

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA, ON TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026, COMMENCING AT 11:30AM.**

**PRESENT**

Mayor D Gordon, Deputy Mayor P Redmond (Audiovisual link), Councillors T Bartle, B Cairns, W Doody, T Fulton, J Goldsworthy, B McLaren, N Mealings, S Powell, and J Ward.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

J Millward (Chief Executive), C Genet (General Manager Finance and Business Support), S Hart (General Manager, Strategy Engagement and Economic Development), A Gray (Communications and Engagement Manager), H Street (Corporate Planner) and T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader).

**1. APOLOGIES**

Nil.

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts declared

**3. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Nil.

**4. ADJOURNED BUSINESS**

Nil.

**5. REPORTS**

5.1 **Adoption of the Draft 2026/2027 Annual Plan and Consultation Document** – C Genet (General Manager Finance and Business Support) and S Hart (General Manager Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development)

C Genet noted that the Council was being requested to adopt, for consultation, the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 and the Consultation Document 2026/2027. He took the report as read; however, highlighted the following key points included in the Consultation Document:

- The Consultation Document confirmed alignment with the key messages previously discussed, particularly in relation to the financial budgets, which remained focused on the significant projects scheduled for Year Three of the Council's 2024–2034 Long-Term Plan. The budgets were broadly consistent with earlier iterations, with only minor exceptions and adjustments. Average rates movements remained stable across property categories.
- The Consultation Document also outlined several matters requiring consultation due to recent changes within the local government environment. This included a summary of recently concluded reform processes, covering Resource Management reforms, Rates capping, the Emergency Management Bill, and updates to infrastructure funding and financing arrangements, as well as Development Contributions.
- The Consultation Document also provided an overview of matters of particular significance to the Waimakariri community, including a brief update on the establishment of a Council in-house Water Services unit.
- The Capital Works Programme section outlined how the programme had been refined and scaled back to ensure it remained both deliverable and achievable within current capacity and resource constraints.

- The final matter addressed in the Consultation Document was the Rangiora East Link Road project. The report noted that design work had been brought forward, with a business case and updated total project cost scheduled for consideration at a forthcoming Council meeting. The estimated project cost had increased from \$37million to approximately \$65million. This increase equated to an estimated impact of around 70 cents per week for the average ratepayer.. The project had been endorsed by the Infrastructure Commission with funding yet to be approved by the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Responding to Mayor Gordon's question, J Millward advised that the projected average rates increase was 4.91%; however, if three water charges were excluded, the projected average rates increase across district wide rates was approximately 2.9% to 3%.

Councillor Fulton noted that the Oxford consultation event would now be held at the A&P Show. He queried whether staff would be present at that event and, if not, how questions raised by residents would be recorded. He further asked how similar matters would be managed across the other consultation events to ensure consistency in capturing questions and feedback. S Hart confirmed that staff would attend all scheduled consultation events to assist with responding to questions and addressing residents' concerns.

Councillor Cairns requested clarification on the methodology used to calculate the average rates figure. C Genet explained that the average rates figure was calculated based on the overall rates requirement after adjustments had been applied for growth. J Millward added that individual properties may not necessarily experience the average rates increase in the current year due to the impact of targeted rates for services such as water supply and drainage. As a result, some communities, such as Kaiapoi, would see rates movement of approximately 1.5% higher than the district average.

Councillor Cairns sought advice on the potential implications of future rate-capping legislation, specifically whether any cap would apply to the average rates increase or whether it would be applied uniformly across all rating components. C Genet noted that the implementation of the proposed future rate-capping had yet to be clarified. However, for the Taituara submissions, it was perceived that an overall rates cap was proposed. J Millward noted that rates-capping excluded three water charges and that district-wide rates were already under the 4% cap; therefore, if rate-capping were in place now, the Council would already be in compliance.

Moved: Mayor Godon

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Redmond

**THAT** the Council:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 260120008286.
- (b) **Adopts** the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 (Trim 260210023362) as the principal document relied on for the content of the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 Consultation Document.
- (c) **Adopts** the Consultation Document (Trim 260210023366) as the Statement of Proposal for public participation in decisions on the content of the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 and as the information for consultation in relation to:
  - (i) the draft 2026/27 Development Contributions Schedule as approved at the Council meeting on 27 January 2026.
- (d) **Approves** the proposed fee increases as set out in the fees and charges schedule in the draft Annual Plan 2026/27.
- (e) **Notes** the Annual Plan Engagement Schedule with the special consultative procedure to open on 20 March 2026 and close on 20 April 2026.
- (f) **Notes** the Draft Annual Plan and Consultation Document refers to further information and reports, and this information will be provided on the Council website during the special consultative procedure from 20 March 2026 to 20 April 2026.

- (g) **Notes** that the average rate increase per property is 4.91% and that this is consistent with achieving the Council's Financial Strategy set out in its Long-Term Plan 2024-2034). **Delegates** to the Mayor and Chief Executive authority to amend the Consultation Document following Council comments and to the General Manager Finance and Business Support, authority to make necessary minor edits and corrections to the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 prior to publication.

**CARRIED**

Mayor Gordon acknowledged the constructive discussions held by Councillors during late January and early February 2026, noting the significant preparatory work undertaken by staff following the election to understand and reflect the Council's priorities. He reiterated that one of the key priorities was the need to demonstrate financial restraint in the current economic climate. Mayor Gordon commended staff for delivering a prudent and responsible budget, resulting in an overall rates increase of 4.91%, with the average impact on district wide rates, excluding Three Waters, being approximately 2.9% to 3%. He noted that this compared favourably with the position of many other councils nationally.

Mayor Gordon highlighted the value of keeping the community informed about the Rangiora Eastern Link Road project. As the detailed business case and design work progressed, inflationary pressures and increased construction costs, consistent with national trends, had driven the project cost from \$37million to approximately \$65million. He noted that similar cost escalations had occurred in other major transport projects, such as the Woodend Bypass. While acknowledging the scale of the increase, Mayor Gordon emphasised that the estimated impact on ratepayers remained modest at less than 10cents per day.

Mayor Gordon stressed the importance of progressing the business case to Central Government and the New Zealand Transport Agency without delay, noting that the Eastern Link Road was critical to addressing current and future congestion in Southbrook, with traffic volumes of 23,000 to 26,000 vehicle movements per day. He referred to the delays experienced by residents, including his own experience travelling through the area, which had contributed to increased 'rat running' through Southbrook. Mayor Gordon also noted that while the Eastern Link Road was a key priority, it formed part of a wider programme of transport improvements, including the Skew Bridge upgrade, the Five Crossroads intersection, and the Ashley Road–Waihi Road corridor. He emphasised the need to provide certainty to the development community, particularly those contributing Development Contributions toward the project.

Mayor Gordon commended the 2026/27 Consultation Document and encouraged Councillors to attend the drop-in sessions to support community engagement. He noted that although consultation was not legally required for the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan, Council had chosen to consult to ensure transparency and to provide the community with an opportunity to comment.

In conclusion, Mayor Gordon advised that work on the 2027–2037 Long Term Plan would commence shortly, including a comprehensive review of water, sewer, and drainage rating structures. He acknowledged that addressing existing inequities, such as those affecting Oxford, which faced a significant sewer upgrade, would require careful consideration and may involve trade-offs.

Deputy Mayor Redmond supported the motion. He noted that the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 aligned closely with the Council's 2024-34 Long Term Plan and that, although consultation was not legally required this year, Council had elected to consult in order to engage transparently with the community.

Deputy Mayor Redmond observed that the key challenge remained achieving an appropriate balance between maintaining affordable rates and sustaining service levels. He advised that the proposed 4.91% rates increase represented that balance, equating to approximately \$200 per annum, or around \$4 per week, for the average ratepayer. Deputy Mayor Redmond noted that the Council had delivered some of the lowest rates increases nationally over the past six years and continued to demonstrate leadership within the local government sector.

Deputy Mayor Redmond acknowledged the impact of higher inflation and the effect of asset revaluations on depreciation, both of which were expected to contribute to cost pressures in the coming financial year. Conversely, lower interest rates had helped moderate the overall increase. He also commented on the effect of excluding Three Waters from the calculation, noting that this reduced the average increase to around 3%, which remained within the proposed rates cap of 2% to 4%.

Deputy Mayor Redmond further noted that adjustments to the Capital Works Programme were required to make the programme deliverable. He expressed concern about the volume of central government reforms, which imposed numerous unfunded mandates and created uncertainty for future planning. Deputy Mayor Redmond welcomed community feedback on the four key consultation topics and encouraged residents to review the Council's submissions page, which clearly outlined the challenges posed by the reform agenda.

Deputy Mayor Redmond acknowledged the extensive work undertaken by Councillors in reviewing the budgets line-by-line to achieve the proposed 4.91% increase. He also highlighted the Council's strong financial position, as confirmed by its AA stable credit rating, comparable to that of major trading banks.

In his right of reply, Mayor Gordon agreed that the AA-stable Fitch rating was a significant indicator of the Council's sound financial management. He emphasised that the rating reflected independent external assessment and ongoing prudent financial oversight. Mayor Gordon thanked Councillors, staff, and, in particular, the Chief Executive for their work in preparing the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27, noting that staff had clearly understood and responded to the Council's direction.

**6. QUESTIONS**

Nil.

**7. URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next ordinary meeting of the Council was scheduled for Tuesday, 3 March 2026, commencing at 9am and would be held in the Council Chamber, Rangiora Service Centre, 215 High Street, Rangiora.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11:55am.

CONFIRMED



Chairperson  
Mayor Dan Gordon

3 March 2026

---

Date