

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA, ON TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2025, COMMENCING AT 9AM.

PRESENT

Mayor D Gordon (Chairperson), Deputy Mayor N Atkinson, Councillors A Blackie, R Brine, B Cairns, J Goldsworthy, T Fulton, N Mealings, P Redmond, J Ward and P Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE

J Millward (Chief Executive), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roading), C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation), K LaValley (General Manager Planning, Regulation and Environment), S Hart (General Manager Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development), S Salthouse (General Manager Organisational Development and Human Resources), G Bell (Acting General Manager Finance and Business Support), K Simpson (3 Waters Manager), J McBride (Roading and Transport Manager), K Waghorn (Solid Waste Asset Manager), C Roxburgh (Project Delivery Manager), J Recker (Stormwater and Wastewater Manager), G MacLeod (Community Greenspace Manager), L Sole (District Libraries Manager), T Sturley (Community Team Manager), M Greenwood (Aquatics Manager), R Hawthorne (Property Manager), M Bacon (Development Planning Manager), W Taylor (Manager Building Unit), W Harris (Planning Manager), B Charlton (Environmental Services Manager), S Nichols (Governance Manager), A Keiller (Chief Information Officer), H Street (Corporate Planner – Policy and Strategy), T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader), K Rabe (Governance Advisor), A Connor (Governance Support Officer) and C Fowler-Jenkins (Governance Support Officer).

Meeting Adjournments:

The meeting adjourned at 10.20am for refreshments and reconvened at 10.40am.

The meeting adjourned at 1.05pm for lunch and reconvened at 1.45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 3.05pm for refreshments and reconvened at 3.25pm.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. OVERVIEW AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY

3.1 Overview – G Bell (Acting General Manager Finance and Business Support)

G Bell provided an overview of where the budget numbers were sitting and spoke to a presentation that outlined the work undertaken to date, the financial plan, risks and proposed consultation topics. The presentation also covered the funding statement, financial environment, the broader work programme, budget changes and key dates going forward. It was advised that the average district rate increase was 4.98%, noting that it was signalled in the last LTP at 4.73%.

Mayor Gordon reiterated appreciation of the work that had gone into the Annual Plan and efforts of striking a balance of maintaining levels of service and costs against the consequence of adding things into the budget.

J Millward reflected on the last three years with all Council's struggling with inflation affecting depreciation and balancing the books against expenditure. The financial strategy adopted in the LTP set out the plan. Although the media indicated rates are too high nationally, Waimakariri is a growth council. He mentioned the struggle to meet CPI, the need to explain this to the community with how it affects the depreciation and if reserves are not held through depreciation then we will pay a cost in 40 years for long term asset renewals. There is also the 2% funding of the earthquake and stadium loans each year. To budget under 5% is a good effort. It was acknowledged that some people may not like the proposed removal of the 4% discount for early payment of rates, however this is out of line with most other councils who may do 2% at most or not at all.

Councillor Redmond asked about costs associated with undertaking consultation. It was advised this is approximately \$50,000 in addition with a lot of time/effort from staff. However this Council consults on its Annual Budgets so the public have a good basis to make decisions and signal to the council their views.

Councillor Redmond commented about the government signal of removing the four wellbeing's and having a different plan for councils, enquiring if the management believed this budget (which looks lean and mean) would it meet the government criteria. It was advised that the budget is core services, however the government work programme and definition is yet to be clarified. There was caution if a council tried to remove a library from the community for example and the public expectation of such service.

Councillor Williams queried the difference from \$80m to \$612m in the capital programme. G Bell outlined three factors, being less subsidy from NZTA, less revenue and cash surplus and changes to general assets therefore less capital revenue, noting that borrowing is used for projects and not operating costs.

Councillor Blackie commented on the Berl forecasts differing from reality last year and what that may mean this year. J Millward commented that Berl information was usually sound, however last years market changes meant no economist was right, however the market is starting to settle and be more under control now. This council is in a good position with its infrastructure renewal programme and with well managed assets.

Councillor Fulton enquired if there is capacity for more growth and capacity to support the growth of say another 100 consents. J Millward confirmed that was the case, with comment on the increased number of consent. The LTP provides for growth and we continue to meet demand which is shown through the financial forecasts.

Councillor Fulton asked if we as a council have a vision for the type of economy we want to support and what is the strategy. J Millward confirmed we do have a vision however it is best for the Council to debate the matters when looking at reports. This district continually shows that it is not just a good place to live and work but it is also attracting good businesses to the district.

Each unit presented reports followed by operational budgets before proceeding to the next unit. The order that operational units present information to the Council was:

- *Utilities and Roading*
- *Community and Recreation*
- *Regulation and Planning*
- *Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development*
- *Finance and Business Support*
- *Management*

Procedural Motion

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Receives** the budget pack papers and approves the recommended budget proforma, subject to debate in the meeting.

CARRIED

4. REPORTS

4.1 Councillor Suggested Opportunities for Organisational Efficiencies and Savings – S Hart (General Manager, Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development)

S Hart took the report as read, noting two key aspects with previous workshops looking at efficiencies and the report reflects the work undertaken referring to the principles in section 3.7. We are one of the first councils to bring information and the framework together.

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Councillor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 250122009628.
- (b) **Endorses** the assessment and categorisation of suggestions for efficiencies and savings that were provided by Councillors as part of the development of the 2025/26 draft Annual Plan and as provided in attachment (i) of this report and described in Option One (section 4.2).
- (c) **Notes** that of the 34 suggestions received, five have been assessed as already being implemented as part of existing processes, a further three have been implemented during the development of the draft 2025/26 Annual Plan budgets, 22 suggestions are being further investigated, and four a recommended as not being progressed.
- (d) **Endorses** staff to further investigate the 22 suggestions as highlighted above in recommendation (c) and provided in attachment (i) of this report, and to bring back a further report to Council providing advice and options relating to these suggestions.
- (e) **Notes** that the draft 2025/26 Annual Plan budgets have been prepared consistent with the staff recommendations column within the assessment and categorisation of the 34 suggestions provided by Councillors, as highlighted in attachment (i) of this report.
- (f) **Notes** that staff are currently underway with the development of a new policy that provides a framework to support the ongoing pursuit of operational efficiencies, cost savings and continuous improvement opportunities, while maintaining critical infrastructure and agreed levels of service. This draft policy will be presented to Council for consideration in April.
- (g) **Circulates** this report to the Community Boards for their information.

CARRIED

Councillor Ward commented on the work undertaken by staff, and taking feedback from Councillors during earlier meetings, in an effort to improve the outcomes.

Councillor Atkinson stated it was a well written report and believed in time the framework would evolve to meet the needs of the Council and it was also great to start to measure aspects of what we do.

Mayor Gordon was appreciative of the staff work with the framework and reflected on the constant reviewing of budgets, and savings where practical.

4.2 **Rangiora Airfield – Water and Wastewater Servicing and Budgets for 2025/26 Annual Plan** – D Roxborough (Strategic and Special Projects Manager) and O Stewart (Airfield Manager and Safety Officer)

D Roxborough provided an update on the budget required to supply sewerage and water services to the Rangiora Airfield. Although the budget currently stood at \$1.35 million, staff were proposing an additional \$580,000 for proposed work on water and wastewater infrastructure.

Councillor Williams asked why the problems with the water and wastewater infrastructure were not anticipated sooner. O Stewart explained that the significant problems were twofold: the age of the system and the design of the dispersal field.

Councillor Williams enquired what facilities at the Rangiora Airfield were connected to the sewer system, whether it was Council toilets or private connections. D Roxborough noted that there were hand connections.

Councillor Williams noted that private connections to the system and queried whether they should pay for it rather than the ratepayers. D Roxborough noted that the Council would have to consider the proposal as part of the 2025/26 Fees and Charges.

Councillor Williams questioned if it would be difficult to set Fees and Charges because very few of the hangers had toilet facilities.

D Roxborough advised that staff was undertaking a survey to establish existing connections. However, approximately 25 connections were believed to be to the septic system, which serviced the public toilets and some of the hangers.

Mayor Gordon asked if the Rangiora Airfield Advisory Group had been informed of the proposed additional work on the water and wastewater infrastructure. C Brown noted that the Rangiora Airfield Advisory Group was supportive of the proposed work to be done.

Councillor Williams questioned why the Rangiora Airfield ground rent was being reduced. D Roxborough noted that the previous budget included some assumptions regarding fees and charges being increased prior to the 2025/26 financial year; however, this would only happen next financial year. So, staff had adjusted the budget to reflect what the Council was collecting.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

Seconded: Councillor Ward

THAT the Council

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 241205216641.
- (b) **Approves** additional Capital Budget (loan funded) of \$356,400 for water infrastructure services to serve the airfield in the 2026/27 financial year (Option 1), and that the balance of works over 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years to be funded from planned carryovers of existing budgets.
- (c) **Approves** additional Capital Budget (loan funded) of \$223,220 for wastewater infrastructure services in 2026/27 financial year (Option 1), and that the balance of works over 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years to be funded from planned carryovers of existing budgets.
- (d) **Notes** that the water and wastewater budgets are still dependent on successful rezoning through the Proposed District Plan in accordance with the submission on the adjacent land, and if this is unsuccessful, then the budget will need reconsideration.
- (e) **Approves** an additional operational budget of \$12,000 in the 2025/26 financial year for interim servicing of the existing septic tanks.

- (f) **Approves** an additional Operating Budget of \$10,000 in the 2025/26 financial year for legal and professional services associated with the proposed adjacent Airpark private development and ongoing renewals of hangar leases.
- (g) **Approves** an additional Operating Budget of \$30,000 in the 2025/26 financial year for professional services and physical works and regulatory fees associated with obtaining resource consents for global earthworks at the airfield.
- (h) **Notes** that the extra budget requested in this report is already identified within the 2025/26 Annual Plan budget, and the effect on rates has already been included in the 2025/26 Annual Plan forecasts.

CARRIED

Deputy Mayor Atkinson supported the motion, as he accepted that the proposed work was necessary. He suggested that the possibility of connecting to the sewer system rather than a septic tank should be investigated. He thanked staff for the work they were doing on the development of the Rangiora Airfield.

Councillor Ward noted that many challenges at the Rangiora Airfield needed to be addressed. She believed that the Council needed to prepare for the future by standardising and upgrading the infrastructure to ensure compliance. Once this has been done, the Council needed to ensure that all parties contributed to the connection. Councillor Ward commended the work being done at the Rangiora Airfield at the dedication of the Airfield Manager and Safety Officer, O Stewart. She, therefore, supported the motion.

Mayor Gordon also supported the motion. He praised D Roxborough and O Stewart for their work at the Rangiora Airfield, which he believed was a jewel in the Waimakariri District's crown and a real asset. The proposed development in and around the Rangiora Airfield added even more interest in the district.

4.3 **2025/26 Development Contribution Schedule for Consideration with Draft Annual Plan** – C Roxburgh (Project Delivery Manager), J Eggleton (Project Planning and Quality Team Leader) and A Meredith (Project Engineer)

C Roxburgh took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor Fulton

THAT the Council

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 241217224631.
- (b) **Approves** the Draft 2025/26 Development Contribution Schedules for consultation with the 2025-26 Annual Plan (Trim 241220227191).
- (c) **Approves** the Draft 2025/26 Development Contribution maps to be unchanged from 24/25 for consultation with the 2025-26 Annual Plan (Trim 240626103949).
- (d) **Approves** the proposed updates to the Development Contribution Policy to be consulted on as part of the draft 2025/26 Annual Plan, to allow Development Contributions for several larger projects to be charged to more than ten years of growth (Trim 240925164481) for the following projects:
 - Growth component of the Oxford Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project to be recovered over 35 years, as this better aligns with the time period over which the upgrade will be sized. The Policy and schedules are proposed to be updated to state that the growth component of this project be recovered over a 35-year period rather than 10-year.

- Growth component of the Red Lion Corner roading project, which has been set up in the schedules to be recovered over a 25-year period, but this is not reflected in the Policy. The Policy is proposed to be updated to reflect how the project has been set up in the DC schedules.
- Growth component of the Ashley River bridge roading project, which has been set up in the schedules to be recovered over a 25-year period, but this is not reflected in the Policy. The Policy is proposed to be updated to reflect how the project has been set up in the DC schedules.

CARRIED

4.4 **Rates Remission Policy – Multiple Dwellings on a Single Rating Unit** – M Harris (Customer Services Manager)

M Harris took the report as read.

Councillor Mealings questioned whether the definition of vacant land and vacant premises would encompass tiny homes or self-contained vehicles residing on land. M Harris confirmed it would if the Council was aware of them. If there were no building consents, applications for connection to services, or kerbside bins, it was unlikely that the Council would be aware of tiny homes or self-contained vehicles.

Following a further question from Councillor Mealings, M Harris clarified that this change would have the same effect on rates as the current one; however, the transaction would show on the rates assessment, making it more transparent to the public and easier for staff to administer.

Councillor Williams enquired if the rates rebate for the Hurunui Scheme was displayed on the rates assessment, similar to the remission for multiple dwellings. M Harris explained that the water rate was charged per unit, not per inhabited property, so it would not.

Councillor Cairns inquired whether the policy would encapsulate the entire Waimakariri District or just rural properties. M Harris confirmed that the policy would be applicable to the entire district.

Moved: Councillor Brine

Seconded: Councillor Blackie

THAT the Council

- Receives** Report No. 241203214736.
- Approves** the draft Rates Remission Policy – Remission on Multiple Dwellings on a Single Rating Unit for consultation in the 2025/26 Draft Annual Plan.
- Notes** the proposed changes to the definition of a Separately Used and Inhabited Part of a Rating Unit (SUIP) for use in calculating liability for targeted rates under Clause 7, Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
- Notes** that this report has no effect on development contributions.

CARRIED

5. **BUDGETS**

5.1 **Roading**

G Cleary took the report as read. J McBride advised that a multi-layer approach with projects was taken to assist the outcome of a lower budget than previously indicated and the report from October. Some projects had been moved out or to design stage only.

Mayor Gordon enquired about the rail line upgrade and the request. Staff advised that further discussion was occurring with KiwiRail, but it is prudent to include in the budget at this time.

Mayor Gordon reflected on the Woodend Bypass and the Pegasus Woodend footpath, referencing page 16. Staff were preparing a report for Council in March and a meeting is planned with NZTA to propose a way forward with this project.

Mayor Gordon queried the ford bridge at Oxford, indicating the Council would take a lead, enquiring what stage the project was at. Staff advised that a workshop was proposed in the near future to enable staff to better understand the situation with managing bridges in-house.

Councillor Williams queried costs associated with speed limits signage variations outside of schools. Staff explained a mix of static or electronic signage is proposed, depending on the roading location of the school. Staff are currently working with each school to understand aspects and will then report back to the Council later in the year. Signage needs to be in place by June 2026.

Councillor Mealings queried the subsidy associated with school speed signage. Staff advised they are currently working through the application process and acknowledged there is a fund specifically for this project which needs to comply with new rules.

Councillor Redmond queried old bridge renewals, and in particular bridge railings. Staff advised of the situation and the need to reduce vehicles going over/through the rails, advising there was budget provision for some repairs. Mayor Gordon commented on the need for information to come back to the Council, for the community to be aware and the Council take the lead on improving safety.

Councillor Goldsworthy sought clarification on minor works improvements, with it confirmed that budget was included in the capital works budget.

Councillor Fulton enquired about Skew Bridge, the business case and service implications. Staff advised that the strategic business case supports the investment of why the bridge requires replacement which is then submitted to NZTA for funding contribution. The Council is looking for a higher level of service to reflect the use of the bridge, with it proposed to be built back better, with higher standards and wider.

Councillor Atkinson questioned the Mafeking Bridge project being moved out, commenting about the health and safety concern with the old netting. Staff indicated further maintenance would be looked at in the short term.

Mayor Gordon commented that given the environment and the government changes impacting on decisions and work programmes, the staff were doing a superb job in challenging circumstances. Skew Bridge was a priority for the Council, and receiving any funding for the Eastern Link business case would also be a positive step forward.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor Redmond

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Roothing budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

- (b) **Notes** that Maintenance, Operations and Renewals funding endorsed by NZ Transport Agency is less than requested by the Council, and this has resulted in a funding shortfall.
- (c) **Notes** that Council resolved at its October meeting that for Maintenance, Operations and Renewals to work to the NZ Transport Agency approved budget plus Council unsubsidised share, to ensure there was no rating impact.
- (d) **Notes** that Low-Cost, Low-Risk funding endorsed by NZ Transport Agency is also less than requested by the Council, and this has resulted in a significant funding shortfall and the need to re-prioritise a large number of capital projects over the three years of the NLTP (2024 to 2027).
- (e) **Notes** that consideration has been given to the option of reducing capital project spending to balance the shortfall, and the Council has resolved to take a multi-layered approach to progressing these projects. This approach includes allowing work to continue on the design of a number of declined projects so that if funding does become available over the next two years, the Council will be well-positioned to secure funding and progress projects quickly.
- (f) **Notes** that Council resolved at its December meeting to allocate additional budget in the area of Low-Cost Low Risk in years one of the 2024-27 NLTP period to partially cover a shortfall in funding to allow the Minor Safety Programme to continue in full as planned and safety improvements to be delivered.
- (g) **Approves** for inclusion in the Draft Annual Plan, consultation on the allocation of additional budget of \$405,450 in both 2025/26 and 2026/27 to cover a shortfall in funding in the Low-Cost Low-Risk area, specifically the Minor Safety Programme.
- (h) **Notes** that there are a number of areas where additional funding is likely to be required in the short term resulting from the retendering of the District Road Maintenance Contract, the development of the Belfast to Pegasus RoNS project, and the development of the South MUBA area.
- (i) **Notes** that funding constraints through the National Land Transport Programme are likely to be an ongoing issue.
- (j) **Notes** that there has been a deduction on depreciation of \$ 2.218 million.
- (k) **Notes** that while there is still an increase in the Roding Rate for the 2025/26 Year, this is 2.8% (including inflation) less than was originally indicated in the Long Term Plan.

CARRIED

A refreshment break was taken at this time from 10.20am to 10.40am.

5.2 **Solid Waste**

K Waghorn took the report as read.

Councillor Fulton sought clarity on the history and if the recycling services in Cust. K Waghorn advised that the recycling station was closed during Covid; however, the community wanted this service to be reinstated, and the service was, therefore, made permanent.

Councillor Fulton asked what volume of recycling was generated at the Cust facility and what would be the impact if the facility was closed. K Waghorn noted that the recycling station brought in about two-thirds of the amount of recycling from the Oxford transfer station. It was difficult to predict what the public would do if the Cust station was closed; some may well end up dumping their recycling. However, most would likely they would take it to the Oxford or Southbrook Transfer Stations, which would be a significant increase for Oxford and only a minor increase at Southbrook.

Councillor Cairns questioned the aim of the audits on the recycling bins and what would be the cost saving if the Council reached a zero need to recheck bins. K Waghorn noted that after Covid, many bins were contaminated, resulting in a high cost to the Council as all of the contents had to be sent to landfill. There had been a considerable drop in the number of contaminated bins after the audits started, resulting in overall contamination being less than 5%. Some bins were very badly contaminated. However, most bins were not too bad, and that 'diluted' the impact of the worst bins; therefore, the whole load was acceptable.

Councillor Cairns asked if increasing audits would improve the contamination rate and was advised that auditors were going to new areas and revisiting known hot spots. It was believed that the current level of auditing was having sufficient impact to ensure low contamination levels.

Councillor Redmond noted the increase in waste removal charges and queried how the charges compared to neighbouring councils. K Waghorn advised that the Council's charges were not compared with other councils. However, she would expect that the increases may be similar to that of the Council as all councils were subject to the same levy and disposal charge increases. She noted that the Council's charges may be slightly higher so as to mitigate the increases in waste diversion service costs at Southbrook.

Councillor Williams asked if the rubbish and green bin service was cost-neutral to the ratepayer and clarified this by asking if the general rate was used to subsidise the cost of this service. K Waghorn stated that the targeted rates for rubbish and organics were set to cover the collection and disposal costs. The general rate was not used to cross-subsidise collection charges; however, there was a portion of the waste levy income put towards bin audit costs.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Solid Waste budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked K Waghorn for her work, acknowledging that this was a complex area that she managed very well on behalf of the Council.

5.3 **Water**

C Fahey noted the rate increases were predominantly due to increased interest and depreciation costs.

Mayor Gordon raised a concern regarding the substantial changes for West Eyerton and Garrymere Schemes, namely 32.84% and 31.03% respectively. Mayor Gordon queried if it was possible that the increase could be reconfigured or spread to reduce the impact. K Simpson noted that the Garrymere scheme had recently been upgraded, and the cost increase was due to increased depreciation costs. One suggestion would be for the depreciation on the UV component to be separated and then spread over the district rather than the targeted ratepayers.

Mayor Gordon noted that the work on the West Eyerton Scheme was carried out some time ago and questioned the current substantial change. K Simpson explained that the asset valuation had been corrected; however, while the capital cost was set, the operational costs accrued increased depreciation costs.

Mayor Gordon asked if this matter could be tabled for later in the meeting. The Council agreed to table it.

Councillor Cairns noted the difference in the increases between Rangiora at 3.7% as opposed to the 6.8% at Kaiapoi and queried if this was due to a smaller rate base in Kaiapoi. Staff agreed that the population size would be one factor; however, staff would need to investigate why there was such a large difference and report back to the Council. It was acknowledged that Kaiapoi had benefitted from stormwater upgrades and a new pump station; however, further information on this matter would be forthcoming.

Councillor Cairns queried the financial implications of the asset in Smith Street, Kaiapoi, which benefitted Rangiora and was assured that the cost was proportioned between Rangiora and Kaiapoi.

In response to Councillor Goldsworthy's request for clarification regarding water units, C Fahey explained that an "on demand" water supply connection was equivalent to two units of water for a restricted connection.

Councillor Mealings asked for confirmation that the user pays for water assets, machinery, etc., at a targeted rate. G Cleary agreed, noting, however, that UV costs were spread proportionally over the district.

Mayor Gordon noted that district-wide rating was a discussion for the new Council.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** draft Water budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that the rate increases are predominantly due to increased interest and depreciation costs.

CARRIED

5.4 **Stock Water Races**

K Simpson took the report as read.

In response to a question from Councillor Fulton, K Simpson noted that currently, there were no guidelines for monitoring and maintaining stock water races other than the booklets that the Council provides. If stock water races were on private property, it was the landowner's responsibility to maintain them.

Councillor Redmond raised a concern regarding health and safety in maintaining stock water races along roadsides and queried how this was being managed. K Simpson explained that the landowners were expected to maintain the stock water races fronting on rural roads. However, problems occurred on busier roads, such as Tram Road, which required traffic management when conducting maintenance. The Council assisted those who could not manage the maintenance themselves; however, most farmers used contractors. Staff were proposing to develop Maintenance and Monitoring Guidelines similar to those for drainage.

Councillor Fulton wondered if combining verge mowing and stock water race maintenance could improve efficiency. K Simpson stated that the maintenance of stock water races was under review; however, staff were always open to improving cost efficiencies.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Stock Water Races budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.5 Wastewater

K Simpson took the report as read.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson noted that three renewal wastewater projects in Kaiapoi had been delayed and queried about the risk of delaying these projects. K Simpson noted that delaying the work gave staff time to assess and plan what works should be carried out effectively while reviewing the budget required.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson voiced a concern that delaying projects may increase costs. Staff advised that Asset Renewal Budgets were predicted on a set time frame, which did not consider any unexpected maintenance and upgrades to systems prior to the renewal date. These could impact the condition of the asset, so assessment and planning were required to ensure that work was done efficiently and in a timely manner.

Mayor Gordon requested a workshop to assist Councillors in understanding the process and requested that the Communications and Engagement Team be included so they could provide correct and concise information to the public on this aspect of Council budgeting.

Councillor Williams noted that \$1.5 million worth of projects were being deferred and shared Deputy Mayor Atkinson's concern regarding the risk of pipe failure if renewals were delayed. K Simpson noted that sewerage lines used to be laid along the fence line of properties. Previously, properties were large, requiring significant pipework to connect to the Council services on the roadside. However, current properties were smaller, with many of the larger properties being subdivided, resulting in pipes being built over. It, therefore, made sense for staff to investigate the assets prior to renewing them.

Councillor Mealings received confirmation that, during the assessment, if assets showed significant deterioration, work would be done to repair them prior to full renewal.

In response to Councillor Fulton's query regarding changes to septic tanks being considered by Environment Canterbury (ECan), K Simpson replied that he was unsure how ECan would manage the changes. However, he did not believe that it would conduct inspections to determine if maintenance to septic tanks was being carried out.

Councillor Fulton asked if these proposed changes would impact the wastewater programme, and K Simpson agreed, noting that staff would be investigating the best approach to the Oxford Wastewater System.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Wastewater budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

(b) **Notes** that the rate increases are predominantly due to increased depreciation costs.

CARRIED

5.6 Drainage

K Simpson presented the report, noting that rural drainage budgets had been increased to account for the increased impact of severe weather events on services and an increase in the proposed budget for the Mandeville Resurgence Stage 1 Project.

Councillor Williams queried why the budget for Infrastructure Resilience had been reduced. K Simpson advised that the projects had been assessed and only the most urgent would be dealt with during the 2025/26 financial year, while the other projects would be assessed and dealt with during the following two financial years. Staff had prioritised all the projects to ensure those chosen were deliverable within the 2025/26 financial year period.

K Simpson also explained that the Resilience Team had only recently been formed and was still in the assessment process. However, as more understanding of what was required was gained, the work would progress more speedily and efficiently.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Drainage budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that the rate increases are predominantly due to increased depreciation costs.
- (c) **Notes** the Capital Budgets incorporate an additional \$50,000 for general maintenance activity.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon supported the new Resilience Team, noting that neighbouring councils had already seen benefits in improved efficiencies and the range of projects dealt with.

Councillor Fulton agreed with the Mayor's assessment and noted that the Resilience Team had made a good start with a staged work programme.

The Mayor thanked G Cleary for his work, noting that Utilities and Roading operations were often under scrutiny and that there were many diverse and amended opinions on drainage, water, and wastewater. He commended the team for the work they did in a professional and calm manner.

5.7 **Utilities and Roading Overheads**

G Cleary took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Utilities and Roading Overheads budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.8 **Project Delivery Unit**

C Roxburgh took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Project Delivery Unit budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.9 **Water Unit**

G Cleary took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (b) **Approves** the draft Water Unit budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.10 Libraries and Local Museums

L Sole noted that there was no significant change from the budget included in the Council's 2024/34 Long Term Plan, with the exception of some identified efficiencies and a temporary reduction in the collection budget.

Councillor Cairns enquired whether the cost of the software was based on the number of libraries in the Waimakariri District, and L Sole noted that the software licenses were based on population size.

Councillor Cairns sought clarity on what the software licence encompassed. L Sole explained that the licence covered Waimakariri District's membership in the Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa Consortium, which the Department of Internal Affairs underwrote.

Mayor Gordon asked if the software license fee included digital subscriptions such as Ancestry, LinkedIn, and Kanopy, and L Sole confirmed that it did.

In response to Mayor Gordon's further question, L Sole advised that most audiobooks were resource purchases from the capital budget.

Councillor Cairns asked if staff analysed the usage of digital resources. L Sole stated that staff had a large annual data collection process regarding how many people were interacting with which digital platforms.

Councillor Mealings enquired how Ancestry worked if accessed via the library. L Sole noted that users' library membership cards gave them a personal login.

Councillor Redmond questioned what services the public could access remotely. L Sole advised that people were moving more to online platforms, including the older population. Hence, there was growth in online platforms, and libraries would continue to invest in them. Digital books were regionally very popular and would continue to be.

Councillor Fulton inquired about the operations of the various libraries and service centres and how the costs were allocated. C Brown noted that the footprints of the Oxford Library and Service Centre and Kaiapoi Library and Service Centre were very small, and the power costs would be the same whether they were there or not. There would be small transfers across.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Libraries and Local Museums budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that budgets remain largely unchanged from 2024/34 Long Term Plan, with the exception of efficiencies identified in this document.

CARRIED

Councillor Blackie was pleased that there was no opposition to the levy on the Christchurch Museum.

Mayor Gordon commented that many people did not realise how many volunteer hours went into the running of Waimakariri libraries. Without the volunteers, the Council would not have had the success it did. The staff did an amazing job, augmented by the great skill that was there. Libraries were so much more than just books, with the hosting of regular community activities, concerts and art shows. He thanked the staff for the work that they did.

Councillor Ward also commended the staff for their incredible work. Libraries were the social centre of many people's lives, particularly older people and younger children.

5.11 Aquatic Facilities

M Greenwood took the report as read.

Councillor Cairns sought an explanation of the further developments in leisure activities at the Kaiapoi Aquatic Centre. M Greenwood explained that ahead of the 2024/34 Long Term Plan, the Council consulted with the Kaiapoi public about the community's requirements in terms of Aquatic facilities. Although staff had not yet explored that further, it was indicated that separate pool space for children's leisure activities, where parents could spend time with their children, was required.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Aquatic Facilities budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** the recommendations from the District Aquatic Plan for the development of Hydrotherapy, Leisure and integration of the Dudley Pavilion to meet current community demand for services.
- (c) **Notes** that further development of the facilities in line with the recommendations of the District Aquatics Plan have been moved to fall outside of the current Long Term Plan period.

CARRIED

5.12 Community Development

T Sturley took the budget as read, noting there were no significant changes.

Councillor Williams asked what had changed in the last seven months since the 2024/34 Long Term Plan to the 2025/26 Annual Plan forecast from \$505,000 to \$534,000. C Brown explained that the increase was due to the anticipated staffing increase. As the Council progressed its remuneration review, some remuneration bands had moved, and the overall union amount and living wages had increased.

Responding to a question from Councillor Cairns, T Sturley noted that the Community Team had two staff members who were externally funded: the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs and the Welcoming Communities. Both roles were for a fixed period of time. However, staff had received feedback about the success of the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs Programme and had a significant increase in the number of outcomes the role was expected to deliver. The programme was fairly secure.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Community Development budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Councillor Ward thanked staff for the work they were doing throughout the community.

Mayor Gordon also thanked the staff for their work. He commented that the Community Team was involved in many district events. He was touched by the care given to those in the community who most needed it. The point of difference to the Council was that we had a Community Team and a community development model.

5.13 Greenspace and Community Facilities

G MacLeod took the report as read.

C Brown noted that staff was recommending stopping the provision of bags in the dog parks at a cost of \$15,000. Staff were confident that this would not cause an issue in terms of mess in the dog parks.

Councillor Redmond questioned if the \$41,000 outgoings for the Edward Street building included mortgage interest payments. C Brown advised that the Council would not be subsidising any activities on the site. It was agreed that any outgoing payments were the responsibility of the leaseholders.

Councillor Williams queried the \$2 million in land purchases included in the budget. C Brown explained that when the land was acquired through new developments, the Council had to purchase the neighbourhood reserves to service those. The cost was generally offset by income received through Development Contributions.

Councillor Blackie enquired if there was any earthquake insurance that could be used for the rebuild of the historic Cobb Cottage at the Rangiora Museum. C Brown noted that the Cobb Cottage was in reasonably good shape. However, the problem was that it did not meet the earthquake standards. Currently, people could only look in from the outside; however, the cottage structure had to be strengthened before people could be allowed inside. He confirmed that there was insurance money that could be used to strengthen the cottage.

In response to a question from Councillor Fulton, C Brown explained that public tennis courts in the Waimakariri District were in good order. Staff went through a replacement programme a number of years ago to ensure the courts were up to playing standard. The Council now had a replacement budget for tennis courts.

Councillor Williams queried whether weed and obnoxious plant removal was done by spraying. C Brown noted that in Pegasus, specifically, Council contractors rake the beaches and manually remove the weeds. There had been times when noxious weeds had grown around the outside of Pegasus Lake, which had been cut, and vigilant gel was used but no spraying.

Councillor Williams questioned the maintenance of weeds in streams. C Brown explained that day works were generally rubbish removal; the rest were cutting back weeds manually. However, the Council did not spray on the waterside.

Councillor Cairns asked if the Strategy and Partnerships Team worked alongside event organisers to implement a strategy to reduce waste. G MacLeod noted that staff had been talking with Enterprise North Canterbury and linked them up with a Waste Minimization event person.

Councillor Redmond noted that some Council facilities had expenses associated with them. He asked what the status was of the tenants of the Rangiora War Memorial Hall. C Brown noted that the budgets were operating expenditures as opposed to income. Staff would be reviewing these Council facilities leases during the next financial year.

Responding to a question from Councillor Williams, C Brown explained that there were cleaning costs associated with the different buildings. Although people hiring Council facilities were expected to leave them neat and tidy, there were many cleaning tasks that the Council would not expect a normal user to do.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Greenspace and Community Facilities budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

- (b) **Notes** that the renewal of the parks and reserves and streets and reserves tree contracts poses a risk of cost escalation in the later part of the 2025 – 2026 financial year. This has not been budgeted in the current accounts.

CARRIED

5.14 **Community and Recreation Overheads**

C Brown took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Community and Recreation Overheads budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.15 **Strategic and Special Projects**

D Roxborough took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Strategic and Special Projects budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that the Strategic and Special Projects Community and Recreation team has been established as a new Cost Centre with the primary purposes of delivering and monitoring the capital works programme principally for Greenspace, Regeneration, Earthquake Recovery, and the Rangiora Library and Civic Precinct projects as some key examples.
- (c) **Notes** that there is no net overall change in operational costs within Community and Recreation arising from the new team setup itself and that the overheads costs are transferred/recovered internally to the Units/Cost Centres being served, based on an assessed proportional split based on forecast levels of team effort for the 2025/26 year.

CARRIED

5.15 **Earthquake Recovery and Regeneration**

D Roxborough took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Earthquake Recovery and Regeneration budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that the District Regeneration activity is now largely wound up, with the delivery of any remaining capital projects from the 2025/26 financial year onward under Regeneration and Earthquake Recovery budgets now being delivered via Strategic and Special Project Community and Recreation or Roading/Civils teams.
- (c) **Notes** that internal and external funding provisions for the proposed Kaiapoi Community Hub Trust's development of buildings and associated facilities on site are not included in this budget and commentary.

- (d) **Notes** that these budgets do not include for Mixed Use Business Area developments and contributions (including Public Realm) – these are covered in Recreation Activity or Business and Centre Activity budgets
- (e) **Notes** that these budgets do not include any further Council inputs or in-kind support to WHow Aquasports Park proposal
- (f) **Notes** that a report will be provided regarding the Williams Street Bridge Balustrade Project scope and budget.

CARRIED

5.16 **Property, Housing for the Elderly, Camping Grounds**

R Hawthorne took the report as read.

Responding to Councillor Fulton's question, R Hawthorne noted that there was a large variety of land classes or types in the Council's Forestry Portfolio, including disused gravel pits reserve land and general freehold title land. Some years ago, the Council employed a Forester who also dealt with rural fire, and when the Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) change occurred, the role was disestablished. The land types determine the Council's use of a forestry area; often, forestry areas were not suitable for recreational purposes. Any forestry areas registered or established prior to 1989 were subject to the Emissions Trading Scheme, and as such, the Council had obligations to continue with a compliance standard of forestry activity. Regarding the commercial viability of exotic pines as opposed to natives, there were various factors that influenced the costs; however, it was a much more expensive exercise to transfer out of pines into natives.

Councillor Williams asked if small forestry blocks were insured against fire, and R Hawthorne confirmed that they were.

Councillor Ward questioned if the exotic pines along the coast would assist in the case of a tsunami. R Hawthorne noted that the trees were not planted to serve as tsunami barriers. Some of the earlier planting was done to stabilise the sand dunes and stop sand from blowing away.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Property, Housing for the Elderly, and Camping Grounds budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.17 **Planning and Regulation Management Overhead**

K LaValley took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Planning and Regulation Management Overhead budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked K LaValley for her dedication, commending her professional approach to all matters.

5.18 **Planning Implementation Unit**

W Harris took the report as read, highlighting the proposed increase to fees and charges to reflect inflation and insurance premiums. These changes would align with other Canterbury Councils.

There were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Planning Implementation Unit budget for the 2025/26 financial year

(b) **Notes** the fees and charges align with the median market across Canterbury councils.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked W Harris and the Planning Implementation Unit for all their work and noted that he regularly received positive feedback regarding their service.

5.19 **Development Planning Unit**

M Bacon took the report as read.

Mayor Gordon questioned whether the Minister had provided any information regarding the District Plan. M Bacon confirmed that no information had been received.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Development Planning Unit budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Councillor Fulton thanked the staff for their work and assistance in providing clear, relevant information.

5.20 **Building Unit**

W Taylor reported a proposed increase in fees of 3% to cover insurance costs.

Councillor Williams questioned whether the Central Government's proposals on tiny homes would affect the Council. W Taylor advised that the effects were currently unknown; however, the Council would likely have more clarity between July and November 2025.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

(a) **Approves** the draft Building Unit budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.21 **Environmental Services**

B Charlton highlighted a 10% increase in all fees and charges across Environmental Health and Animal Control activities to reflect the actual costs associated with delivering the services.

There were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Environmental Services budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that proposed fees and charges are comparable to other Councils in the region.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon appreciated Environmental Services' work, noting that working in a regulatory environment was never easy.

5.22 **Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development**

S Hart took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon commended the quality of work provided by the Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development Team.

5.23 **Communications and Engagement**

S Hart took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Communications and Engagement budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Councillor Ward noted that the Council was fortunate to have a professional in-house team, which saved costs on the need to use contractors.

Mayor Gordon endorsed Councillor Ward's remarks.

5.24 **Civil Defence Emergency Management**

S Hart noted that the only significant change proposed to the draft budget was an amalgamation of budgets for the digital radio upgrade, which would not affect the overall budget.

Mayor Gordon questioned whether the budget for Mount Grey and Lees Valley was adequate to meet Compass FM's request for resilience. S Hart advised that staff were waiting for technical advice from engineers regarding the resilience requirements. A series of conversations were held with Compass FM, and further work was being done regarding specifics needed and pricing.

Councillor Fulton sought clarification on the function of the Operational Support Teams and their link to the Community Hubs. S Hart clarified that the Council worked with three volunteer teams during Civil Defence emergencies, i.e. the Operational Support Teams. This was separate from the Emergency Community Hubs.

Councillor Mealings asked when the recommendations from the capability assessment would be available and if it was expected any further budget would be needed because of the recommendations. S Hart answered a draft report was received; however, further clarification was required. At this time, it would be challenging to ascertain if further budget would be needed. However, if a further budget was recommended, staff would liaise with the Council whether they felt it was appropriate to allocate further funds.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Civil Defence Emergency Management budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.25 **Finance and AIM (Asset Information Management)**

P Christensen took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Finance and Asset Information Management budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Notes** that there is no change from what was proposed in the 2024/34 Long Term Plan for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.26 **Customer Services**

M Harris noted that fees for Certificate of Title searches would increase, as Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) had increased their fee by \$2, and the Council would do the same to stay aligned.

Mayor Gordon questioned if the removal of discounts for early rate payments was anticipated to cause public concern. M Harris advised that some people would be disappointed; however, of the 16 surrounding councils, 14 did not offer a discount. The proportion of those who currently received the discount was very small.

Following a further question from Mayor Gordon, M Harris stated that an increasing number of residents were paying by direct debit; however, the majority still paid through internet banking.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson sought clarity on the amount relating to the rates discount. M Harris confirmed it had been \$190,030. The original budgets allowed for the year were slightly higher as not all rate discounts had been provided.

Councillor Cairns inquired about incentives for switching to electronic notifications instead of using postage. M Harris responded that there were no incentives. However, staff encouraged ratepayers to switch. New ratepayers were encouraged to use direct debit and receive emails rather than physical mail.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Customer Services budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Adopts** the recommended Land Information Memoranda fees for consultation in the 2025/26 Annual Plan
- (c) **Agrees** to consult in the 2025/26 Draft Annual Plan to amend the Rates Policy by removing Section 4, Discount for the early payment of rates in the current financial year (under section 55 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002) to take effect from 1 July 2025.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked M Harris and the Customer Services Team for their dedication to serving the public.

5.27 **Canterbury Museum**

J Millward advised that the loan funding was intended to be spread out over 50 years rather than 25 years.

There were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Canterbury Museum budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- (b) **Approves** Canterbury Museum Annual Plan 2025/26 being referred to the contributing local authorities for six weeks, likely from March 2025 to April 2025.
- (c) **Notes** that staff will arrange a suitable time for the Canterbury Museum to present to the Council its draft Annual Plan and the Museum Project.

CARRIED

5.28 **Information and Technology Support**

A Keiller took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Information and Technology Support budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked A Keiller for his leadership in the IT space with the large changes currently underway.

Councillor Ward also thanked A Keiller and his team for their work and hoped the remainder of the project ran smoothly.

5.29 **Governance, Quality and Risk and Creative Administration**

S Nichols took the report as read, and there were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Governance, Quality and Risk, and Creative Administration budget for the budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon expressed appreciation for the support the team provided to the Council.

5.30 **District Management**

J Millward took the report as read.

Mayor Gordon highlighted that the proposed budget was to provide legal advice and planning assistance to the Community Boards, noting that he felt \$10,000 total was an appropriate amount. However, further discussion was required; therefore, this subject would be addressed at a later time.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft District Management budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

5.31 **Organisational Development and Human Resources**

S Salthouse took the report as read.

Councillor Cairns asked if the \$30,000 budget for legal fees was spent annually. S Salthouse confirmed it was currently spent in full every year; however, the Council was building up its in-house skills, and the staff was confident that over the next few years, the budget would decrease.

Councillor Fulton questioned if the EAP Service provided to staff was fully utilised. S Salthouse noted that the Council used Raise through Southern Cross, which provided counselling sessions, which had a full uptake. There was also a wellbeing budget through the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Team. This had stepped up due to changes to the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Act, where wellbeing was considered a number one priority.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Council

- (a) **Approves** the draft Organisational Development and Human Resources budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon noted a positive change since S Salthouse started with the Council and stated this budget was important as it took care of the organisation.

6. **BUDGET SUMMARY**

Mayor Gordon noted that there were only the following matters still to be discussed:

6.1 **West Eyreton Garrymere Water Supply.**

J Millward noted staff were currently working through options; however, there was some adjustment to be made on the UV treatment depreciation as well as some small adjustments to other accounts. Once the adjustments were made staff would present the final figures to the Council before final adoption.

6.2 **Provisions of bags at Dog Parks.**

J Millward reported that staff was confident savings could be made in other areas that would offset the costs and keep the provisions of bags at dog parks in the budget. Further investigation would need to be done on the possibility of recovering the cost as part of the Dog Registration Fees, as the intention of the legislation likely did not allow for the added cost of dog bags.

N Atkinson inquired if dog parks were the correct location for the bag dispensers, as the majority of the complaints received were not regarding dog parks but town centre areas. It was agreed that further investigation would be done.

6.3 **Legal advice and planning assistance to the Community Boards**

S Hart noted that the Council was drafting a policy regarding the funding of technical assistance to Community Boards. This policy would highlight that the Boards should focus on community views rather than expensive expert opinions in their submissions.

Councillor Redmond suggested \$10,000 per Community Board, i.e., a total of \$40,000, as \$10,000 would likely not be enough if multiple Boards needed access to the funds. He also noted that the \$40,000 could be a pool of money with no limited amount for each board to be used as needed.

Mayor Gordon noted that if \$40,000 was approved, there could be a budgetary implication. He preferred a minimum of \$10,000, which meant the Boards could request more funding from the Council if necessary. He did not want to send the message that there was an unlimited sum of money as more money had been spent on this in previous years than planned.

J Millward explained that, except for the previous year, only one Community Board had required technical support with a submission in the last eight years. In contrast, the Boards have submitted on three issues in the past year. He believed that the Community Boards needed a deeper understanding of planning processes because of the surge in applications driven by the Waimakariri District's rapid growth and its proximity to Christchurch.

Councillor Fulton agreed that \$10,000 may be sufficient for Community Boards to start drafting their submissions. He noted that Board members also needed to be kept informed about the entire process to be able to answer community questions accurately.

While Councillor Williams agreed with \$10,000 per Community Board, he also felt that if a Board needed more funding, they should be able to approach the Council.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson believed this should be deficit funding as there was no way to tell when or how much money would be needed.

J Millward advised that \$40,000 would not increase the proposed rates increase over 5% if the Council wished to consider the option.

J Goldsworthy questioned how the expenditure would be tracked. J Millward explained that the fund would be recorded as an individual line item in the budget, and if not used, it would carry over to the next financial year.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor Redmond

THAT the Council:

- (a) **Approves** a pool allowance of \$40,000 for legal advice and planning assistance for the Community Boards to use with a policy to be developed.

CARRIED

A division was called with the following results:

For: Mayor Gordon, Councillors Brine, Cairns, Fulton, Goldsworthy, Mealings, Redmond and Ward.

Against: Deputy Mayor Atkinson, Councillors Blackie and Williams.
(8:3)

Councillor Mealings stated that although she understood why the fund was needed, the Council also had to be mindful of the message it sent. She believed that the Council's Planning Team explaining the process and answering any questions from Community Board members would be the most helpful. She agreed that a policy needed to be developed to support this fund if it was approved.

Councillor Williams was not supportive of a consolidated fund as it may not have provided all the Community Boards with a fair opportunity to access the funds.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson also did not support the motion, as he believed it should be deficit-funded.

Mayor Gordon noted that the Community Board Chairpersons who had been involved in drafting submissions wanted to ensure the Council had funds in place to support the Boards if necessary. If the funds were not used, they could be revised during the next Annual Plan process.

Councillor Redmond stated that providing the fund was not a license to litigate; it was a way to support the Community Boards. The key would be the policy, as it would determine how the fund was utilised and the criteria for use. He felt \$40,000 was a modest amount that would be helpful.

Councillor Brine was eager for the conversation regarding the policy and its implementation. This fund would provide confidence to the Community Board that, if required, there was a fund they could access for assistance. He believed provision needed to be made as the cycle of Council meetings would not always align with when the funds were needed.

Councillor Ward supported a consolidated fund of \$40,000 that the Community Boards could apply for under a policy with strict criteria.

Councillor Fulton felt a consolidated fund of \$40,000 was the correct decision. The proximity to Christchurch would only see more large applications that the community may be in favour of or against.

Mayor Gordon thanked all staff for their work towards providing this prudent response to budget.

7. **NEXT MEETING**

The Council would meet on Tuesday, 18 February 2025, to consider a report on the consultation timeframes for the Draft 2025/26 Annual Plan.

The next ordinary meeting of the Council was scheduled for 9am on Tuesday, 4 February 2025 in the Council Chamber, Rangiora Service Centre, 215 High Street, Rangiora.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CLOSED AT 4.07PM.

CONFIRMED



Chairperson
Mayor Dan Gordon

27 May 2025

Date