

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 215 HIGH STREET, RANGIORA, COMMENCING  
AT 1PM ON TUESDAY, 24 JUNE 2025.**

**PRESENT:**

Mayor D Gordon, Councillors R Brine, B Cairns, T Fulton, J Goldsworthy, P Redmond, J Ward and P Williams.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

J Milward (Chief Executive), K LaValley (General Manager, Planning, Regulation and Environment); M Bacon (Development Planning Manager); W Harris (Planning Manager); P Wilson (Principal Policy Planner); R McClung (Principal Policy Planner); J Manhire (Policy Planner); A Benbrook (Development Planning Administrator) and T Kunkel (Governance Team Leader).

Four members of the public attended the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Moved: Councillor Brine

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** the Council:

- (a) **Receives** and sustains apologies for leave of absence from Deputy Mayor Atkinson, Councillors Mealings and Blackie.

**CARRIED**

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts declared.

**3. REPORTS**

**3.1 Decisions on Submissions on Proposed Waimakariri District Plan and Variation 2 Under the Resource Management Act, and Variation 1 Under the Intensification Streamlined Planning Process – K LaValley (General Manager Planning, Regulation and Environment)**

M Bacon spoke to the report and highlighted that the Council was requested to consider the submissions lodged regarding the Proposed District Plan, as well as the Streamlined Planning Process. The two processes had very similar, but not identical, legislative requirements, which was why the Council was provided with recommendations from two panels. Both panels had attempted to outline their intentions and, as far as possible, integrate their decisions, providing a standard set of provisions, i.e., one version of the District Plan.

M Bacon explained that if the Council chose not to accept all the Proposed District Plan Hearing Panel's (Hearing Panel) recommendations, then it would be required to refer any recommendations it rejected, along with any alternative directions, to the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, who would make the final decision on these provisions.

M Bacon noted that the Council received 725 submissions, containing over 12,000 submission points during four separate public notification timeframes. The Hearing Panel held hearings for 35 days, during which they considered over 900 pieces of evidence submitted by the parties. It took considerable work and dedication from both staff and the Waimakariri community, over many years, to reach this historic milestone.

K LaValley observed that the Planning Officer's recommendations had not always been the same as the Hearing Panel's recommendations. The Hearing Panel had also not always accepted the Planning Officer's recommendations. However, staff were advising that the Council accept all the Hearing Panel's recommendations, notwithstanding their alignment with the Planning Officer's recommendations.

Councillor Cairns questioned how many submitters objected to the Medium Density Residential Zones. M Bacon advised that 75 submissions were received on the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS), which varied in their views. The applicability of the MDRS to the Waimakariri District raised concerns regarding shading and several other issues. However, some of the submissions were supportive of the MDRS.

Councillor Redmond enquired whether the Hearing Panel was constrained by the Government's directions on the MDRS, while the Council was already embarking on a District Plan review. M Bacon explained that the Hearing Panel had a legislative process to follow, which provided the different assessment criteria. For example, Qualifying Matters had a series of other tests that they needed to meet to be considered Qualifying Matters. The Hearing Panel may have been constrained in this process.

Moved: Mayor Gordon

Seconded: Councillor Fulton

**THAT** the Council:

- (a) **Receives** report No. 250120008002.
- (b) **Accept** the recommendations of the Proposed District Plan Hearing Panel appointed to hear and make recommendations on provisions and submissions lodged with respect to the Proposed District Plan (including Variation 2) pursuant to Clauses 9 and 10 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991 (including recommendations on notices of requirements) and accepts or rejects submissions, as recommended by the Proposed District Plan Hearing Panel's recommendation reports, for the reasons set out in those reports with respect to:
  - (i) the Proposed District Plan.
  - (ii) Variation 2 'Financial Contributions' to the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan.
- (c) **Makes** and notifies the recommendations of the PDP Hearings Panel on the notices of requirements included in the proposed district plan under clause 4(5) to the appropriate authority.
- (d) **Accepts** the recommendations of the Proposed District Plan Hearings Panel on provisions included in the Proposed District Plan under clause 4(6) that the Council has responsibility for within the Waimakariri District.
- (e) **Approves** the public notification of the Council's decisions on the Proposed District Plan in accordance with Clauses 10(4)(b) and 11 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991 and recommendations and decisions on notices of requirements in accordance with Clause 9 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991 on or before 14 July 2025 in line with the extension granted by the Minister of RMA Reform.
- (f) **Accepts** the recommendations of the Independent Hearing Panel appointed to hear and make recommendations on provisions and submissions lodged with respect to Variation 1 'Housing Intensification' to the Proposed District Plan (using the Intensification Planning Instrument) pursuant to Clause 101 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991 and accepts or rejects submissions, as recommended by the Independent Hearing Panel recommendation reports, for the reasons set out in those reports.
- (g) **Approves** the public notification of Council's decisions on the Intensification Planning Instrument in accordance with Clause 102 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991.

- (h) **Delegates** to the General Manager Planning, Regulation and the Environment any steps necessary to give effect to resolutions (b), (c), (d) and (e) above, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Mayor and District Plan Portfolio Holder.
- (i) **Notes** that staff will make any required clause 16 amendments to the proposed plan to make alterations of minor effect, or to correct minor errors prior to notifying the decisions version of the plan under existing delegations provided to staff and will provide a copy of the alterations to the Mayor and District Plan Portfolio Holder for their information.
- (j) **Recognises** formally the significant time and input that submitters within the process have put into the submissions, further submissions and hearings process.
- (k) **Recognises** formally the significant time and input that the members of the Proposed District Plan and Independent Hearing Panel appointed to make recommendations within the process have put into the submissions, further submissions and Hearings process.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Williams Abstained

Mayor Gordon noted that when the Council embarked on this journey, it was advised that it could choose not to review its District Plan, due to the numerous changes at the Central Government level. He was pleased that the Council had opted to proceed with the Review. The Operative Waimakariri District Plan, made operative in 2005, was seriously outdated, and the Council needed to ensure it was fit for purpose. The Proposed District Plan was publicly notified in November 2021. Subsequently, the MDRS emerged, presenting some challenges that staff managed extremely well to ensure the Council had a proposed District Plan that complied with the legislative framework.

Mayor Gordon acknowledged the work done by the independent Hearing Panel, which consisted of G Sweetman (Chairperson), G Rae, A Cubitt, M McKay, Deputy Mayor N Atkinson, and Councillor N Mealings. He believed that the Hearing Panel had done an outstanding job in piecing together the Proposed District Plan. He appreciated that there would be people who would be pleased with the proposed plan, whilst others may be dissatisfied with the decisions reached. However, that was the nature of an independent process: to consider the evidence, weigh all the factors, and ultimately make a decision. The Hearing Panel had worked through a complicated and intricately woven process to deliver a proposed District Plan that would meet the Waimakariri District's future needs by allowing for the development of between 14,000 and 17,000 new dwellings over the next 20 years.

Mayor Gordon observed that, under the Proposed District Plan, the Waimakariri District would continue to experience growth. Growth was significant; however, growth had to be planned, managed, and sustainable. The Waimakariri District's population had grown from 38,000 to 74,000 in 21 years and was expected to reach 100,000 in the next 15 years. Despite its continuous growth, the district had not lost its unique character, which was valued by the community. He elaborated on his family history in the Waimakariri District, noting that many residents in the district were connected and that the district's generational history should be preserved, despite competing demands. Mayor Gordon believed that the Hearing Panel's recommendations achieved this balance. The Council was requested to consider the Proposed District Plan, which had been crafted through an extensive submission process. He believed that the proposed plan needed to be approved and embedded. Once this had been achieved, the Council could focus on the challenges that needed to be addressed further, such as the MDRS. Mayor Gordon acknowledged that Councillors may have varied views on the MDRS; however, there would be time at a later stage, after the appeal process, to consider this matter further.

Mayor Gordon commended the extraordinary effort by staff across the organisation. The Council was proud of the work staff had done in managing the District Plan review process. The Council had organised a series of drop-ins to ensure residents understood, in layman's terms, what the Proposed District Plan entailed for them. In the interim, the Duty Planner would be available to assist the public in navigating the Proposed District Plan. Mayor Gordon supported the motion and urged Councillors to approve the proposed plan.

Councillor Fulton endorsed Mayor Gordon's comments, noting that it was a privilege to second the motion. It was a momentous occasion for the Council to consider the Proposed District Plan that would shape the future of the Waimakariri District. Although the proposed plan was compiled after a lengthy process including an extensive submission process. Councillor Fulton acknowledged that there would be residents who would support the proposed plan. He noted that the District Plan review was a rigorous process done with much care and expertise and reflected the input of the broader community. This was a once-in-a-generation plan which set the basis and ground rules for the development of the Waimakariri District and how the Council would interact with its community.

Councillor Fulton reminisced about the privilege of growing up in the Ohoka community and the importance of community facilities, such as the Ohoka Domain and subsequently the Mandeville Sports Club, in fostering a sense of community and ensuring community wellbeing. He noted that it was essential for the Council to ensure this continued by rigorously implementing the conditions of the Proposed District Plan. He commended the Hearing Panel, as an independent and impartial body, for listening to the community, considering expert evidence, and drafting the recommendations. Councillor Fulton thanked staff for their dedication and hard work throughout the District Plan review process.

Councillor Ward also supported the motion and acknowledged staff for navigating the District Plan review process on an extremely tight timeline. She noted that the Council received several workshops and briefings to ensure they fully understood what the Proposed District Plan entailed.

Councillor Williams commended the management of the lengthy District Plan review process. Although he supported approximately 90% of the Proposed District Plan, he did not accept all the Hearing Panel recommendations; hence, he would abstain from voting. He noted that he previously supported the Council's decision to discontinue the application to the Environment Court for immediate legal effect of rules relating to a future urban development area in Rangiora, which negatively affected approximately 30 people. He was embarrassed that he let down the residents by supporting the previous decision, which the Proposed District Plan did not rectify. Therefore, he could not in good conscience support the motion.

Councillor Cairns commented that he developed a better understanding of development planning throughout the District Plan review process and a genuine admiration for the Development Planning Team. He was excited about the future of the Waimakariri District, noting that there was a large number of people very keen to invest in this district, hence the continuous demand for rezonings. Additionally, he reviewed the Council's Welcoming Communities and Accessibility Plans, which are being developed to support a growing council. All of these plans fit together, but the Proposed District Plan would establish the foundation for striking the crucial balance that allows for this growth.

Councillor Cairns noted that he would support the motion; however, he had reservations regarding the MDRS, particularly as he had a slight lean towards food forests and people growing their own food in their own backyards. Hence, he was concerned about the reduced light affecting the enjoyment of life and its impact on people's wellbeing and health when living next to three-story houses. Additionally, the potential adverse effects of the MDRS on the value of neighbouring properties. He supported MDRS within new subdivisions; however, he believed that, as the proposed plan allowed for the development of approximately 17,000 new dwellings over the next 20 years, there was no need for MDRS. Councillor Cairns observed that residents would be tested in their ability to deal with the development of all the new sections and infrastructure, but it would be worthwhile, longer term. He commended the staff and the Hearing Panel for delivering the Proposed District Plan, as well as all the people who submitted their views.

Councillor Redmond noted that the Council's decision on the immediate legal effects mentioned by Councillor Williams was some time ago and served a purpose. The Council had received a growing number of subdivision applications in the rural areas, which was contrary to the Operative District Plan. After much reflection, as it did affect people's property rights, he supported the Council's decision. In hindsight, he still believes it was the right decision, as it achieved the desired outcome. He observed that the Proposed District Plan was more prescriptive than the Operative Plan. Hopefully, this would make it easier for people to navigate and form their opinion about the proposed plan.

Councillor Redmond also had concerns regarding the MDRS, as he did not believe that the rules should apply to a peri-urban area. However, he had decided to take the long view and wait to see what happened during the appeal period, because he was aware that there might be other avenues later, when the Council was in control of its own destiny and could address any remaining anomalies and concerns. He noted that it was unfortunate that the MDRS was announced halfway through the District review process, thereby constraining the outcome of the Hearing Panel's recommendations. Councillor Redmond supported the motion.

Councillor Goldsworthy believed that the Proposed District Plan would provide certainty of the way forward for Waimakariri residents and indicated the direction that the Council was content with for the district. He noted that any District Plan would never be perfect; there would always be people who would challenge the rules. However, in his mind, the Council would always endeavour to improve the regulations, enabling and protecting our environment and resilience. In summary, it was the best reflection of the Waimakariri District's current situation and its best hope for the future growth, which was why he supported the motion.

In this right of reply, Mayor Gordon commented that he voted against the Council's decision on the immediate legal effects as he felt that it affected people's property rights; however, the decision was taken for good reason to ensure that the floodgates would not open concerning the effect it could have had on development in the rural area. Nonetheless, the decision did have consequences there, which Councillor Williams rightly observed. He believed that the Proposed District Plan aimed to effectively manage land use, protect the environment, and ensure that proper rules were in place for managing future growth.

Mayor Gordon noted that Councillors seemed to be focusing on one or two measures in a much larger document, which contained several provisions. He was particularly pleased to see provision for granny cottages, which increased the size, while the Government had indicated 70 square metres, the proposed plan included 80 and 90 square metres. Also, it would allow for more than one kitchen under the roof. He did not believe that the District Plan should prescribe how families lived, as long as their dwellings met the Building Code. He was also pleased that the proposed Plan would strive to protect the rural character of the Waimakariri District in areas such as Ohoka. Two independent processes had concluded that residential style development in the Ohoka area was not appropriate. He hoped that developers would take note and respect the findings. Mayor Gordon acknowledged that there were Fast Track provisions; however, the Council had always maintained that fast tracking should respect processes that have already been well considered and should not revisit previous decisions. He had not met anyone in the Waimakariri District in favour of seeing that style of development in the district, in that particular locality. The proposed Plan made ample provision for growth in other areas in the district.

Regarding the MDRS provisions, Mayor Gordon did not believe that three stories would be suitable for the Waimakariri District, however this would be tested over time and addressed at a later stage. The Council's views on the MDRS provisions had been shared with the Minister for the Environment. He noted that the approval of the Proposed District Plan was the most significant decision this Council would be asked to make, as the current Operative District Plan was approved around 20 years ago. He hoped that it would progress through the following stages as intact as possible, as it was now committed for formal notification. He again thanked the staff for their work.

#### **4. QUESTIONS (UNDER STANDING ORDERS)**

Nil.

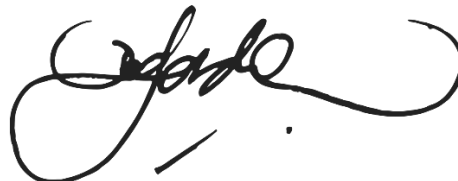
#### **5. URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS (UNDER STANDING ORDERS)**

Nil.

**6. NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Council was 9am on Tuesday, 1 July 2025, to be held in the Council Chamber, Rangiora Service Centre, 215 High Street, Rangiora. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1.45PM.

**CONFIRMED**



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Chairperson  
Mayor Dan Gordon

5 August 2025

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Date