

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, RANGIORA SERVICE CENTRE, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA, ON TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026, AT 9AM.

PRESENT

Councillors J Goldsworthy (Chairperson), T Bartle, W Doody, T Fulton, B McLaren, J Ward and Mayor D Gordon.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors B Cairns, S Powell and Deputy Mayor P Redmond (audiovisual link)

J Millward (Chief Executive), C Genet (General Manager Finance and Business Support), C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Rooding), P Christensen (Finance Manager), M Harris (Customer Services Manager), S Nation (Senior Quality and Risk Advisor), J Eggleton (Project Planning and Quality Team Leader), D Young (Senior Engineer Advisor), S Morrow (Rates Officer, Property Specialist), T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader) and K Rabe (Governance Advisor).

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Deputy Mayor P Redmond declared an interest in relation to the public excluded report.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on Tuesday 18 November 2025

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor McLaren

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Confirms**, as a true and accurate record, the circulated Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, held on 18 November 2025.

CARRIED

3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. PRESENTATION/DEPUTATION

Nil.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Updates to Risk Management Policy and Framework – S Nation (Senior Quality and Risk Advisor)

S Nation presented the report, which reviewed the Risk Management Policy and Framework, and requested that the Committee recommend their adoption by the Council.

Councillor Fulton queried whether the proposed Risk Management Policy risked placing undue responsibility on contractors by expecting standards beyond those typically applied in local business. J Millward explained that the Council's policy must reflect the enhanced health and safety Practices being introduced by the Government. He emphasised the importance of balancing the transfer of risk to contractors with the Council's need to retain appropriate levels of risk internally. J Millward further noted that, at present, only organisational risks relating to fraud, and their associated mitigation measures, were being managed within business units. Transferring additional risk to contractors would likely influence contract costings, so each case would need to be assessed individually.

In response to Councillor Goldsworthy's question about shifting responsibility for resourcing effective risk management from the Council to the Chief Executive, J Millward advised that ultimate responsibility would still rest with the Chief Executive.

Moved: Councillor Fulton

Seconded: Councillor McLaren

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260127013586.
- (b) **Notes** the action plan for inclusion of a new section to the Risk Management Policy regarding 'Mandatory Requirements' for risk management across the organisation.

AND

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee recommends:

THAT the Council:

- (c) **Adopts** the proposed changes to the Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework.

CARRIED

Councillor Fulton thanked S Nation for the report and noted the importance of delegation, acknowledging that the responsibility ultimately rested with the Chief Executive. He also emphasised the need for clear policy structures to prevent potential vulnerabilities, noting that this was fundamental to good governance.

Councillor McLaren highlighted the distinction between managing contractual risks and managing health and safety risks. He referred to Section 28 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, noting that health and safety responsibilities could not be contracted out and remained with the duty holders, in this case, the Council. Councillor McLaren further noted that the Chief Executive was considered an officer under the Act, and that all parties had ongoing obligations to manage health and safety risks as outlined in the policy.

5.2 **2025/26 Capital Works December Quarterly Report** – J Eggleton (Project Planning and Quality Team Leader), D Young (Senior Engineer Advisor), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roading and C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation)

J Eggleton presented the report, which set out the progress of the delivery of the 2025/26 Capital Works Programme. She acknowledged there were some risks in achieving the projected 80% delivery; however, this had been discussed in detail with project managers, and there was a reasonable level of confidence in achieving the forecast 80.1% expenditure.

Councillor Doody questioned the impact of current weather conditions on the delivery programme. G Cleary advised that while weather events do influence delivery, they were actively managed to achieve the best possible outcomes. He admitted that a wet autumn would place additional pressure on some projects.

Councillor Fulton queried the significant amount of Community and Recreation funding to be carried forward to the next financial year. C Brown explained that most of the carry forwards related to two major multi-year projects:

- The construction of the Pegasus Community Centre, and
- The purchase of property in Woodend for the future development of a community centre, which was expected to settle before the end of the financial year.

Councillor Fulton requested an update on the Mandeville Resurgence Project and asked whether staff and the community were aligned on what could be achieved in Phases 1b and 2. G Cleary advised that the first part of Phase 1 was relatively straightforward, while the second part, relating to driveway culverts, required individual engagement with each property owner. He noted that Phase 2 remained under development due to complex technical design issues. When asked whether technical requirements could override community input, G Cleary confirmed that they could.

Councillor Goldsworthy sought clarification on the at-risk roads and footpath projects. G Cleary explained that this included the Reseal Programme, which operated within a three-year completion window. Some projects had been reprioritised to align with complementary work from other business units, resulting in scheduling delays. He added that many works were weather-sensitive, and wet conditions had affected progress. While some work was expected to be delayed this financial year, G Cleary remained confident it would be completed in the following year.

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Mayor Gordon

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260204019834.
- (b) **Notes** the actual and predicted achievement across all tracked capital expenditure.
- (c) **Notes** that of the \$79.84M total capital spend, \$24.91 million (31.2%) has been completed and \$63.99 million (80.1%) is predicted to be completed (subject to weather and other matters outside our control).
- (d) **Notes** that the previous September Quarterly Report predicted completion of spend at 79.7%.

- (e) **Notes** that progress towards achieving the 25/26 Capital Works Programme appears to be behind schedule at only 31.2% completed spend to date (c.f.50% of the time has passed), but there is a significant programme of works currently underway, and there is reasonable confidence of the predicted spend being met (albeit with a number of remaining risks).

CARRIED

Councillor Ward noted that the expected 80% completion rate was consistent with the previous financial year and that the carry-overs had been appropriately incorporated into the following financial year's budgets. She considered this approach prudent and observed that borrowing had not increased due to favourable interest rates, reflecting sound financial management. Councillor Ward therefore supported the motion.

Mayor Gordon endorsed Councillor Ward's comments, acknowledging the strong management of the Capital Works Programme. He noted that the work had been complicated by an increase in weather events affecting scheduled activities. Mayor Gordon considered the Capital Works Programme a positive indicator of investment in a growing district, balancing depreciation management with loan funding to distribute the cost of infrastructure assets across generations rather than placing the full burden on current ratepayers.

5.3 **Approval of Rates Remission in Miscellaneous Circumstances** – S Morrow (Rates Officer, Property Specialist) and M Harris (Customer Services Manager)

S Morrow presented the report, which requested approval for a remission of rates under the Council's Policy for Rates Remission in Miscellaneous Circumstances on a property in Oxford, which was damaged by fire in December 2025.

Councillor Fulton observed that the property had sustained significant damage and asked about Council's policy should repairs take longer than one year. S Morrow advised that the property had been revalued essentially to land value, which next years rates would be calculated on. This paper sought to reduce the rates to 30 June 2026. The owners would be charged rates on the land only until the house was rebuilt.

Moved: Councillor Doody

Seconded: Councillor Bartle

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260129015471.
- (b) **Approves** a rates remission under the Policy for Rates Remission in Miscellaneous Circumstances of \$921.45 on the property at 884 Harewood Road, Oxford (Rates Assessment 2170011206).
- (c) **Notes:** The period for the remission covers up until 30 June 2026, which is the end of the current rating year. The remission will be offset against the remaining balance of rates owing up until the end of this period.

CARRIED

Councillor Doody expressed sympathy for the family, noting they had suffered a significant loss, and reaffirmed the Council's responsibility to minimise the hardship they had experienced.

Councillor Bartle agreed, and Mayor Gordon endorsed these remarks, emphasising the need for the Council to handle such matters sensitively and treat all parties fairly.

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

P Christensen presented the report, which provided the financial results for the period ended 31 December 2025.

Councillor Fulton asked about the stability of the Council's debt-to-equity ratio in light of district growth. P Christensen advised that operating revenue excluded vested assets and Development Contributions, and he expected the ratio to increase gradually over the year.

Councillor Fulton queried whether there was an acceptable variance range, such as plus or minus three percent, and P Christensen noted that he anticipated results similar to those of the previous financial year.

Councillor Ward noted that external borrowing was currently \$210 million, and was budgeted to increase to \$256 million by the end of the financial year. She asked whether achieving 80% of the Capital Works Programme would mean that only 80% of the additional \$46 million in borrowing would be required. P Christensen confirmed this was broadly correct, estimating that approximately \$15 million would likely be needed. He cautioned, however, that scheme requirements and inflationary pressures also needed to be taken into account.

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Councillor Fulton

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260128015301.
- (b) **Notes** the surplus for the period ended 31 December 2025 is \$5.4 million. This is \$5.6 million under budget.
- (c) **Notes** that a significant variance to the budgeted surplus is due to development contributions revenue, which is \$4.8million less than forecasted. This revenue depends on the progress of the developments. The current slow economic cycle has slowed development in the Waimakariri District.
- (d) **Notes** that a significant variance to the budgeted surplus is vested assets revenue, which is \$1.3 million less than forecasted. The value of the known 3 Waters assets vested in the Council has been recognised.

CARRIED

Councillor Ward observed that the Council continued to grow its asset base and commended the Financial Team for its effective budget management. She emphasised the importance of ongoing investment in the Waimakariri District, particularly during a period of low interest rates.

Councillor Fulton thanked P Christensen for providing responses that improved his understanding of the Council's debt-to-operating revenue ratios and debt servicing costs.

Mayor Gordon supported the earlier comments and acknowledged the Financial Team's efforts in managing debt during a challenging election period marked by widespread misinformation. He reiterated that asset funding should be intergenerational and noted that the proposed 4.91% rate increase remained one of the lowest in Canterbury. Mayor Gordon further acknowledged that while savings and efficiencies would need to continue to be identified to maintain low rates, this should not undermine future investment.

In her right of reply, Councillor Ward noted that bringing further depreciation funding back was significant and represented a hidden cost that affected the financial forecasts.

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

T Kunkel presented the report, which provided an update on the requests for information made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

Councillor McLaren noted that, after averaging the number of requests against the time spent, the response time was approximately two hours per request, which he considered fast and efficient. He queried whether this information was being reported correctly and whether staff time was being accurately captured. T Kunkel advised that a standard template was provided to all staff dealing with information requests, requiring them to indicate the time needed to collate the requested information. It was the Council's practice that if a request was expected to take more than two hours, applicants were asked to refine the scope of their request and were informed that the original request might incur a charge. She noted that, in most cases, customers either refined their requests accordingly or chose to withdraw them.

Mayor Gordon asked whether the Council had a policy for charging for complex information requests. T Kunkel responded that there was no formal policy setting out timeframes or charges, as each official request is assessed on merit. However, it was internal practice to assess each request and estimate the time required to respond. If it was anticipated that information could not be made available without substantial collation and research and would therefore impact the staff's ability to carry out other operations, the applicant was advised accordingly. Applicants were then provided an opportunity to refine their request. If the applicant wished to proceed with the request, the Council could charge for the information in accordance with the Ministry of Justice's rates. In response to a further question, T Kunkel confirmed that most applicants had refined their requests and that no charges had been applied to date.

In response to Councillor Fulton, T Kunkel clarified that requests for services were forwarded to the Customer Services Team to raise a service request, while all requests for information were evaluated and, if deemed necessary, dealt with under the provisions of the LGOIMA.

Councillor Goldsworthy queried the reference to "administrative deficiencies" in the baseline report. J Millward explained that this referred to information the Council had supplied in response to matters raised with the Ombudsman.

Moved: Councillor McLaren

Seconded: Mayor Gordon

THAT the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260202017782 for information.
- (b) **Notes** that the Council received 59 official requests and responded to 63 official requests for information from 1 October to 31 December 2025, 18 more than the 45 official requests responded to in the same period in 2024.
- (c) **Notes** that the Council responded to requests within an average timeframe of 11.7 working days.

CARRIED

Councillor McLaren noted that the organisation managed requests effectively, recognising this as an important function, and expressed satisfaction that the Council did not charge for information released to the public.

Mayor Gordon noted that no charges had been applied to date. He observed that scrutiny was beneficial and supported timely improvements that strengthened the organisation's transparency.

Councillor Fulton commended the Governance Team's responsiveness to queries and considered the triaging process to be effective.

6. **PORTFOLIO UPDATES**

6.1 **Audit, Risk, Annual / Long Term Plans – Councillor J Ward**

- The Annual Plan Consultation Document had progressed well – this was planned to be adopted for consultation on 17 February 2026.
 - Key highlights included:
 - Rates increase of 4.91% compared to the budgeted increase of 4.95% in year three of the Long Term Plan.
 - Updates provided to the community on the current reform programme impacting local government – specifically informing on Simplifying Local Government, Resource Management Reform, and Rates Capping. The Emergency Management Bill and the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act 2020 changes
 - How and why the Council had reduced the Capital Programme to a deliverable programme – from \$73 million to approximately \$61 million
 - Updates on the status of setting up the internal business unit for Local Water Done Well Reforms – including showing that we were within the lowest three Councils for cost increases by 2034.
 - An update on the progress of the Rangiora Eastern Link, following Council's decision in December 2025 to bring forward design works to progress the Business case.
- Planning for the 2027/37 Long Term Plan had commenced with approaches agreed for updates to asset management planning, and preparation in place for the strategy day with Council on 24 February 2026.
- Finance staff had been assisting on key local government reform submissions as subject matter experts, primarily those that were of a financial nature, including rates capping, development levies, and the infrastructure funding and financing arrangements. This work had been important to ensure strongly considered positions on matters which impact the key revenue streams future financial strategy.

6.2 **Communications – Councillor S Powell**

- The Communications Team commenced the week under a Heavy Rain Watch. As the team responsible for the Public Information Management (PIM) function during Civil Defence activations, they often begin preparatory work well in advance of other teams or any formal declaration.
- Social media performance, with Facebook as the primary channel, continued to track as expected. Between 18 January and 15 February 2026, Facebook content reached 671.9k views. The total audience has grown to 27,236, supported by the audience-first content strategy and the ongoing "Do You Know" campaign, among other initiatives.
- Council Website analytics for the period 1 January to 15 February 2026 showed approximately 53,000 active users. This was slightly less than usual, likely reflecting reduced activity during the January holiday period.
 - Most popular pages over this period were about swimming pools and rubbish/kerbside opening hours over the Christmas/NY period. 17,000 visits, approximately.
 - The *Do You Know* campaign continued to perform well, supported by a dedicated landing page. This initiative formed part of the broader *Your Council* education series, which commenced in the final quarter of 2025. The

campaign had utilised a mix of digital channels, including TVNZ OnDemand, MetService, and Stuff, with geotargeting applied to reach local residents. Limited physical signage in town centres had also been used to complement the video and social media components.

The campaign continued to perform well. To date, the landing page had received approximately 550 unique visits, with video engagement significantly higher. The campaign's primary objective of increasing awareness was tracking as expected. Final performance metrics for each channel would be available at the end of March 2026.

- The Local Government Reforms webpage had recorded 620 unique visits to date. Additional information and Council submissions were being uploaded as they were finalised.
- Engagement - Very busy with the draft Annual Plan consultation and full document. Youth Action Plan and Welcoming Communities were sitting with the teams. Four engagements were active this week:
 - *Draft Traffic and Parking Bylaw 2026* - Opened on 15 January. Currently, 29 were aware, 18 were informed, and two were engaged.
 - *Mill Road Stormwater Management Area* - This was a targeted engagement to residents of Mill Road, which looked to gauge support for applying development contributions to any further subdivision. Twenty residents in total, with a closing date of 15 February 2026.
 - *Libraries Survey 2025* - This went live on 5 December 2025. 1400 aware, 1000 informed, 765 engaged. This survey was usually emailed to the library's database and received significant engagement following the direction communication.
 - *Beach User Survey 2025/26* - Went live on 11 December 2025. 338 currently aware, 221 informed, 166 engaged. Posters had been put up around Pegasus Bay over the summer to gather/encourage submissions. Closed mid-March 2026.
- Media – The Press had assigned a new reporter to cover the Waimakariri District, Louisa Steyl, who was attending the meeting as her first introduction
 - Releases had been to proactively promote the many road works taking place over the summer, as well as the Local Government Reforms page, Annual Plan updates, and changes to service hours.
 - Twenty-five queries for January 2026 and 14 for February 2026 so far. January's queries were primarily around LG reforms, subdivisions, profiles, etc. February seemed to have been dominated by multiple media seeking comment on insurance in Woodend.

6.3 **Customer Services – Councillor W Doody**

Councillor Doody opted not to provide a report at this time.

6.4 **Procurement (Efficiencies and Savings) – Councillor T Bartle**

- Work continued to focus on the Council budgets in preparation for the 2026/27 Annual Plan, with an emphasis on ensuring that budgets reflected and secured appropriate cost savings. Notably, the Delta contracts for Greenspaces and Trees contributed significantly to reducing the projected rates increase to 4.91%.
- A further saving of approximately \$31,000 was achieved through the decision not to renew the subscription for Consult 24, the software used to manage consultation processes for Annual Plans and the Long-Term Plan. As the Council determined that the platform would be required only for Long-Term Plan processes or when an Annual Plan involved substantial public engagement, the cancellation represented a modest but positive example of cost-conscious decision-making within business units.

- Teams have also been heavily engaged in preparing Local Government submissions relating to rates capping, development levies, and infrastructure funding and financing arrangements. While progressing the Procurement Strategy remained a priority, the submissions and Annual Plan budget processes had necessarily taken precedence for both the Finance Team and the Strategy and Policy Teams supporting this work.
- The Council's Procurement Specialist continued to focus on identifying "easy wins" and was currently exploring opportunities to further leverage All-of-Government contract pricing. This includes assessing the potential benefits of joining an office furniture contract to determine whether it would provide more favourable pricing than current arrangements.

7. **QUESTIONS**

Nil.

8. **URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil.

9. **MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED**

Moved: Councillor Goldsworthy

Seconded: Councillor Ward

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 is moved that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting:

Item 9.1 Application for Rating Sale

The general subject of the matter to be 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-
REPORTS			
9.1	Application for Rating Sale	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).

CARRIED

CLOSED MEETING

The public excluded portion of the meeting was held from 10.21am to 10.47am.

OPEN MEETING

10. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 9am to be held in the Council Chamber, Rangiora Service Centre, 215 High Street, Rangiora.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 10.47AM.

CONFIRMED

Chairperson

Date