Minutes of a Meeting of the
Marlborough District Council
held in the Council Chambers and via Teams, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim
on THURSDAY 2 APRIL 2026 commencing at 9.00 am

Present

Mayor Nadine Taylor (in the Chair), Clrs Scott Adams, Sally Arbuckle, Allanah Burgess (via Teams), David Croad, Deborah Dalliessi, Brian Dawson, Cyril Dawson, Barbara Faulls, Gerald Hope, John Hyndman, Raylene Innes (via Teams until 11.15am), Thelma Sowman, Ben Stace, and Malcolm Taylor

In Attendance

Messrs John Boswell (Chief Executive), Geoff Blake (Chief Financial Officer), Pere Hawes (Head of Environmental Policy), Setareh Masoud-Ansari (General Counsel), Claudia Mark (Solicitor), Jamie Lyall (Group Manager Property & Community Facilities), Glyn Walters (Head of Communications), Juliet Gibbons (Communications Advisor), Wayne Oldfield (Marlborough Roads), Steve Murrin (Marlborough Roads), Nicole Chauval (Committee Secretary), and Tiffany Wise (Governance Manager).

Karakia

The meeting opened with a karakia.

Apology

None received.

Recognition of Service

A presentation from Mayor Nadine Taylor recognising the retirement and 46 years of service for Legal & District Secretary, Tony Quirk, commenced the meeting. Guest attendance and farewell comments were received by previous Marlborough District Council Mayors Liz Davidson, Gerald Hope, Alistair Sowman, and John Leggett.

Cncl-0426-316 Declaration of Interests -

Members were reminded of the need to be vigilant to stand aside from decision-making where a conflict arises between their role as an elected member and any private or external interest. The following pecuniary interests were declared, as recorded in the Elected Members' Interests Register:

- Mayor Taylor, Clr. Brian Dawson and Clr. David Croad declared a pecuniary interest in Marlborough Airport Limited – 2026-27 Statement of Intent (Cncl-0426-323) and MDC Holdings Limited – 2026-27 Statement of Intent (Cncl-0426-324).

All three members left Council Chambers prior to the discussion and did not participate in voting on these items.

Cncl-0426-317 Introduction of Additional Item -

The Mayor / Clr Adams:
That the following additional item, pursuant to Standing Order 9.12, to deal with an item of business, namely Project Update – Peninsula Road Stopbank Repair & Upgrade, not included on the agenda be considered on the grounds that:

- **The information required to enable a full and informed option analysis was not available until after the statutory agenda publication deadline;**
- **The matter cannot be delayed because a Council decision is required to urgently advise contractors supplying materials for the project;**

- **The item must be considered in the public-excluded section of the meeting, pursuant to section 7(2)(b)(ii) and 7(2)(i) of LGOIMA, to protect commercially sensitive information and Council's negotiating position.**

Carried

Cncl-0426-318 MDC Holdings Limited – Directors Fees – *Motion to Withdraw*

S400-004-010-26

Council was advised, through the Mayor, that the report was originally presented to consider an increase to Marlborough Airport Limited directors' fees, assessed in accordance with the Institute of Directors' methodology and as part of the triennial review cycle to ensure fees remained aligned with comparable regional boards.

The Mayor moved to withdraw the report, noting that since the paper was prepared, economic circumstances for regional airports had materially changed, including increased financial pressure and the withdrawal of some services by Air New Zealand. It was acknowledged that while the proposed fee adjustment would have had minimal impact on the airport's overall financial position, the Directors had collectively requested that the paper be withdrawn as an expression of good faith and shared responsibility in the current economic climate, and to signal prudent restraint ahead of forthcoming decisions on funding, remuneration, and levels of service across Council.

With no objection from the members, the item was withdrawn pursuant to the Chair's authority under Standing Order 9 and was not considered further.

The Mayor / Clr Croad:
That Council withdraw the paper for consideration currently.

Carried

Cncl-0426-319 Confirmation of Minutes -

No requests for corrections were put forward.

The Mayor / Clr Croad:
That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 February 2026 (Minute Nos. Cncl-0226-267 to Cncl-0226-279) be taken as read and confirmed.

Carried

Committee Reports

Cncl-0426-320 Infrastructure & Community Facilities 26 February 2026 -

No requests for corrections were put forward.

Clr B Dawson / Clr Adams:
That the Committee report contained within Minute Nos. ICF-0226-280 to ICF-0226-286 be received and the recommendations adopted.

Carried

Cncl-0426-321 Environment & Planning Committee 5 March 2026 -

No requests for corrections were put forward.

Clr Faulls / Clr Arbuckle:
That the Committee report contained within Minute Nos. E&P-0326-287 to E&P-0326-301 be received and the recommendations adopted.

Carried

Cncl-0426-322 Strategy & Community Partnerships 12 March 2026 -

No requests for corrections were put forward

Clr Innes / Sowman:
That the Committee report contained within Minute Nos. SCP-0326-302 to SCP-0326-308 be received and the recommendations adopted.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Taylor, Clrs. Brian Dawson and David Croad exited Council Chambers prior to discussion of Cncl-0426-323 and Cncl-0426-324. Clr. Gerald Hope assumed the Chair for discussion and voting on these items. Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Blake spoke to the items.

Cncl-0426-323 Marlborough Airport Limited – 2026-27 Statement of Intent S400-002-012-27

Council considered the draft 2026–27 Statement of Intent (SOI) for Marlborough Airport Limited (MAL), which sets out the company's objectives, planned activities and performance measures for the coming financial year and following two years. It was noted the draft SOI is broadly consistent with the current year's document and reflects a period of relatively stable passenger numbers, with forecasts of approximately 272,000 passengers for both the 2025/26 forecast and the 2026/27 budget year.

Members noted the continued low safety risk profile, expanded sustainability initiatives, and the expectation of a modest operating surplus, while also acknowledging that no dividend is forecast to be paid to MDC Holdings for the year. The importance of MAL's ongoing relationship with the New Zealand Defence Force was highlighted as a key strategic consideration given the shared use of the airfield. Councillors were satisfied that the draft SOI met legislative requirements and appropriately balanced financial sustainability, regional economic development, safety, and environmental responsibility.

Clarification was sought on the dividend distribution policy contained in the draft Statement of Intent, noting that the report showed Marlborough Airport Limited had not paid dividends for several years and was not forecasting dividends over the period covered by the Statement. Council was advised that while dividends had been paid in earlier years, recent decisions not to declare dividends reflected the Company's capital investment programme and financial position. Significant expenditure, including major runway resealing works, had required retention of cash and increased borrowings. The Board had therefore prioritised debt reduction over dividend distributions, particularly given the Airport's relatively modest profit levels.

It was noted that this approach was considered prudent in the current circumstances and that dividend achievability would be reviewed as the Airport's debt position and future cash flows were reassessed. Council was further advised that the Statement of Intent is an annual process, providing an opportunity to review dividend expectations in future years.

There being no further questions, the recommendation was put.

Clr M Taylor / Clr Sowman:
That Council approves the Draft 2026-27 Statement of Intent for Marlborough Airport Limited.

Carried

Cncl-0426-324 MDC Holdings Limited – 2026-27 Statement of Intent S400-004-004-26

Council considered the draft 2026–27 Statement of Intent (SOI) for MDC Holdings Limited, which outlines the objectives, activities and performance expectations of the holding company and its subsidiaries for the coming financial year and following two years. It was noted that the draft SOI is consistent with the previous year's document and reflects MDC Holdings' role in overseeing and coordinating Council's commercial investments, particularly Port Marlborough and Marlborough Airport.

Members noted that debt facilities will continue to be made available to both subsidiaries, regular "no surprises" reporting will remain in place, and a letter of shareholder expectations will be provided to inform Port Marlborough's upcoming Statement of Corporate Intent. Councillors also noted that a dividend from Port Marlborough is expected at broadly similar levels to recent years.

Clarification was sought regarding the performance targets relating to group debt levels, as set out in the Statement of Intent, including whether the figures represented maximum thresholds or forecast debt levels over the period. Council was advised that the debt levels shown were forecast levels, based on current assumptions, including the anticipated timing and funding requirements of the proposed ferry project for Port Marlborough, which remains subject to Council approval. It was noted that, from a forward-looking perspective, MDC Holdings Limited is required to make reasonable assumptions about potential future commitments in order to present indicative financial targets. The clarification assisted members' understanding of the stated debt targets.

Overall, Council was satisfied that the draft SOI appropriately balances financial performance, prudent stewardship, and support for sustainable regional and economic development. There being no further questions or discussion, the recommendation was put and carried.

Clr Hope / Clr Hyndman:
That Council approves the Draft 2026-27 Statement of Intent for MDC Holdings Limited.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Taylor, Clrs. Brian Dawson and David Croad returned to the meeting with Mayor Taylor resuming the Chair. Governance Manager, Tiffany Wise spoke to the following item.

Cncl-0426-325 Local Governance Statement 2025 – 2028 D050-003-06

Council considered the updated Local Governance Statement, presented in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Act 2002, which requires a review of the statement for accuracy within six months of a triennial election. It was noted that the statement is intended to be a publicly accessible reference document outlining Council's governance structure, decision-making processes, and the key policies, bylaws, and legislative frameworks that guide Council's work, with links provided to ensure information remains current.

The Governance Manager advised that only minor updates were proposed, including the correction of a factual date relating to the Waste Minimisation Bylaw, and that delegation was sought for the Chief Executive to make minor and factual amendments during the triennium, with any material changes to be referred back to Council.

During discussion, councillors acknowledged the largely procedural nature of the review, with clarification provided that existing Standing Orders already enable the recording of division votes when requested, and that any broader changes to voting transparency would require a separate Council decision. Council was satisfied that the statement met statutory requirements and appropriately supported transparency and public understanding of Council governance and subsequently resolved to adopt the Local Governance Statement 2025–2028 with the Waste Minimisation Bylaw review date corrected to reflect “2025”.

Clr Hope / Clr Croad:
That Council:

1. **Receives the report.**
2. **Adopts the Local Governance Statement 2025–2028 as set out in Attachment 1.**
3. **Authorises the Chief Executive (or delegate) to make minor editorial or factual updates to the Statement during the triennium, where such changes do not materially affect governance arrangements.**
4. **Notes that any substantive changes will be brought back to Council for approval.**

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Head of Environmental Policy, Pere Hawes spoke to the following item.

Cncl-0426-326 Making PMEP Provisions Operative M100-12-01

Council considered the report seeking approval to make the approved provisions of the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (PMEP) operative, noting that this item marked the conclusion of a long and complex statutory process. The Environmental Policy Manager, Mr. Hawes, advised that the provisions had received ministerial sign-off and that this step represented a significant milestone, effectively bringing to a close a process that began with notification of the plan in 2016 and subsequent Variation 1 in 2020 following an extensive collaborative process with industry, iwi, central government and the wider community.

Councillors noted that the plan was now effectively almost fully operative, with only a very small number of outstanding appeal matters remaining, primarily relating to Aquaculture Management Areas, and that those matters were already before the Environment Court or subject to active resolution processes. In response to questions, Mr. Hawes confirmed that approximately 99.9% of the plan was now operative and provided clarity on the remaining statutory timelines, including the potential implications of forthcoming national resource management reforms and Council’s submission to the select committee seeking to retain the PMEP through a transition period.

Councillors acknowledged the scale of the work undertaken over more than a decade and commended staff for achieving a high-quality, largely settled planning framework, noting that the PMEP is widely regarded as a benchmark for coastal and marine planning. Council subsequently resolved to make the approved PMEP provisions operative.

Clr Faulls / Clr Hope:
That Council:

1. **Receive the report.**
2. **Notes the Minister of Conservation’s approval of Variation 1: Marine Farming provisions, associated Policies 14.2.3 and 14.20.2, and Policies 9.3.9 and 14.15.2.**
3. **Approve the non-regional coastal plan provisions of Variation 1: Marine Farming that are not subject to appeal.**
4. **Approve Rule 2.7.6 and Standard 2.9.6.**
5. **Make operative the approved provisions of Variation 1: Marine Farming, associated Policies 14.2.3 and 14.20.2, and Policies 9.3.9 and 14.15.2, Rule 2.7.6 and Standard 2.9.6 via public notice as soon as practicable.**

Carried

Cncl-0426-327 Decision to Conduct Business with the Public Excluded -

The Mayor / Clr Corad:
That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- Confirmation of Public Excluded Minutes
- Committee Reports (Public Excluded Sections)
- Morgans Road No. 2 Bridge

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is 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 are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section48(1) for the passing of this resolution
Minutes and Committee Reports	As set out in the Minutes and Reports	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under Section 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.
Morgans Road No. 2 Bridge	To enable the Council, as holder of the information, to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) as provided for under Section 7(2)(i).	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under Section 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Carried

The meeting closed at 1.11 pm.

Confirmed this .... day of 2026

N P TAYLOR
MAYOR

Record No. 2682092