

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref IM/JMcK

Date 19/03/26

## Civic Theatre & Concert Hall Update

From Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement)

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### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the current position regarding progress toward the proposed demolition of the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall within the Motherwell Civic Centre Complex.

The building was closed in September 2023 after the identification of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the roof structure, with subsequent structural studies (2023–2024) categorising the risk level as *High to Critical*. Repair costs for replacing RAAC only were initially estimated at £10.5–£11.65 million. Costs have increased significantly following further detailed technical investigations which revealed that replacing the RAAC roof would involve extensive enabling works, along with major additional interventions to address cladding and glazing issues, fire safety compliance, building services, thermal performance, and wider cyclical maintenance requirements.

Given the buildings' Category B Listed status, demolition requires statutory approvals, including Listed Building Consent (LBC) from Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

As previously advised to committee, the complex nature of RAAC remediation, requiring extensive enabling works, intrusive intervention into listed fabric, temporary structural support, and the possibility of uncovering further hidden defects, creates substantial uncertainty in programme, cost, and deliverability. These risks underpin the conclusion that long-term retention or refurbishment of the building is neither technically reliable nor economically viable, and they continue to inform the council's approach to statutory approvals and forward planning.

Engagement with HES has been positive, with the organisation acknowledging the council's detailed structural evidence, conservation assessment, and cost viability analysis. Updated feasibility, conservation, and cost evaluations prepared by consultants Pick Everard and MAST Architects conclude that full repair and refurbishment, while technically possible, would require extensive intervention, carry substantial risks, and result in a significant conservation deficit. This deficit arises because the cost of undertaking the necessary repairs and conservation works would far exceed the building's end value once restored, leaving a financial shortfall that makes the project economically unviable without substantial external funding.

The council is currently finalising the preparation of the Planning Statement, technical documentation and LBC application for submission in May 2026. Risks remain regarding HES determination and potential call-in by Scottish Ministers. If approvals are granted, the full demolition and reinstatement programme is expected to take at least 20 months, including creation of new parking areas, landscaping, and integration of design elements sympathetic to the retained Civic Centre.

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### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Acknowledges the substantial work completed to date in preparing the necessary documentation to support forthcoming Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for the demolition of the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall, and the intention to submit these applications in May 2026.
  - (2) Acknowledges the work being undertaken to re-design external elements of the Civic Centre Complex following the demolition of the Civic Theatre & Concert Hall.
  - (3) Recognises that the demolition of the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall is conditional on the council obtaining the necessary statutory consents.
  - (4) Acknowledges the risks associated with RAAC projects and that budget allocation will require to be kept under review, with further capital funding likely to be required in future plans.
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### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	(22) Facilitate a North Lanarkshire wide approach to asset rationalisation, including with communities and partners
Programme of Work	Statutory / corporate / service requirement

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#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Civic Theatre & Concert Hall was surveyed in September 2023 as part of the council’s Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) inspection programme and RAAC was identified in the roof area. There were signs of water ingress noted that could weaken the load bearing capacity of the panels and the report recommended the immediate closure of the facility due to the condition of the panels.
- 1.2 A further Structural Feasibility Study was undertaken on the council’s behalf by Pick Everard in March 2024 and this report categorised the condition of RAAC within the premises as High to Critical Risk.
- 1.3 At that time, it was estimated that the capital funds required to repair the facility would be between £10.5M and £11.65M, however it was noted that there remained significant risks associated with the complex works that could result in additional costs.
- 1.4 In light of the above, the Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024, approved a report recommending that the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall be demolished.

- 1.5 The report noted that the entire Civic Centre Complex is Category B Listed and this includes the Civic Theatre & Concert Hall. Any demolition would therefore be conditional on agreement from Historic Environment Scotland (HES).
  - 1.6 Following the Committee decision the council has been working with consultants MAST and Pick Everard to produce costs and feasibility reports and a conservation report to support an application for Listed Building Consent (LBC) to allow for the building's demolition.
  - 1.7 As outlined in the School Estate: Strategic Capital Update report presented to Committee in December 2025, a further update on the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall demolition was scheduled for Cycle 1 2026. This report has been prepared to fulfil that requirement.
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## **2. Report**

### **Historic Environment Scotland**

- 2.1 The Civic Centre Complex was Category B listed by HES in December 2020. The listing excludes the interiors of the 6-storey office block, adjoining ranges and Civic Square, together with the glazed stair tower addition to the council chamber, lift shafts, metal fire-escape and service addition to the fly tower. The Civic Theatre and Concert Hall, including the interiors (with the exception of the metal fire-escape and fly tower), are therefore included within the listing.
- 2.2 Category B listed buildings are defined by HES as buildings of special architectural or historic interest that are major examples of a particular period, style or building type.
- 2.3 The Statement of Special Interest identifies the Civic Centre Complex as being of special architectural and historic interest due to its significance as a largely intact example of post-war Modernist civic architecture, its high-quality design and plan form by an important Scottish architect, its landmark status within Motherwell, and its contribution to understanding civic life and local governance in 20th-century Scotland.
- 2.4 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, any works that impact the special interest of a listed building, including alterations or demolition, must obtain LBC. Although LBC applications are typically decided by the local planning authority, this responsibility can transfer to HES when the authority itself owns the building.
- 2.5 HES guidance on the demolition of listed buildings states that demolition should be treated as a last resort, following the consideration and discounting of all reasonable alternatives. The guidance identifies four circumstances where demolition may be acceptable, subject to clear justification, including where a building is incapable of meaningful repair or where repair and reuse are not economically viable. The four circumstances:
  - The building no longer of special interest.
  - The demolition of the building essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community.
  - The building is incapable of meaningful repair.
  - Economic Viability where the demolition and reuse of a listed building is being considered on the grounds that it is not economically viable.

- 2.6 In this case, the ability to meaningfully repair the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall is affected by the extent of RAAC within the roof structure and the consequential impact of repair works on listed internal elements. In addition, the economic viability test requires demonstration of a conservation deficit where repair costs significantly exceed the end value of the building.
- 2.7 Although the guidance normally expects marketing of a listed building prior to demolition, this is not considered feasible due to the safety risks associated with RAAC and the building's functional and physical integration within the wider Civic Centre Complex. The guidance also confirms that marketing alone is not determinative and that demolition decisions should be informed by a broader assessment of alternative options and economic viability.
- 2.8 Officers have been engaging with HES since April 2024, providing the Structural Feasibility Study and outlining the RAAC issues. HES encouraged exploration of repair options and potential funding opportunities, with demolition to be treated as a last resort.
- 2.9 As part of the viability assessment, the Council is required to address the following key questions:
- why demolition is being pursued;
  - how the demolition would be undertaken;
  - how the interface with the retained Civic Centre Complex would be treated; and
  - the proposed future use of the site.
- 2.10 The council has appointed a conservation consultant to represent the council in discussions with HES and to assist in the preparation of a detailed planning statement in support of the council's case for LBC. In addition, Pick Everard were appointed to evaluate the type, methodology and amount of repairs and upgrades required (not limited to RAAC as per previous reports) in order to demonstrate 'conservation deficit' in repair cost versus the market value of the end product.

### **Cost & Feasibility Study**

- 2.11 Following a review of the information contained within the two previous surveys detailed at 1.1 and 1.2 above, undertaken with the conservation consultant, it became apparent that further work was required to fully understand the extent of the technical constraints and associated costs related to the removal of RAAC. This illustrates the complexity of RAAC projects.
- 2.12 This additional work was also necessary to identify and cost other essential remedial works required to fully reinstate the building, outlined at 2.19 below, which had not been considered previously, as earlier surveys focused on RAAC replacement costs.
- 2.13 The council appointed Pick Everard to prepare cost estimates and feasibility reports to develop a more detailed understanding of the required works and associated costs, thereby informing the decision-making process on the proposed way forward.
- 2.14 The information contained within the reports was necessary to evidence a conservation deficit in support of the case for demolition.
- 2.15 The feasibility report provides a detailed assessment of the works required, in addition to RAAC replacement, to enable the building's return to productive use.

- 2.16 In assessing costs Pick Everard were asked to look at three scenarios which are detailed below along with the respective cost estimates:

Scenario 1: Replacement of RAAC and Refurbishment - £31.4m - £34.7m.

Scenario 2: Demolition - £3.2m – £3.55m

Scenario 3: Demolition + Car Park Implementation (Basic Scheme) - £5.21m - £5.76m.

### **Conservation Consultant**

- 2.17 Discussions were held with MAST Architects, and a site meeting took place in March 2025 to review the council's requirements.
- 2.18 MAST Architects were appointed in Spring 2025 to support the procurement of detailed technical surveys, cost estimates and professional commentary, enabling a robust assessment of the scope of works, the implications for the heritage significance of the listed building, and the combined cost of these works in the context of known and anticipated cyclical repair and maintenance liabilities.
- 2.19 The further investigations demonstrated that replacement of the RAAC roof would necessitate extensive enabling works, including asbestos removal, dismantling and protection of historic features, removal and reinstatement of services and plant, major temporary works, and interventions to the primary concrete and steel structure. In addition, significant associated works would be required to address cladding deterioration, glazing, fire strategy compliance, building services, thermal performance and wider cyclical repair liabilities.
- 2.20 Given the building's highly specialised layout, listed status, constrained location within the wider civic complex and limited commercial appeal, its end value is assessed as being substantially lower than the cost of repair, resulting in a significant conservation deficit. Marketing or transfer to a restoring purchaser was considered not to be feasible.
- 2.21 While repair and refurbishment is technically possible, the investigations identified very high levels of risk associated with building stability, safe access, asbestos contamination, potential loss of historic fabric and prolonged timescales required to secure statutory consents. There is also a material risk that the extent of deterioration is greater than can currently be verified, which could result in further cost escalation.
- 2.22 An appraisal of alternative options concluded that doing nothing, sale, conversion, or partial demolition are not viable or deliverable solutions. Demolition and landscaping has therefore been assessed as a contingency option should repair and reuse not be achievable.
- 2.23 The investigations demonstrate that the scale of RAAC related failure, the extent of necessary intervention, the high likelihood of heritage loss during repair, and the exceptional capital costs involved mean that repair and reuse cannot reasonably be considered economically viable.
- 2.24 The report concludes that demolition of the Motherwell Concert Hall and Civic Theatre may be justified in exceptional circumstances, subject to Listed Building Consent.
- 2.25 A meeting took place in November 2025 between representatives of HES, the Council (Assets & Procurement and Planning) and the Conservation Consultant to consider the findings of the cost and feasibility reports alongside the conservation report. The engagement with HES was positive, with officers indicating that they were satisfied with the depth of analysis and level of detail provided by the Council and its consultants in

evidencing the case for demolition. During the meeting, opportunities to further strengthen the conservation report were identified, and additional work has since been undertaken to address these points.

2.26 The anticipated sequence of events to obtain the required statutory consents to progress the demolition are detailed in the table below:

<b>Completed Actions</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Initial Engagement with HES	April 2024
RAAC Report to P & S Committee	December 2024
Identification of Planning Consultant – MAST Architects	February 2025
Initial site meeting with MAST	March 2025
Preparation of MAST Scope	March 2025
MAST Proposal Return	April 2025
MAST Appointment	Spring 2025
Justification for Demolition - MAST	October 2025
Interim Historic Environment Scotland Review	November 2025
<b>Actions in Progress</b>	
Update Report to Policy and Strategy Committee	March 2026
Finalisation of Proposals for Site Including Retention of Key Features	March 2026
Finalisation of Planning Statement and associated documentation	April 2026
Application for Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent	May 2026
Application for Demolition Warrant	TBC
Determination of Listed Building Consent Application	TBC
Notification of Outcome	TBC

2.27 The timescales noted above are indicative at this stage and are largely dependent on the response from HES and the requirements of utility providers including Scottish Water, which are out with the council's control. Timescales cannot be provided for a number of the steps above as they will be dependent on receipt of Planning Permission and LBC approvals.

- 2.28 There is a risk if HES objects to the listed building consent Scottish Ministers may choose to 'call in' the case and could decide to hold a public enquiry. There is no right of appeal unless the council could demonstrate an error in coming to their decision.
- 2.29 The LBC and Planning consents, if granted, would lapse after a period of three years from the date of the decision notice unless the works have commenced within that period.

### **Initial Artist Impressions**

- 2.30 Concurrently with the demolition consent work above, the in-house Technical & Design team are developing the proposals for the replacement car park scheme with assistance from an external civil engineer and the council's Planning & Transportation team.
- 2.31 The council's Technical and Design team have created some artist impressions which show how the external elements of the Civic Centre Complex that will be impacted by the demolition could be treated. See Appendix 1.
- 2.32 The treatment of the external areas will require detailed discussions and agreement with HES and will most likely be subject to further change throughout the process.
- 2.33 The impressions show additional car parking, soft & hard landscaping and new steps leading from the main car park to the existing terrace. In addition, remedial work to the retaining walls and parts of the Civic Centre Complex that will be physically separated as a result of the demolition and landscaping are also shown.
- 2.34 The design enhances the aspect of the approach to the elevation in a more aesthetically pleasing way and could incorporate materials from the Civic Theatre and Concert Hall to provide a sympathetic treatment to the external elements and a nod to the site's previous use.
- 2.35 The successful completion of the actions detailed at 2.26 above would allow for the demolition programme to commence. It is anticipated that the demolition from commencement of the programme to conclusion will take around one year.
- 2.36 The works to re-develop the cleared site following the demolition, as illustrated at Appendix 1, will take a further six to nine months to conclude giving a total timeline of at least 20 months from commencement of the demolition programme to the provision of a useable car parking area.
- 2.37 The timescales are dependent on utility providers i.e. Scottish Water and SPEN requirements and assumes that there are no unforeseen delays or complications with demolition works. This would require to be kept under review.

### **Costs**

- 2.38 Whilst the final costs cannot be determined until after the tender process has been conducted the indicative costs are summarised below.
- 2.39 The demolition costs are estimated to be in the region of £3.22M and £3.55M
- 2.40 The works to treat the external elements of the Civic Centre Complex following the demolition including the creation of the additional car parking, new access points and landscaping are estimated to cost £1.99M to £2.21M.

- 2.41 The total costs for the demolition and re-instatement works are therefore likely to be in the region of £5.21M and £5.76M.
- 2.42 All costs outlined above are based on current estimates provided by Pick Everard and may be subject to change once the works are finalised and formally tendered. Costs may also be revised as demolition method statements are completed and a detailed car park design is developed.
- 2.43 Full budget provision for the above works is not allocated within the current capital plan and provision would require to be made in the updated capital plan going forward.
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### **3. Measures of success**

- 3.1 Obtaining the required statutory consents to allow for the demolition to proceed.
- 3.2 Demolition will address the health and safety issues associated with the presence of RAAC within the building.
- 3.3 The successful re-purposing the areas within the Civic Centre Complex that are impacted by the demolition of the Civic Theatre & Concert Hall.
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### **4. Supporting documentation**

Appendix 1 – Artists Impressions.



**James McKinstry**  
**Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement)**

## 5. Impacts

<p><b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Full budget provision for the works has not been allocated within the current capital programme and provision would require to be made in an updated capital plan going forward.</p>
<p><b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The council has a statutory obligation to comply with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes  No

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to [dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk)

Yes  No

**5.6 Technology / Digital impact**

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes  No

**5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact**

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The demolition of any property will assist in reducing the council's carbon footprint

**5.8 Communications impact**

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.9 Risk impact**

Is there a risk impact?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

The issues associated with RAAC are being managed locally by services in relation to service and operational impact. RAAC management plans have been adopted for all relevant buildings where operations continue.

The timescales outlined within the report are indicative and subject to obtaining HES approval and the required statutory consents. If LBC is not granted there is a risk that the demolition may not be able to proceed and the council would require to re-assess alternative options.

**5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

**5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact**

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes  No

**Appendix 1 – Artists Impressions**

**Aerial View**



**New Stairs from Car Park**



Civic Café

