the inclusion of skill-based leads in place of site-based leads by:

- Creating four new specialist roles of Systems Librarian, Collection Librarian, Programme and Outreach Specialist and Te Ao Māori Specialist.
- Enhancing the Library Assistant function.

Change Proposal

Disestablished Roles

The table below sets out existing roles which are proposed to be disestablished from the library services function.

Role	Proposed Change
Branch Librarian (Martinborough)	Propose to disestablish role
Branch Librarian (Featherston)	Propose to disestablish role
Branch Librarian (Greytown)	Propose to disestablish role
Assistant Librarian	Propose to disestablish role

The Branch and Assistant Librarian positions reflect a traditional site-by-site library model. The Branch Library roles and associated structure do not approach or promote efficiency and consistency of workflows and standards in a contemporary context.

The Assistant Librarian incumbent is mostly based in Martinborough and has been leading the children and outreach programme. It is proposed this work is moved to Programme and Outreach Specialist which includes both adult and children programmes.

All people in these roles above are considered to be directly 'affected staff members'. Staff are seen as being 'affected' if their roles are proposed to be disestablished or significantly changing.

New Roles that are very similar to existing roles

The table below sets out the proposed new roles and process for the library services function. Where a new role is viewed as being the *same or very similar* to an existing role, it is proposed that such role would be offered as a **reconfirmation** to an existing role holder.

New roles that are different to existing roles

If a proposed new role is viewed as being *different to any existing role*, but an existing role holder is seen as having the capabilities to effectively undertake the proposed new role, the new role may be offered as a **redeployment** opportunity, following an 'Expressions of Interest' (EOI) process from affected staff members. Where there are several people who may be able to undertake any proposed new role, we would assess whether any of those suitable have more of a legitimate right than others to the role, based on their existing tasks. Where there is more than one person who undertakes similar tasks and so could be suitable redeployment candidates for a new role, we would hold a selection process.

Proposed New Role	Proposed focus of the role	Proposed Process
Systems Librarian (full-time)	Library management systems, website, apps, online services, social media and hardware and software that supports library systems and resources. Ensure technology used is up-to-date, reliable and accessible to both staff and patrons.	Given the current tasks are performed by the [REDACTED] we propose to offer redeployment to the current [REDACTED] who we assess as having the capabilities to undertake this new role and is already undertaking

		many of the tasks that would be involved.
Collections Librarian (full-time)	Selection, purchasing, cataloguing, processing, distributing and repairing of all library resources, from books to magazines for the SWDC library network. Provides leadership in the planning and development of collections.	Given that we assess this as a new role and not similar to any existing role, we propose an Expression of Interest process. Any affected staff member who wishes to be considered could opt to apply for a redeployment opportunity.
Programme and Outreach Specialist (full-time)	Educational programmes and public events for adults and children. Implement initiatives to directly extend library services and resources beyond the traditional library spaces into the community.	Given the current tasks of the [REDACTED] we propose to offer redeployment to the current [REDACTED] who we assess as having the capabilities to undertake this new role and is already undertaking many of the tasks that would be involved.
Te Ao Māori Specialist (part-time 30 hours per week)	Development, access to and promotion of the SWDC Māori collections. Develop and increase the profile of te reo and tea o Māori throughout SWDC Library culture, organizational practices and services. Engage with Māori patrons and mana whenua to ensure their voices are heard.	Given that we assess this as a new role and not similar to any existing role, we propose an Expression of Interest process. Any affected staff member who wishes to be considered could opt to apply for a redeployment opportunity. Noting the specific requirements of this role, if we consider we do not have sufficient capability internally for successful redeployment, we might look to recruit externally. However, we would first assess internal applicants.

Library Assistants

SWDC has seven Library Assistants' positions, of which six incumbents work varying part-time hours and one is a full-time role. We are not proposing a change of hours from existing incumbent employment agreements at this time. However, we are proposing that a specialist function is included in three existing Library Assistant positions to support the relevant lead and provide more focus to three of the Library Assistants' roles. These proposed roles would conduct all responsibilities of the existing library assistant position description, including front-of-house customer, service centre functions and library services. Off-desk time would continue to be rostered to allow time for specialist functions. These Library Assistants would be required to work a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Reporting Line Changes and other minor changes

The table below sets out proposed reporting line changes for three Library Assistant roles.

Role	Proposed Job Title	Proposed Reporting Lines
Library Assistant	Library Assistant – Systems Full-time	Change in reporting lines to the Systems Librarian
Library Assistant	Library Assistant – Collections	Change in reporting lines to Collection Librarian
Library Assistant	Library Assistant – Programmes and Outreach	Change in reporting lines to Programme and Outreach Specialist.

It is proposed that the above Library Assistant Position Description is revised to include 'support functional leads i.e. Systems, Collections and Outreach Specialists as required'.

The selection of these roles would be based on review of incumbent Library Assistants' current contracted work hours, specialist skills, and incumbent preferences. Where we have more than one person who wishes to be considered for a particular specialist Library Assistant position, we propose to hold a selection process to determine the successful applicant.

The remaining Library Assistant (4) would continue to report to the Library Manager and their existing Position Description would remain unchanged. Part time hours would remain as currently agreed.

Library Manager

The current Library Manager role will be vacant effective 17 May 25. We have appointed an interim manager to continue the day-to-day management of the libraries. The Library Manager Position Description will be adjusted slightly to remove Wairarapa Library Services (WLS) and the associated processes. We are not seeking feedback on this position as it is proposed to remain essentially the same as it currently stands. This role would be available as a potential redeployment for affected staff. If, following review, we do not consider there are internal candidates who have the necessary capabilities to undertake this role, we would recruit externally.

Implications

Unfortunately, if we proceed with the proposal as planned, and disestablish positions, we may not be able to identify alternative roles suitable for all affected staff. If that is the case, some staff may have their employment terminated due to redundancy.

Throughout this process, we are focused on being fair, transparent, and consistent. We are committed to giving you the information and support you need, so please raise any questions in a timely way as we progress through this change process. We commit to treating everyone with respect and dignity, especially as we recognise that these processes are inherently stressful and given that some people may ultimately have their employment terminated.

In terms of impacts on roles, where it is determined a role may be disestablished, the following options would be considered and implemented where appropriate:

Reconfirmation

Reconfirmation means the transfer of affected staff whose current positions are the same, or substantially the same, into a role, that is more or less the same as their existing role. While there may be some small changes, the majority of the tasks to be done in the 'new' role are the same as what the person did previously, so staff are 'reconfirmed' into a new role.

Reconfirmation applies to the work people do. Current positions will be compared to positions which are "the same or substantially the same" in the new structure.

If the new job is the same, or substantially the same, as a job in the current structure the Employee in that position is eligible for reconfirmation.

The criteria for eligibility for reconfirmation is:

- The new Position Description is the same, or substantially the same, as what the employee currently does.
- The total remuneration for the new position is the same
- The hours and days of work are the same or very similar; and
- The location of the new position is the same or within reasonable travelling distance of the current location.
- Where there is more than one candidate interested in a potential reconfirmed position, a fair selection process shall apply to select the person best suited for the position.
- If the reconfirmation criteria have been met, but the employee declines the position, the employee will be deemed to have terminated their employment and no claim for compensation under the redundancy clause of this agreement can be made, because the role is essentially the same as their current role – so it is not a redundancy but a resignation.

Redeployment

Redeployment means placement in a different, but suitable position that matches the employees' capabilities. Assessment of a "suitable position" would be made by matching the existing skills, knowledge and experience of each individual with positions which have similar requirements.

Employees must be capable of performing the job to an acceptable standard either immediately or following some reasonable upskilling training.

A person who has been offered redeployment may, as part of that redeployment, be required to undergo training and have a performance plan in place that requires a level of competence within a period of time.

If that person's employment is later terminated because they have failed to reach the competence levels required within the required timeframe they would be entitled to redundancy compensation.

Where a person is offered redeployment and refuses it, yet the duties are not outside the range of skills of the employee and the salary and terms and conditions of employment no less favourable, then no claim for compensation under the redundancy clause of this agreement can be made, provided that individual circumstances are taken into consideration.

Where a person is offered redeployment and the position involves a reduction of salary, conditions or the change in duties is significantly different, then the Employee shall be entitled to decline the offer without forfeiting their entitlement to the redundancy provisions.

Redundancy

For affected employees whose roles are disestablished, if no other suitable role can be found through redeployment, then employment would be terminated by reason of redundancy.

If an affected employee's employment ends by reason of redundancy, the employee would receive redundancy payment in line with the provisions within their employment agreement and any other entitlements specific to the employees circumstances. Four weeks written notice would be given to the employee.

Proposed consultation timelines and next steps

Thank you for engaging with this Consultation Document. To recap, all feedback on the proposal can be provided by email to OrgChange@swdc.govt.nz. As detailed in the timelines below the consultation period ends at **12 noon, Tuesday 3 June 2025**.

Following consultation all feedback will be read and considered. Feedback will be responded to in summary form in the Decision Document, which will be issued after the consultation period.

Following the announcement of final decisions, we will formally notify people by letter of the impact the decisions have on their substantive position and the implications for them individually.

In consideration of any proposed changes impacting your employment, you have the right to seek independent support or legal advice. Additionally, you are entitled to be accompanied by a support person or representative in any future one-on-one meetings related to this proposal and restructuring process.

Date(s)	Proposed change activity
16 May 25	Meet with significantly affected staff in individual meetings
16 May 25 3pm	Meeting with all library staff
16 May 25	Consultation period starts
3 Jun 25 12 noon	Consultation period closes
4- 9 Jun 25	Feedback considered
10 Jun 25	Decision communicated
11 Jun 25	Expression of Interest processes open
18 Jun 25	Expression of Interest processes close
19/20 Jun 25	Interview process for new roles
Week commencing 23 Jun 25	Appointments made
30 Jun 25	New structure in place

Appendix One – Draft Position Descriptions

This section includes draft Position Descriptions for proposed new roles.

Systems Librarian

- Full time
- Leadership role
- One direct report
- **Responsible for the library management system (LMS), website, app, online services, social media, and Skinny Jump as well as the hardware and software that supports these systems and resources**
- **Responsible for ensuring that the technology used by the library is up-to-date, reliable, and accessible to both staff and patrons**
- **Ensures that library staff have the expertise to support customers utilising digital services**
- **Collaborates with other library staff to develop and implement new services and provides training and support to library staff and patrons regarding digital and online services.**
- **Is able to trouble shoot and communicate problems promptly with LMS/app agents and council IT teams**
- **Contributes to front of house customer services on a rostered basis**
- Collaborates with SMART consortia counterparts
- Holds a New Zealand recognised library qualification or similar experience
- Has a good understating of how public libraries operate
- Has the ability to lead staff to provide a level of customer service that is exemplary
- Has experience working with people as a leader
- Has excellent communication skills
- Understanding and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural issues.
- Strong organisational skills are essential to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines, while excellent communication, relationship-building abilities, and a collaborative mindset will support effective teamwork and engagement.
- Demonstrate and uphold SWDC core values (Pride, Manaakitanga, Collaboration and Customer-First)

Collections Librarian - Draft

- Full time
- Leadership role
- One direct report
- **Responsible for the selection, purchasing, cataloguing, processing, distribution and repairing of all library resources; from books to magazines, DVDs to digital databases for the SWDC library network. Provide leadership in the planning and development of collections.**
- **Utilises Collection HQ for collection maintenance**
- **Manages interlibrary loan services**
- **Contributes to front of house customer services on a rostered basis**
- Collaborates with SMART consortia counterparts
- Maintains the cataloguing standard as set by the SMART consortium
- Applies cataloguing and metadata expertise to enhance content accessibility
- Holds a New Zealand recognised library qualification or similar experience
- Has a good understating of how public libraries operate and modern collection procedures
- Has the ability to lead staff to provide a level of customer service that is exemplary
- Has experience working with people as a leader
- Has excellent communication skills and is well organised
- Has strong problem-solving skills
- Understanding and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural issues
- Strong organisational skills are essential to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines, while excellent communication, relationship-building abilities, and a collaborative mindset will support effective teamwork and engagement.
- Demonstrate and uphold SWDC core values (Pride, Manaakitanga, Collaboration and Customer-First)

Programmes and Outreach Specialist - Draft

- Full time
- One direct report
- **Responsible for educational programmes and public events for adults and children**
- **Implements initiatives to directly extend library services and resources beyond the traditional library spaces into the community**
- **Supports other team members in the delivery of their programmes as required**
- **Is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective, co-operative and professional working relationships with internal and external stakeholders in relation to programmes and outreach**
- **Coordinates the relevant marketing/promotions/social media activities for your allocated programme as outlined in agreed programme plans**
- **Maintains a strong awareness and appreciation of external trends and opportunities for programme development, and works to realise opportunities to act as a catalyst for improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of our communities**
- **Contributes to front of house customer services on a rostered basis**
- Collaborates with SMART consortia counterparts
- Holds a New Zealand recognised library qualification or similar experience
- Has a good understating of how public libraries operate
- Has the ability to provide an exemplary level of customer service
- Has experience working with people as a leader
- Has excellent communication skills and is well organised
- Has strong problem solving skills
- Understanding and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural issues
- Strong organisational skills are essential to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines, while excellent communication, relationship-building abilities, and a collaborative mindset will support effective teamwork and engagement.
- Demonstrate and uphold SWDC core values (Pride, Manaakitanga, Collaboration and Customer-First)

Māori Specialist -Draft

- Full time
- **Responsible for the development, access to, and promotion of the WLS Māori collections**
- **Responsible for developing and increasing the profile of te reo and te ao Māori throughout WLS culture, organisational practices, and services**
- **Engage with Māori patrons and mana whenua to ensure their voices are heard**
- **Foster understanding among library staff on how to best deliver culturally responsive and meaningful library services for Māori**
- **Understanding of te reo Māori to at least an intermediate level**
- **An understanding of tikanga Māori**
- **Experience with working with Māori resources in a library environment**
- **Understanding and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural issues**
- **Contributes to front of house customer services on a rostered basis**
- Collaborates with SMART consortia counterparts
- Holds a New Zealand recognised library qualification or similar experience
- Has a good understating of how public libraries operate
- Has the ability to provide a level of customer service that is exemplary
- Has a flexible approach, commitment to customer experience and natural ability to relate well to people of all ages and backgrounds
- Has excellent communication skills and is well organised
- Has strong problem-solving skills
- Strong organisational skills are essential to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines, while excellent communication, relationship-building abilities, and a collaborative mindset will support effective teamwork and engagement
- Demonstrate and uphold SWDC core values (Pride, Manaakitanga, Collaboration and Customer-First)