

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA ON FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021 COMMENCING AT 12 NOON.**

**PRESENT**

Mayor D Gordon (Chairperson), Deputy Mayor N Atkinson, Councillors K Barnett, R Brine, N Mealings, P Redmond, J Ward and P Williams.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

J Harland (Chief Executive), C Brown (Manager Community and Recreation), L Smith (Manager People and Engagement) and K Rabe (Governance Advisor).

There were three members of the public present.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Moved: Councillor Barnett                      Seconded: Councillor Williams

Apologies for absence were received and sustained from Councillors A Blackie, W Doody and S Stewart.

**CARRIED**

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Nil.

**3. REPORT**

**3.1. Covid-19 Protection Framework – Vaccine Pass Adoption for Aquatics Facilities and Libraries – J Harland (Chief Executive)**

L Smith and C Brown presented the report on behalf of the Chief Executive. A risk assessment had been carried out on staff roles which showed that staff in library and aquatics roles were considered to be at high risk and therefore the 'Health and Safety at Work Act 2015' applied. It was therefore recommended that the vaccine pass process should be enforced at these district facilities.

J Harland drew the Council's attention to the legal opinion of the Council's employment lawyer from Simpson Grierson who supported the recommendation to operate Libraries and Aquatic Facilities under the vaccine pass regulation.

Councillor Barnett asked for clarification regarding children over 12 requiring a vaccine to enter either a library or a pool. C Brown confirmed that anyone over 12 years of age would require a vaccine pass, however during the transition period some discretion would be used.

Councillor Redmond enquired if contactless operations options had been considered for the library service similar to what was done during the Covid-19 lockdown periods. C Brown replied that the Book Bag Scheme and other initiatives would be available to those who could not access the library and staff would be available on-line and via the phone for any research queries.

Councillor Atkinson was concerned about the possible embarrassment and bullying of youths at being denied entry to facilities, especially during school outings and holidays. He enquired if staff had tools in place to deal with, and mitigate issues for those denied entry. C Brown noted that the Aquatic staff were working with schools to ensure that vaccine passes would be sighted prior to children arriving at the pools and any issues dealt with before arriving on site.

Councillor Brine enquired why the Rangiora Service Centre was not included in the recommendation. L Smith replied that the Library and Aquatic services had been assessed first, and staff were currently assessing roles to determine if staff in other Council services may also require further protection.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor Brine

**THAT** the Council

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 211206195024.
- (b) **Approves** that the Aquatics Facilities would require Vaccine Passes for all visitors and staff to its facilities at Rangiora and Kaiapoi effective from 13 December 2021 at all levels of the Covid-19 Protection Framework until further notice.
- (c) **Approves** that the Libraries would require Vaccine Passes for all visitors and staff at Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Oxford facilities effective from 13 December 2021 at all levels of the Covid-19 Protection Framework until further notice.
- (d) **Notes** that the Organisational Risk Assessment Criteria and the Legal Opinion from Simpson Grierson were to remain public excluded due to the sensitive nature of the content and legal privilege.
- (e) **Notes** that the Council had completed a Risk Assessment for staff working in both Aquatic Facilities and Libraries and that these risk assessments state that due to the nature of these roles they had been classified as high risk in accordance with the Government guidelines.
- (f) **Notes** that Kaiapoi and Oxford Service Centres would require Vaccine Passes for library and service centre access at this time to mitigate the risk of transmission across the premises.
- (g) **Notes** management would be consulting with staff on a policy to support any further decisions relating to Vaccine Pass requirements for roles across the organisation.
- (h) **That** staff, where feasible and safe, implement alternative means of delivery of services to unvaccinated residents.

**CARRIED**

Mayor Gordon stated that these were extraordinary times where regulations were changing rapidly in a bid to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 in communities. However, he believed that being vaccinated was the best safeguard for slowing down the spread through communities and for allowing some normality in trading for businesses throughout New Zealand. He noted that he had received strong feedback from both sides of the argument, however, he believed that it was the Council's obligation to protect staff and businesses in the district. This was a difficult decision and was not taken lightly. He acknowledged that it would be helpful if the Government had issued clearer guidelines which did not require interpretation to uphold.

Councillor Brine endorsed the Mayor's comments, however, in his opinion the Council should also have included the Rangiora Service Centre in the recommendation. He was concerned for customer service staff dealing with the public all day with little protection.

Councillor Redmond suggested that a further recommendation be included in the motion related to staff implementing alternative means of service delivery to the unvaccinated members of the public. The Mayor and Councillor Brine as seconder, supported the suggestion and it was incorporated into the motion as (h).

Councillor Redmond further supported the motion stating it was an unfortunate situation which could divide families.

Councillor Barnett was reluctantly in support of the motion and noted that the information from the risk analysis made it imperative for the Council to implement vaccine passes at some facilities to protect its staff. She noted that there would be some analogies where one guideline seemed to contradict another, however a pragmatic approach needed to be followed. This would be most notable in vaccinated families with children too young to be currently vaccinated.

Councillor Atkinson was also in support of the motion although acknowledged the difficult decision which had to be made. He again raised concern regarding the way staff managed the process and requested that it be dealt with sensitivity especially for the children and the youth.

Mayor Gordon noted that all the comments were well stated and that the rest of the staff roles and Council facilities were still being assessed and would therefore be considered at a later date. He again stated that if the guidelines had been easier to interpret it would have assisted with a more consistent approach being taken by local authorities and business. However the Council needed to interpret the guidelines to the best of its ability rather than just following others lead.

#### **4. NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Council would commence at 1pm on Tuesday 1 February 2022 in the Council Chamber, 215 High Street, Rangiora.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.28pm.

**CONFIRMED**



Chairperson  
Mayor Dan Gordon

1 February 2022  
Date