WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, RANGIORA SERVICE CENTRE, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA, ON TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2025 AT 9 AM.

PRESENT

Councillor J Goldsworthy (Chairperson), Deputy Mayor Atkinson, Councillors T Fulton, J Ward, P Williams and Mayor D Gordon.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors B Cairns and P Redmond.

J Millward (Chief Executive), C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roading), N Robinson (General Manager Finance and Business Support), P Christensen (Finance Manager), G MacLeod (Greenspace Manager), M Harris (Customer Services Manager), T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader), D Young (Senior Engineering Advisor), H Street (Corporate Planner), L Palmer (Credit Controller) and C Fowler-Jenkins (Governance Support Officer).

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts declared.

3 TABLEING OF LATE REPORT

Councillor Goldsworthy indicated that a late report had been submitted via a supplementary agenda, which needed to be formally received.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson Seconded: Councillor Williams

That the Audit and Risk:

(a) **Resolves** to receive the late report, "*Insurance Claim and Settlement – Coastal Forestry Fire November 2022*".

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 **Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on Tuesday 11 March 2025**

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson Seconded: Councillor Fulton

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Confirms**, as a true and accurate record, the circulated Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, held on 11 March 2025.

CARRIED

4.2 Matters Arising (From the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

5 PRESENTATION/DEPUTATION

5.1 Miles O’Connor – Bancorp Treasury

M O’Connor noted that the economic commentary indicated the market was currently fairly dynamic. There was significant volatility in the market, which was almost unprecedented. On the Liberation Day, the tariffs on 2 April 2025, the United States' 10-year Treasury Bond yield fluctuated over the course of a day and a half, rising from 3.88% to 4.5%. Normally, when tariffs were raised, the focus was on inflation and the effect of the tariffs, as well as what would be needed when inflation prompted the Federal Reserve Bank to act. When tariffs were reduced, the market considered the impact on economic growth and the resulting slowdown, necessitating a decline in official interest rates.

The Federal Reserve Bank had started focusing on the level of the United States' overall debt, which was quite staggering; it was currently at $36 trillion, which increased $1 million every 30 seconds. It equated to 114% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whereas New Zealand’s was around 47%. While New Zealand did not rank high in public sector debt, it had a very high level of private sector debt. In New Zealand, according to the current Monetary Policy Statement, the Government lowered the cash rate to 3.25% in May 2025. The Council was policy compliant with all relevant parameters of the Treasury Policy. As of 6 June 2025, the cost of funds was 4.02%, and the debt was $220 million, which had declined due to prefunding.

M. O’Connor noted that tariffs increased in the lead-up to the Great Depression, and then began to decrease, a trend that continued for the last 100 years. There had been some sort of resolution in the United States-China Trade War, as the United States imposed tariffs of 145% on China, and China imposed tariffs of 110%, which had now been reduced to 30% on Chinese goods entering the United States and 10% on American goods. He commented that the United States-China trade deficit was around $300 billion, meaning the United States imported $300 billion more than it exported, which represented a drain on the United States' economy. However, the problem was that the United States could not compete with Chinese factories, which was partly a result of the American consumer's desire for cheap goods. One of the supposed benefits of tariffs was to replace imported goods with American-made goods; however, only 7% of those in manufacturing suggested that they would relocate factories to the United States. It was a multi-decade investment if you wanted to build a new factory, so it was a difficult decision to make.

M. O’Connor noted that the Council was at a 134% debt-to-revenue ratio, which was a requirement of the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA). The Council could have a debt-to-revenue ratio of 285%, indicating a significant ability to borrow more and still remain within the debt-to-revenue level. This was an endorsement of the Council’s debt capacity and the fact that it was not overborrowing and was in a very sound position.

Mayor Gordon sought clarification on the Council's net debt, which was currently $210 million. M. O’Connor explained that the Council’s debt was probably lower if cash were included. The LGFA considered any cash in the bank and any term deposits held by the Council when calculating the Council’s debt. Therefore, $230 million could be gross debt, but the net debt would be around $196 million.

Councillor Fulton asked if prefunding was a commonplace mechanism. M. O'Connor noted that Standard & Poor's (S&P), the Council's rating agency, had five or six different measures that it used to base the rating on, one of which was the Council's liquidity. For the calculation, S&P examined the amount of cash the Council had on hand and whether it had prefunded next year's debt. Mainly, S&P did not want the Council to have an excessive amount of debt up for refinancing. They wanted the Council to prefund debt, which would help improve its liquidity score.

Councillor Ward queried whether, given that the Council had already set aside the debt repayment for August 2025, the $210 million debt level equated to net debt. N Robinson confirmed that it equated to the net debt level. The Council would use the $10 million in August 2025 to repay the debt, and it would depend on Capital Works at that time whether it would draw down further.

Councillor Williams enquired how depreciation came into this. J Millward explained that the depreciation funding provision alleviated the need to use future replacement funding in that current financial year. Within the Council's Capital Works Programme, there were three divisions: levels of service, replacement, and growth, each with different funding mechanisms. All replacement assets would be funded through depreciation funding; however, the treasury function, as a whole, assessed the net deficits required across all the Council's accounts, and the Council borrowed money for these purposes. The Depreciation Fund was maintained as a special reserve, used solely for asset replacement. Rather than investing those funds in a bank, it would be borrowed internally at the same rate, which meant the Council was removing any cost-of-funds premium applied to it.

Councillor Williams questioned how much was in the Depreciation Fund and how the Council used the funds if it did not have them. J Millward explained that by accessing the funds, the Council would start losing track of future intergenerational equity because it did not have the funds for replacement in the future. This was part of the Council's Funding Strategy, which it was commended for, for setting aside funds for future asset replacement. The Council would never use those funds to repay debt, as it would put itself in a rather unfavourable position. The Council would have lower debt, but this generation would not benefit from it, and the next generation would be in a worse position.

Councillor Williams inquired whether the Council had previously used the Depreciation Fund. J Millward noted that the fund had only been used for the replacement of assets when they fell due. The Council was in a hybrid situation, where it did not have sufficient replacement funds for the next ten to fifteen years. Consequently, there were some accounts where the Council had to use debt funding to make up the difference in paying for those assets.

Councillor Williams asked how much was in the Depreciation Fund and whether the fund could be used to replace, for example, the water main on High Street, Rangiora. J Millward stated that the Council's depreciation reserve was approximately $ 40 million to $50 million. He advised that the water main along High Street was a critical asset, and if it were depreciated from the date of its installation, which the Council began doing in 1996, those funds would be used first to replace that asset.

Responding to Councillor Goldsworthy's enquiry, J Millward noted that the Council had only started depreciation funding in 1996, which was why it was playing catch-up on previous generations. The Council was depreciating assets such as plant, which had a short-term life. In the past, councils had a sinking fund into which they were obligated to put funds for the replacement of their loans.

Mayor Gordon noted that he understood that there had been no conclusion on whether the High Street main required replacement, and it would be speculating to suggest otherwise. J Millward commented that he was not up to date with the replacement process; however, the replacement of any sections of the water main would be funded by replacement funds.

Councillor Fulton inquired about the additional room for the Government to stimulate the economy. M O'Connor explained that one of the two factors in the economy that was performing well was agriculture. Tourism was at 87% of pre-COVID levels. He did not think there was too much the Government could do to stimulate tourism. The Government could stimulate the economy by spending through the Reserve Bank by lowering interest rates.

Councillor Ward wondered how New Zealand could bring international students into its universities that had been turned away from America. M O'Connor was unsure, noting that the University of Canterbury had record levels of international students, which were higher than pre-COVID levels. It may come down to the university's capability to accommodate the students.

Councillor Redmond noted that at M O'Connor's last presentation to the Committee, he said the Council's debt was not out of control. He asked if that was still his view. M O'Connor confirmed that he still held that view.

Councillor Redmond further noted that the United States imports and the imbalance with China. He inquired whether that factored in the fact that many United States companies were manufacturing in China, and M O'Connor noted that it did.

Councillor Redmond asked, given the debt calculator, what M O'Connor's view was of the endgame. M O'Connor was unsure, observing that there had been books written about it at Universities, but he did not quite understand where it all ended. The theory was that if the debt was going up, that was acceptable as long as a country's GDP was increasing, and it was really the debt-to-GDP ratio. The theory was that a country could inflate its way out of it, so it grew the economy, while the headline number increased, the debt-to-GDP ratio decreased.

Mayor Gordon asked how many councils were funding depreciation. M O'Connor was unsure; some councils did stop funding depreciation as a means to improve the debt levels and financials.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson inquired if there were any councils in New Zealand that did not have any debt. M O'Connor noted that Bancorp acted for 38 Councils, and they all had debt. If you were looking at net debt, some of them did not, because they had quite big investment funds. He thought the New Plymouth District Council might be in a net investment position. Environment Southland did not currently had any debt; as they had quite a significant investment in South Port and had an investment fund.

5.2 <u>Yvonne Yang – Audit New Zealand</u>

Y Yang noted that she would provide a summary of the Audit Plan and the procurement practice review, as well as a status update. The summary of the Audit Plan indicated that this year's audit scope remained largely consistent with that of the previous year. There was an increased focus on the capital projects, accounting and procurement account management. Audit New Zealand (Audit NZ) had also refreshed its assessment of material performance measures, introducing a new performance measure, rating response time, as a newly selected key measure. The audit timeline would be consistent with previous years, with the expectation that the current Council would adopt the 2024/25 Annual Report before the election.

Y Yang highlighted the sector interest area, as part of the Local Government Reform, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) would benchmark councils' performance. A benchmark report was scheduled for release, and the Council would have the opportunity to provide feedback. This measure was expected to include rates, the Council's debt levels, capital expenditure, a balanced budget, and road conditions. The legislation was expected to be amended to allow future benchmarking reports to include a comparison of contracts and consultant expenditure allowance as a matrix.

Y Yang further advised that the Procurement Practice review was an additional focus area for 2025 due to the recent improvements the Council had implemented in procurement and contract management. Audit NZ had proposed a high-level review of the Council's procurement practice. The purpose of the review was to acknowledge and celebrate the positive changes introduced by management and to provide any additional insight going forward. The Audit Team had completed 26% and was expected to reach 45% by the end of July 2025.

Councillor Redmond wondered if Y Yang could confirm whether the scope of the audit differed from that of a private sector audit. Y Yang explained that the accounting standards for a private sector audit differed significantly from those for a public audit. Audit NZ was required to follow the Office of the Auditor General's auditing standards when auditing local governments. In comparison to a private sector audit, they would follow international or New Zealand standards for the private sector.

Councillor Fulton noted that Audit NZ were an independent statutory authority, independent of other Government departments. However, the DIA was now also benchmarking councils. He asked if, going forward, there would be a parallel auditing system for Local Government. Y Yang noted that the Department of Internal Affairs was not functioning as an auditor; it would only present information, rather than conduct audits. The Office of the Auditor General was the public watchdog, not the Department of Internal Affairs.

Councillor Fulton inquired whether Audit NZ benchmarked councils. Y Yang confirmed that the Office of the Auditor General did do benchmarking and release reports. However, they would not really comment on the Council's performance from an auditor's perspective, as they observe whether a Council had been given an adverse opinion or any qualification.

Councillor Williams asked how roading evaluation would work when the Council did not know what funding it would receive from the Government, as it varied from year to year. Y Yang explained that the DIA had engaged experts with a wide range of expertise in local government infrastructure assets. The methodology behind it was a variation standard they followed; it optimised the replacement cost model. As of the June 2025 balance sheet date, the Council had a portfolio of roading assets, making a judgment call on how much it would need to replace the entire portfolio. It was considered indexing; the Council's current contract rates, and they would discuss the asset status with the Council's engineers. There was some level of optimisation in it, and from their perspective, they would review all the judgment assumptions and challenge the value of those assumptions.

6 REPORTS

6.1 Audit New Zealand Audit Plan for the year ended 30 June 2025 – P Christensen (Finance Manager)

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

Moved: Mayor Gordon Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** Report No. 250519087712.

(b) **Agrees** to the Audit Plan for the year ended 30 June 2025, as provided by Audit New Zealand.

(c) **Notes** that the final audit will start on 18 August 2025, and verbal audit clearance is planned to be received on 7 October 2025.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon supported the motion and thanked Y Yang and Audit NZ for their work. The Council were very fortunate to work with exceptional and professional individuals. The Council were very fortunate to have Y Yangs and Audit NZ's services, and the fact that the Waimakariri District Council was one of the first councils to be audited in the country was a testament to the Council's performance. He sat on other forums where there were councils around the country that were never in the first tranche and were waiting and complaining about it. The Audit Plan was prescribed by law, although the Council frequently challenged Audit NZ's fees and other aspects, he believed the Council received good value from Audit NZ.

Councillor Redmond endorsed the comments from the Mayor. He supported the motion and suggested that all prospective candidates standing for Council should read the Audit Plan to understand the role of the Auditor General, as the public sector differed significantly from the private sector.

He observed that a prospective candidate had stated on social media that, *in their experience in business, it was amazing what you uncovered when you got access to the books.* He commented that, given the scope of the audit outlined in the Audit Plan, he thought that person might be disappointed should that opportunity arise. As outlined in the Audit Plan, as part of a broader public sector audit, the Council was required to be vigilant for issues of effectiveness and efficiency, waste, and a lack of probity or financial prudence. The definition of materiality contained in the Audit Plan was much broader than the one used in the private sector. There was transparency, the Auditor General performed a watchdog role, there was nothing hidden, and the information was publicly available.

Councillor Goldsworthy agreed with his colleague's comments, noting that no one enjoyed being audited or being bound by regulations. However, considering past events, there were no systems in place to protect people, the need was justified. He commended staff for their time and effort.

6.2 **Financial Report for the period ended 31 March 2025 –** P Christensen (Finance Manager)

P Christensen commented on the report, noting that the surplus at the end of March 2025 was $3.1 million, compared to a budgeted surplus of $9.5 million. The leading cause of the expenditure shortfall was $2.4 million, which was under budget; however, the Council's operating revenue was also under budget by $8.7 million, predominantly driven by Development Contributions.

The report noted the Council's external net debt as at 31 March 2025 as $210 million and its total debt at $240 million. He observed that the Bancorp Treasury referred to the Council's current debt position, as this report referred to its position as of March 2025. Since March 2025, the Council had paid off $20 million, which accounts for the difference between the two reports.

P Christensen reported that the cash flow from operations was $35.1 million compared to $27.1 million in the period last year. With that cash, the Council had spent $37.5 million on assets, and there had been a $40 million increase in borrowing, which included the $30 million of prefunding.

There were no questions from elected members.

Moved: Councillor Fulton Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** Report No.250519088257.

(b) **Notes** that the surplus for the period ended 31 March 2025 was $3.1 million, $6.4 million under budget.

(c) **Notes** that this was predominantly due to Development Contributions revenue being $9.9million unfavourable to budget. Development Contributions were used to fund growth-related capital expenditure. Capital expenditure for growth was under budget by $15.6 million, which would mitigate the reduced cash from the Development Contributions.

CARRIED

Councillor Fulton was pleased to support the motion.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson supported the motion, as he believed that the Bancorp Treasury and Audit NZ deputations summed up the Council's financial position. Bancorp Treasury had reported that the Council was in a good financial position, with a debt-to-revenue ratio of 134%. Audit NZ had commended the Council for its positive changes. While there would always be challenges and instances where the Council did not always get financial projections right, he thought that staff did a good job.

Mayor Gordon was very proud of the Council's financial performance. He endorsed the Deputy Mayor's comments. The Waimakariri District Council was an AA-rated council, a notable achievement; the Council had earned that rating over many years of effective stewardship. He expressed a concern that the DIA's benchmarking of councils had not been developed collaboratively with the sector, as it was based on the New South Wales model and lumped all Councils together.

In his right of reply, Councillor Fulton concurred with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's remarks. He commented that if the DIA were using general dashboards for its assessment of councils, it needed to recognition that people in communities did not live in dashboards. Councils were subject to a whole range of variables, including natural disasters. The Council always needed to be responsive to its community.

6.3 **<u>Non-Financial Performance Measures for the quarter ended 31 March 2025 –</u>** <u>H Street (Corporate Planner)</u>

H Street took the report as read and acknowledged the comprehensive reporting by staff, as well as the work they were already doing for the end-of-year reporting.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson asked whether the change in the Council's IT systems had affected the Non-Financial Performance reporting. H Street noted that the impact of the Council migrating to a new IT system had been reflected in some of the results, but that it had already started in 2024. There was still work going on in several areas to refine some of their measures.

Councillor Goldsworthy questioned whether an annual target of less than five was an internal benchmark for the Council's operations or if it was mandatory across New Zealand. H Street advised that it was one of the mandatory measures based on 1,000 connections to the system.

Councillor Goldsworthy further enquired if there had been a decline in complaints regarding chlorine in the Council's water supplies. H Street observed that there had been an increase; 25 people had submitted on the chlorination of water supplies as part of the public consultation on the Council's draft 2025/26 Annual Plan.

Councillor Redmond asked if the five complaints were one of the mandatory indicators. H Street explained measure pertaining to water quality had six sub-measures, so a lot went into that one measure.

Moved: Mayor Gordon Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** report No. 250521090330.

(b) **Notes** 66 (73%) of performance measures for the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year were achieved, and 11 were not achieved.

(c) **Notes** 22 (25%) of the measures did not meet the target, but ten were within 5% of being achieved.

(d) **Notes** two (2%) of the measures will be reported later in the financial year.

(e) **Notes** all measures have been reviewed for the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan and adopted for the 2024/25-2026/27 financial years.

(f) **Notes** that the year-end forecast is based on achieving all the measures not yet reported for the year.

CARRIED

Mayor Gordon thanked staff for preparing the quarterly Non-Financial Performance reports.

6.4 **Reporting on LGOIMA Requests for the period 1 December 2024 to 31 March 2025 –** T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader)

T Kunkel took the report as read, noting that for the period under review, the Council received 82 official requests for information and responded to 66.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson Seconded: Councillor Fulton

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** Report No. 250521090032 for information.

(b) **Notes** that the Council received 82 requests and responded to 66 official requests for information from 1 December 2024 to 31 March 2025, two more than the 64 official requests responded to in the same period in 2023/24.

CARRIED

Deputy Mayor Atkinson thanked staff for the table in the report; it was interesting that Waimakariri District Council received the same number of official requests for information than most Councils of its size. Deputy Mayor Atkinson supported the motion.

Councillor Fulton was pleased to endorse the motion.

6.5 **2024/25 Capital Works March Quarterly Report –** J Eggleton (Project Planning and Quality Team Leader), D Young (Senior Engineering Advisor), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roading) and C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation)

D Young spoke to the report, noting it was the standard quarterly report. In total, the Council tracked 464 projects across the seven areas; of these, 154 were complete, 181 were on track, 18 were at risk, and 111 were delayed. This was less than ideal across the board, with the report highlighting a range of reasons. An exception was solid waste, which had a relatively small budget that was largely delayed as the Council worked through the Southbrook RRP works. Additionally, Earthquake Recovery and Regeneration had a fairly harsh self-reporting regime, whereby if $900,000 had been spent on a project but it was not completed, the $100,000 was not declared as delayed; instead, the $1 million was declared as delayed.

C Brown explained that staff had provided some additional context in the report to reflect the fact that the percentage of completion was relatively low compared to where staff would have wished to be. Some of the compounding factors included the slowdown in development. The Council had an annualised figure that was calculated on the percentage of greenspace land it would need to purchase to meet the district's growing population. However, this was partly dependent on when developers would develop the land and hand over the green space areas to the Council. The other factor was the land purchases for the Pegasus and Ravenswood community facilities. The Council undertook a restructuring of the Greenspace Team in 2024 and created a Strategic and Special Projects Team to provide a greater focus on capital delivery.

Councillor Fulton asked if the Council had a base standard that it imposed from one community to another when designing playgrounds. C Brown explained the Council had a levels of service document, which related to playgrounds and other assets based on the type of park. There were many catchment areas, so if the park were to serve a large number of people, it would be expected to have more resources. Every development was different.

Councillor Cairns inquired whether, as the district's population aged, the Council would look beyond just installing playgrounds and instead consider providing facilities for the ageing population. C. Brown stated that it was something staff considered; there were a couple of strategies that assessed trends and population demographics to determine what the Council would need to meet future needs. He noted that as the population was ageing, the number of young people was also increasing, so the Council needed to continue providing for the younger population as well.

Councillor Cairns inquired whether the Council was keeping pace with demand in terms of growth and providing adequate facilities. C Brown noted that the Council was keeping up with developments. Community facilities were more challenging because of the cost involved in building them.

Councillor Fulton noted that the Council seemed to have quite a focus on owning the buildings that housed community facilities. He inquired whether there had been any consideration of private sector ownership and management agreements for existing facilities. C Brown noted that an example of private ownership was the Southbrook Sports Club. When staff submitted the feasibility study to Council, they examined the long-term ownership and governance structure, as well as the recommendations from the experts. In today's market, it was challenging for volunteer groups to own and operate their own buildings, resulting in many being handed back to the Council to take over.

Moved: Councillor Fulton Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** Report No. 250529096262.

(b) **Notes** the actual and predicted achievement across all tracked capital expenditure.

(c) **Notes** that of the $94.33 million total capital spend, $45.46 million (52%) has been completed and $58.4 million (64%) is predicted to be completed (subject to weather and other matters outside our control).

(d) **Notes** that the December 2024 Quarterly Report predicted completion of 78.5%.

(e) **Notes** that progress towards achieving the 2024/25 Capital Works Programme is not as well advanced as intended across most areas, and the reasons for this are expanded on in more detail in the separate sections below.

CARRIED

Councillor Fulton thanked staff for the comprehensive report. He agreed it was good to find a balance between protecting the commercial interests and the sustainability of the Council. However, also working with community groups, which sometimes, with the best intentions, wanted to own and operate their facilities, and there was a relationship with the Council that needed to be maintained and strengthened.

Councillor Goldsworthy commented that the staff had had a challenging year. He appreciated all the different cogs that the organisation worked with.

7 PORTFOLIO UPDATES

7.1 Audit, Risk, Annual / Long Term Plans – Councillor Joan Ward

Audit NZ was onsite throughout May 2025, completing the planning work for the Council's annual audit. This had gone well, there were a few outstanding items to complete but overall no issues raised.

Audit NZ would return onsite from 7 July 2005 to conduct testing on the non-financial performance measures and the bulk of the valuation testing. The Council had changed its approach to testing fair values this year and would conduct valuations as of 31 March 2025. These valuations would be tested during the 7 July 2025 visit, and the final quarter would be completed when the auditors return on site in August 2025. This change in approach was to alleviate some of the Audit pressure due to the tight deadlines, as the Council was one of the first councils to complete its audit work. Verbal clearance was set for 7 October 2025.

It was also worth noting that Audit NZ was providing a complimentary service to review the Council's procurement environment against best practice. This was something that the Council welcomed, as it had employed a procurement specialist for the last six months and was seeing significant benefits from both a process and cost-saving perspective. Any further feedback in this space would only be beneficial.

7.2 Communications and Customer Services – Councillor Joan Ward

Customer Services

- 211 Land Information Memoranda (LIMs) were issued in May 2025, making it the busiest May since 2007. Turnaround time was six days.
- The fourth rates' instalment was due at the end of May 2025; 1,765 penalty notices were issued where rating units still had all or part of the fourth instalment unpaid.
- The Council had signed up with Connecting Now for a new telephone and video interpreting service. This followed a procurement exercise managed by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment on behalf of several councils and public agencies. The Council do not have a high demand for an interpreting service; however, it is important to have access to one. Payment was for the actual use of the service.
- Staff had been busy with dog registration enquiries and updates after the registration reminders were emailed last week, and the printed forms would be mailed in the next week.
- Changes had been announced to the Rates Rebate Scheme from 1 July 2025. There would be a two-tier eligibility with Super Gold Card holders having a higher income threshold. This would increase the number of couples on NZ Super receiving rebates. The maximum rebate was increasing from $790 to $805.
- So far this year, the Council had issued 2,880 rebates, compared with 3,048 for the total of the 2023/24 financial year.

Communication and Engagement

- Three major Communication and Engagement projects for this period included getting the Draft Annual Plan 2025/26 ready for public engagement, as well as the associated marketing communications campaigns. The Council's Communication and Engagement Team also managed the communications for Local Water Done Well with neighbouring councils, as well as the partnership with South Link Health to deliver the Rangiora Health Hub.
- 25 news stories, three significant Communication and Engagement Plans, 55 media queries during this period.
- Five engagement projects that had 4,700 visits, 265 contributions and 65 new registrations. The engagement database now had nearly 3,000 registered participants.
- 144,000 website sessions from 80,000 users
- E-newsletter nearing 900 subscribers and regularly had an open rate of around 70%. The industry standard was approximately. 23%.
- Social media remained dominated by Facebook. The Council had 25,594 followers, of which 500 were new. The reach exceeded 300,000 for this period. The top organic post for this period was the response to the water main break on High Street, Rangiora, which reached 76,338 people.
- Major design projects included the refresh of the Trevor Inch Memorial Library, Draft Annual Plan print and video collateral, Owen Stalker Park signage, and numerous Let's Talk engagement projects.

8 QUESTIONS

Nil.

9 URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

10 MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED

In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act (or sections 6, 7 or 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may be, it was moved:

Moved: Councillor Goldsworthy Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

1. That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting:

Item 9.1	Application for Rating Sale – 3 Newnham Street, Rangiora.
Item 9.2	Insurance Claim and Settlement – Coastal Forestry Fire November 2022

The general subject of the matters considered while the public was excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution were as follows:

Item No.	Subject	Reason for excluding the public	Grounds for excluding the public.
9.1	Application for Rating Sale – 3 Newnham Street, Rangiora	Good reason to withhold exists under section 7	To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. **LGOIMA Sections 7(2) (a).**

Item No.	Subject	Reason for excluding the public	Grounds for excluding the public.
9.2	Insurance Claim & Settlement – Coastal Forestry Fire Nov 2022	Good reason to withhold exists under section 7	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities". **LGOIMA Section 7(h)**

CARRIED

CLOSED MEETING

The public excluded portion of the meeting was held from 11:25am to 11:46am.

OPEN MEETING

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee would be held on Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 9 am, in the Council Chambers, Rangiora Service Centre.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:46AM.

CONFIRMED

Chairperson

Date