



**Minutes of a Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chambers and via Teams, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim on
THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2026 commencing at 9.00 am**

Present

Cllrs B A Faulks (Chairperson), S J Arbuckle, G A Hope, J C Hyndman, R J Innes, M J Taylor, Mayor N Taylor, with Mr S Harvey (Rural Representative).

Present via Teams

Cllr A R Burgess (via Teams)

Also Present

Cllrs S R W Adams (from 10.33 am), C M W Dawson, and T P Sowman.

In Attendance

Mr H Versteegh (Group Manager Environmental Science and Policy), Ms G Ferguson (Group Manager Consents and Compliance), Ms S Leighton (Secretary) and Ms T Wise (Governance Manager)

Apology

Cllrs Faulks/Taylor

That the apology for absence from Robbie McKinney be received and sustained, and apology from Cllr Croad and apology for lateness from Cllr Adams be received and noted.

Carried

E&P-0726-05 Declaration of Interests

No interests with items on the agenda were declared.

ATTENDANCE: Jake Oliver, Harbourmaster, presented for the following item.

E&P-0726-06 Marlborough Common Passage Plan
H100-001-01

The Harbourmaster provided an update on the Marlborough Common Passage Plan and reported that monitoring data demonstrated improved vessel compliance with agreed navigation corridors in Queen Charlotte Sound and Tory Channel since implementation of the Plan. Members noted that exceedances had reduced significantly and that ongoing monitoring and engagement with operators was supporting improved navigation safety outcomes.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26146704).

Clarification was provided that while some corridor exceedances would continue to occur due to factors such as vessel interactions, weather and tidal conditions, monitoring data indicated these were generally explainable and consistent with safe vessel operation. Members further noted that monitoring and reporting would continue to support navigation safety oversight.

Cllrs Innes/Arbuckle

That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Amy Hunt, Water Monitoring Administration Officer, presented the following item. Gina Ferguson, Group Manager Consents and Compliance, provided clarification to questions.

E&P-0726-07 Compliance Monitoring of Water Take and Use Resource Consents E360-006-02

Ms Hunt presented the annual water take and use compliance monitoring results for the 2025/26 irrigation season. Members were advised that overall compliance had improved compared with the previous year, with a 10% increase in full compliance, and that no permits were assessed as significantly non-compliant. Clarification was provided that improvements in compliance reflected ongoing monitoring, education and enforcement activities, together with refinements to compliance assessment methodologies.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26146698).

Members discussed water allocation, monitoring requirements and the importance of accurate water use data in supporting future water management decisions. Ms Hunt advised that all consented takes were subject to monitoring, with larger takes prioritised through active monitoring and smaller takes monitored through a risk-based approach.

Discussion also covered the implications of land use change on future water demand, with officers noting that Marlborough's water allocation framework had been supported by the predominance of viticulture, which generally requires less water than alternative land uses such as pasture-based farming. Members were advised that, given many water resources are already fully allocated, a significant shift to more water-intensive land uses could place additional pressure on available water resources.

It was further noted that accurate monitoring, water accounting and reporting systems would become increasingly important in understanding future allocation requirements and the effects of land use change and climate variability.

Clr Arbuckle/Mr Harvey
That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Steffi Henkel, Senior Environmental Scientist – Water Quality, presented the following item. Hans Versteegh, Group Manager Environmental Science and Policy, provided clarification to questions.

E&P-0726-08 Recreational Water Quality Report E370-007-001 **2025-2026**

Ms Henkel presented the Recreational Water Quality Report 2025–2026 and provided an overview of recreational water quality monitoring undertaken at river and coastal swimming sites throughout the region. Members were advised that most monitored sites remained suitable for swimming most of the time and that elevated bacterial concentrations were generally associated with rainfall events. It was noted that, while some sites carried poorer long-term grades, water quality at those locations was often suitable for recreation outside periods of elevated contamination.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26146697).

During discussion, members noted the value of long-term monitoring in identifying environmental trends and measuring the effectiveness of management interventions over time. Officers advised that monitoring results demonstrated improvements at sites such as Picton Foreshore, Waikawa Bay and within the Te Hoiere catchment, reflecting the benefits of wastewater infrastructure upgrades and catchment management initiatives.

Members were also advised that further investigation was proposed into declining water quality trends identified at Governors Bay and that historical source tracking work in the Taylor River had identified urban wildlife and domestic animals as contributing sources of contamination.

Clr Hyndman/The Mayor
That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Alan Johnson, Environmental Science & Monitoring Manager, presented the following item.

E&P-0726-09 Avian Influenza H5N1 Situational Update

E315-001-003-01

Mr Johnson provided a situational update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) and outlined current national and regional preparedness activities. Members were advised that New Zealand remained free of the H5N1 strain, however the virus continued to spread internationally and had recently been detected in several Australian states. It was noted that the most likely pathway for introduction into New Zealand was through migratory wild birds and that national agencies were preparing for the potential arrival of the disease.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26146696).

Members were advised that, should H5N1 become established in wild bird populations, eradication would not be achievable, and the focus would shift to ongoing management of risks and impacts. Clarification was provided that the risk to human health remained low, that there were no food safety concerns, and that Council's role would focus on regional leadership under the Biosecurity Act, preparedness planning, coordination with partner agencies, management of Council-owned land, and regional communications. The Committee noted that work was continuing on the development of Marlborough's regional preparedness and communication plans to support the national One Health response framework.

Cirs Faulls/Innes
That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Clementine Rankin, Strategic Planner, presented the following two items.

E&P-0726-10 Housing and Business Development

Capacity Assessment 2025

N100-001-06-01

Ms Rankin presented the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment 2025 and provided an overview of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development requirements and the purpose of Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessments in informing future planning, infrastructure and growth-related decisions. Members were advised that, while the 2022 assessment identified a potential long-term housing shortfall, updated population projections, market conditions and housing supply information now indicated sufficient housing development capacity within the Blenheim Urban Area to meet anticipated demand in the short, medium and long term. The assessment also confirmed sufficient business and industrial capacity in most zones, although a potential long-term shortfall in Industrial 1-zoned land was identified.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26146694).

Members noted that the assessment was a point-in-time analysis based on current population forecasts, housing supply, infrastructure availability and market feasibility, and that regular reviews remained important as growth projections and economic conditions evolved. Discussion included housing typology preferences, the needs of an ageing population, housing affordability, and the role of infill and greenfield development in meeting future demand. Members were advised that stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of the assessment highlighted continuing demand for smaller, safe and accessible housing options and that an

updated housing typology survey would assist Council's future urban growth, housing and regional spatial planning work.

The Committee noted that the assessment formed part of Council's wider evidence base for growth management and would support future planning under the proposed Planning Act and associated regional spatial planning workstreams.

Cllrs Innes/Hope:

That the Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Receive the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment 2025 Report;**
- 2. Approve completion of a survey investigating housing typology demand to update Council's understanding of local housing preferences; and**
- 3. Approve the findings of the report being used to inform processes required by the Planning Act.**

Carried

Order of Business

The Chair advised that Item 9, Update on Proposed Plan Change to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan – Airport Protection, would be considered immediately following Item 7, Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment 2025, to facilitate the efficient conduct of the meeting.

E&P-0726-11

Update on Proposed Plan Change to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan – Airport Protection

M100-11-025-01

Ms Rankin presented a proposed Plan Change to address an identified gap in the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan relating to airport protection around Marlborough's airports. Members were advised that complaints had been received regarding frost fans constructed in proximity to airport flight paths and that, while frost fans currently require resource consent, the relevant rule did not enable airport protection matters to be considered because it contained no link to the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces established to protect safe aircraft operations. The proposed Plan Change would rectify this issue by introducing an airport protection standard into the existing frost fan rule.

During discussion, Ms Ferguson advised that the concern giving rise to the Plan Change related to the physical location and height of frost fan structures in relation to airport Obstacle Limitation Surfaces rather than airflow generated by frost fan operations. Members noted that the proposed changes would apply only to future frost fan applications and would not affect existing approved structures. The Committee was further advised that consultation had been undertaken with airport operators, affected landowners, iwi authorities and relevant statutory agencies, and that approval was being sought to progress the Plan Change through the Schedule 1 process and seek a Plan Stop exemption so the identified planning gap could be addressed.

Cllrs Faulls/Innes

That the Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Adopt the Plan Change and the accompanying Section 32 Report for the purposes of public notification;**
- 2. Approve making an application for a Plan Stop exemption under section 80V of the Resource Management Act 1991;**
- 3. Should the Plan Stop exemption be granted, approve notification of the Plan Change in accordance with Clause 5A of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 as soon as practicable; and**
- 4. Approve a 20-working day timeframe for notification.**

Carried

Post Meeting Declaration of Interest

Immediately following the meeting, the Mayor advised that she should have declared an interest in Item E&P-0726-11 – Update on Proposed Plan Change to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan – Airport Protection due to her appointment as a director of Marlborough Airport Limited. The Mayor did not move or second the motion. For completeness, it is noted that the outcome of the vote was taken as a majority of voice, and as such, would not have affected the outcome had the Mayor declared the interest and abstained from participation in the item. This note is recorded as a retrospective declaration for transparency and governance purposes.

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 11.04 am and resumed at 11.17 am.

ATTENDANCE: Setareh Masoud-Ansari, General Counsel, presented the following item.

E&P-0726-12

**Council Submission on Conservation
Amendment**

L150-003-01

The Committee considered the draft submission on the Conservation Amendment Bill and was advised that the Bill sought to enable increased economic and visitor activity on conservation land. Members were advised that the proposed submission focused on the implications for Marlborough, including potential increased demand on roads, parking, public amenities, waste management, monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities, and the risk of additional costs falling on local government without corresponding funding mechanisms. Clarification was also provided that the Bill did not adequately address how concessions required by councils on conservation land, or associated funding arrangements, would operate under the proposed framework.

Members noted the importance of ensuring that increased activity on conservation land did not result in disproportionate infrastructure and service costs being borne by Marlborough ratepayers. Discussion also highlighted the need for local impacts to be recognised in the legislative framework, including consideration of funding, cost-sharing arrangements and the role of local decision-making in relation to conservation land use. The Committee agreed that lodging the draft submission would ensure Marlborough's interests were represented within the Select Committee process while preserving Council's ability to confirm its final position.

Cllrs Hope/Innes

That the Committee:

- 1. Receive the submission on the Conservation Amendment Bill, Government Bill 309-1;**
- 2. Note the Chief Executive has delegated authority to lodge the draft submission on behalf of Council to the Select Committee before submissions close on 13 July 2026, expressly subject to Council approval; and**
- 3. Endorse the lodging of the final submission with the Select Committee after Council approves it at its meeting on 6 August 2026.**

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearson, Strategic Planner, presented the following item.

E&P-0726-13 **Proposed Plan Change to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (Operative in Part) – Water Take for Biosecurity Purposes – Wilding Conifer Control** M100-11-01

Ms Pearson presented a proposal to initiate a Plan Change to enable the take and use of water for Council-controlled biosecurity operations, particularly wilding conifer control. Members were advised that recent Government funding announcements would allow a significant increase in wilding conifer control activities in Marlborough; however, existing PMEP provisions prohibiting the take and use of water from certain high-value water bodies could unintentionally restrict the ability to undertake aerial and ground-based control operations in remote upper catchments where water is required to mix agrichemicals for spraying.

The Committee noted that the proposed Plan Change was intended to remove an unintended barrier to biosecurity operations while maintaining consideration of the natural and human use values of affected water bodies through the plan-making process. Members were advised that enabling access to water for wilding conifer control would support protection of catchment water yields, indigenous biodiversity, landscape values and wildfire risk reduction, and would assist Council in fully utilising available Government funding. It was further noted that staff would investigate whether other PMEP provisions created similar obstacles for biosecurity programmes and that a Ministerial exemption from the current Plan Stop requirements would be required before the Plan Change could proceed.

Cllrs Faulls/Innes

That the Committee recommend Council approve the preparation of, and consultation on, a change to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (Operative in Part), to enable the take and use of water for biosecurity purposes – wilding conifer control by the Marlborough District Council and any delegated authorities and contractors.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Louise Walker, Resource Management Strategic Planner, presented the following three items.

E&P-0726-14 **Biodiversity Strategy** **E310-018-01**

Ms Walker presented a proposal to commence development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Marlborough. Members were advised that the Strategy was required under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity and would provide a coordinated framework to guide biodiversity outcomes across the region.

Members discussed the relationship between the Biodiversity Strategy, Biosecurity Strategy Refresh and Regional Pest Management Plan Review, including opportunities for integrated engagement and consultation. Concern was expressed that the recommendations, as drafted, could commit Council and staff to progressing all three workstreams concurrently before programme staging, timeframes and resource requirements had been fully considered.

Members agreed that flexibility should be retained over the timing and delivery of the workstreams to support effective governance oversight and resource management, while still allowing opportunities for alignment between the projects.

The establishment of a subcommittee was discussed, noting the subcommittee would have an advisory and oversight role only and would not be a decision-making body. Members noted that any members serving on the subcommittee would not participate in subsequent hearings or deliberations on submissions received through public consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy, to avoid any risk of bias or predetermination. Any recommendations arising from the strategy process will be reported back to Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council. Councillor Arbuckle was added to the proposed subcommittee membership.

The Mayor/Clr Faulls

That the Committee recommend Council:

1. **Establish a subcommittee comprising Cllrs Barbara Faulls (Chair), Gerald Hope, Sally Arbuckle, and Robbie McKinney (Iwi Representative) and Simon Harvey (Rural Representative) to oversee the biodiversity strategy drafting process; and**
2. **Approve the commencement of the preparation of a Biodiversity Strategy.**

Carried

E&P-0726-15**Biosecurity Strategy Refresh****E315-002-006-02**

Ms Walker presented a proposal to refresh Marlborough's Biosecurity Strategy, noting that the existing strategy was adopted in 2017 and provides the overarching framework for regional biosecurity activities outside the statutory Regional Pest Management Plan. Members were advised that the review would provide an opportunity to consider emerging biosecurity risks, align strategic direction with current programmes and investigate integration with biodiversity outcomes.

Members noted the earlier discussion regarding governance, programme delivery and consultation requirements across the three related workstreams. Consistent with that discussion, members agreed that commencement of the Biosecurity Strategy review should not be contingent on the workstreams proceeding in tandem and that future consultation approaches, staging and resourcing could be considered by the subcommittee and reported back to Council.

As noted in the Biodiversity Strategy item, the proposed subcommittee is to provide an advisory and oversight role only and is not to be a decision-making body. Members noted that, to avoid any risk of bias or predetermination, subcommittee members would not participate in any hearings or deliberations relating to submissions received through public consultation undertaken as part of the Biosecurity Strategy Refresh process. Any recommendations arising from the refresh process will be reported back to Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council. Councillor Arbuckle was added to the proposed subcommittee membership.

Cllrs Faulls/Arbuckle

That the Committee recommend Council:

1. **Establish a subcommittee comprising Cllrs Barbara Faulls (Chair), Gerald Hope, Sally Arbuckle, and Robbie McKinney (Iwi Representative) and Simon Harvey (Rural Representative) to oversee the Biosecurity Strategy refresh process; and**
2. **Commence the review of the Biosecurity Strategy.**

Carried

E&P-0726-16**Regional Pest Management Plan Review****E315-002-011-01**

Ms Walker presented a proposal to commence review of the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP). Members were advised that the RPMP is a statutory requirement under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and that, without a review process being initiated, the current Plan would expire in 2028, resulting in the loss of the regulatory framework supporting regional pest management programmes. Officers advised that early engagement was not required under the Biosecurity Act; however, it was considered beneficial to inform future development of the Plan and identify emerging pest management priorities.

During discussion, members specifically noted the distinction between the RPMP review as a statutory process and the non-statutory Biodiversity and Biosecurity Strategy projects. While recognising the benefits of coordinated consultation where appropriate, members considered that the statutory review should proceed on its own legislative pathway and that Council should not commit itself to completing all three workstreams concurrently.

As noted in the Biodiversity Strategy and Biosecurity Strategy Refresh items, the proposed subcommittee is to provide an advisory and oversight role only and is not to be a decision-making body. Members also noted that, to maintain the integrity of the statutory RPMP review process and avoid any risk of bias or predetermination, members of the subcommittee would not participate in any hearings or deliberations on submissions received through public consultation processes. Any recommendations arising from the review process will be reported back to Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council. Councillor Arbuckle was added to the proposed subcommittee membership.

Cllrs Faulls/Innes

That the Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Establish a subcommittee comprising Cllrs Barbara Faulls (Chair), Gerald Hope, Sally Arbuckle, and Robbie McKinney (Iwi Representative) and Simon Harvey (Rural Representative) to oversee the Regional Pest Management Plan review process; and**
- 2. Commence the review of the Regional Pest Management Plan.**

Carried

E&P-0726-17 Information Package -

Members received the Regulatory Department Information Package and discussed matters arising from the report. Clarification was provided regarding ongoing preparedness activities for potential rook sightings, including liaison with technical specialists and other councils, and members noted the long-term nature of eradication programmes for species such as woolly nightshade.

Discussion also covered contaminated land investigations, landfill-related work programmes and biosecurity monitoring activities. Members requested a future workshop update on the Chilean needle grass programme, including progress with monitoring, surveillance and management activities. Mr Johnson advised that a biosecurity threats and mitigations workshop would be scheduled following the onboarding of the newly appointed biosecurity staff member, with September 2026 identified as the proposed timeframe.

Members acknowledged the achievement of full dog registration compliance for the reporting period. An administrative correction was identified in the alcohol licensing section of the report, with officers noting that the applicant reference recorded as ASB Theatre should be amended to Whitehaven.

Mr Harvey / Cllr Hope

That the Regulatory Department Information Package dated 9 July 2026 be received and noted.

Carried

The meeting closed at 11.58 am.

Record No: 26141614