

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
STRATEGY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE  
held in the Council Chambers and via Teams, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim  
on THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY 2026 commencing at 9.00 am**

**Present**

Cllrs R J Innes (in the Chair), S R W Adams, S J Arbuckle, A R Burgess, J D N Croad, D A Dalliessi, B G Dawson, C M W Dawson, B A Faulls, J C Hyndman, T P Sowman, B D Stace, M J Taylor and Mayor N P Taylor

**In Attendance**

Ms M Aitken (Group Manager Council Operations), Mr J Lyall (Group Manager Property and Community Facilities) and Ms N Chauval (Committee Secretary)

**In Attendance via Teams**

Mr D Heiford (Group Manager Infrastructure & Services)

**Apologies**

**The Mayor/Cllr Dalliessi**

**That the apology for absence from Cllr G A Hope and Ms R Niven (Iwi representative) be received and sustained.**

**Carried**

**S&CP-0126-248 Declaration of Interests**

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Cllr B Dawson declared an interest in Item 3 – Business Trust Marlborough - Update

ATTENDANCE: Dorien Vermaas, Council's Economic Development Portfolio Manager and Beth Barnes, Board Trustee Business Trust Marlborough, were present for the following item.

**S&CP-0126-249 Business Trust Marlborough E100-005-007-01**

The Committee received the mid-year report from Business Trust Marlborough, presented by Beth Barnes. Members noted the Trust's activity across the first six months of the 2025/26 financial year, including the provision of mentoring support, expanded regional engagements, increased training offerings, and ongoing delivery against agreed KPIs. The Committee acknowledged the value of the Trust's support for business capability and the contribution it makes to regional economic development.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2622548).

During discussion, members queried whether additional events—such as business breakfasts or after-5 networking sessions—could be scheduled in Picton and Havelock, noting that travel to Blenheim can be a barrier for local business owners attending existing programmes. Beth Barnes acknowledged Cllr Faulls' established connections within the Picton and Sounds communities and indicated that it would be helpful if she could pass relevant business contacts through to Brian Dawson for follow-up.

**Cllr Croad/The Mayor:**

**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Mark Lucas, Council's Solid Waste Manager, was present for the following item.

**S&CP-0126-250                      Closure of all Council Waste Facilities on  
New Year's Day and ANZAC Day                      W300-005-015-02, W300-005-015-03**

Mark Lucas noted that the purpose of the report was to seek approval to close the Marlborough Waste Facilities and kerbside collection for New Year's Day and ANZAC Day for the welfare of the contracted staff.

The Committee considered the report seeking approval to close all manned waste facilities, as well as kerbside collection, on New Year's Day and to close all manned facilities for the full day on ANZAC Day. Members discussed the wellbeing concerns raised by contractors, as currently staff receive only two public holiday days off annually. It was noted that historical tonnage data showed minimal impact from closing facilities on these days and that the proposal would lead to improved work-life balance for contracted staff and a potential cost saving to Council. It was recognised that landfill operations would extend to a full day on 2 January to manage any backlog compared with the normal four hours.

Members were advised that the costs savings the figures are only an estimate as it will depend on the day of the week that the public holidays fall on there may not be a kerbside collection on that the day that it falls eg Wairau Valley, Rai Valley and Seddon transfer stations do not open every day of the week.

Members asked a number of questions at the meeting, and it was clarified that when a public holiday falls on a standard kerbside collection day, the collection is shifted to the following day. Members noted that there be good communication undertaken to ensure the public is aware of the arrangement.

**Cllrs C Dawson/Fauls:**

- 1. That Council approves New Year's Day as a non-collection day for Kerbside Collection.**
- 2. That Council approves closing all staffed waste facilities on New Year's Day and ANZAC Days including all Transfer Stations, Recycling Centre, Hazardous Waste Centre, Dump Shop and Bluegums Landfill.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Dorien Vermaas, Council's Economic Development Portfolio Manager, was present for the following item.

**S&CP-0126-251                      Economic Development Update                      E100-010-01**

Dorien Vermaas noted that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on the activities and progress on the KPI's and activities of Council's Economic Development team between 4 August 2025 and 14 January 2026.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2622545).

Members were advised that good progress is being made on the refresh of the Marlborough Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2022. Quarterly regional economic development meetings have been taking place with the regional stakeholders, quarterly economic reports from Infometrics have been distributed and collaboration with stakeholders and iwi continues to strengthen. Kānoa has confirmed funding for the installation of a 20,000-litre petrol tank and associated dispensing infrastructure at Elaine Bay in the Marlborough Sounds, which will support and enhance local economic activity and productivity. Te Au Pūngao, Marlborough's Technology and Innovation Hub, has successfully completed its first year of operation. Governance and financial sustainability measures are in place to ensure impact and alignment with Council's innovation objectives and Kānoa's requirements.

Ms Vermaas provided information to members on the connection between the TechHub, Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development section of Council. It was noted that Pūngao Te Au Pūngao – Marlborough's Tech & Innovation Hub – has now been operating for one year and Louisa Murray, Manager of the Hub, will provide a report back to Council at the next Committee meeting in March 2026 on what has been happening at the Hub.

It was reported that the Aerospace & Aviation CIT Group held a facilitated workshop in early December to update the work programme and to develop a renewed vision for Marlborough Aerospace & Aviation, with the outcomes contributing to the Marlborough Economic Development refresh currently underway. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 February 2026.

It was noted that investment attraction remains a key focus for Innovate Marlborough. Recent successes in this area include the installation of a 20,000 litre petrol tank at Elaine Bay supported through a \$350,000 Kānoa–RIF government grant, an \$8 million investment by King Salmon, and developments within the Riverlands Industrial Park. Further to King Salmon's initial investment, it is expected that the total value will reach approximately \$30 million once fully fitted out and creating between 100 and 180 jobs over the next five years. Additional progress has been made through King Salmon's infrastructure initiatives, including fish feed developments and the Whekenui vessel project at the Port Marlborough wharf, representing a significant investment in the region. Council will continue to work closely with King Salmon to support the successful delivery of this growth.

Looking ahead, members were advised that Ms Vermaas will be engaging with the aquaculture industry to progress a Marlborough-specific aquaculture opportunity and explore broader growth potential for the region. It was noted that the government has set a national target of achieving \$3 billion in aquaculture turnover by 2035, and that Marlborough currently represents around 60% of the industry.

**The Mayor/Clr Dalliessi:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Evelyn Arnold, Council's Strategic Planning Manager, was present for the following two items.

## **S&CP-0126-252                      Strategic Planning Quarterly Report**

**E101-001-001-01**

Evelyn Arnold noted that the purpose of the report was to provide an update to the Committee on the activities of the Strategic Planning function.

It was reported that the Council has established a dedicated Strategic Management function to strengthen governance, align planning processes, and embed community engagement into decision-making. Key priorities include developing a Strategic Framework to integrate all plans with the Long-Term Plan (LTP), conducting PESTLE and SWOT analyses to anticipate external trends, and facilitating strategic discussions to align vision and values with community outcomes. The draft Marlborough 2055 Strategic Scan will be available to Councillors next week for review and discussion at future briefings.

Members were advised that to assist with the delivery and management of the LTP, a Long Term Plan Working Group (LTP WG) has been established. This group consists of Councillors, supported by staff. The first meeting of the LTP WG was held on 16 December and a regular schedule of meetings to maintain momentum toward adopting the LTP in 2027 was developed. Minutes from meetings will be included on agendas for this committee. This structured approach allows for ongoing engagement with stakeholders, alignment with legislative requirements, and incorporation of insights from strategic analyses. By doing so, the LTP will reflect both internal priorities and external trends shaping Marlborough's future.

Ms Arnold noted that the work plan over the next 12 months includes completing SWOT analysis to complement the PESTLE findings, participating in Councillor Strategic Discussion to align priorities, prepare for community pre-engagement scheduled for June/July 2026, and continue regular meetings of the LTP WG to ensure timely adoption in 2027.

**Clrs Croad/Adams:**  
**That the report be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Enya Bekker, Council's 2026 Summer Student, was present for the following item.

**S&CP-0126-253**

## **Marlborough Town Centre Health Checks 2025-26**

**E100-005-009-22**

Enya Bekker noted that the purpose of the report was to inform the committee of the results of the 2025-26 Marlborough Town Centre Health Checks (covering Blenheim and Picton town centres).

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2622544).

It was noted that the Marlborough town centre health checks have been carried out every two years since 2011. The health checks research a range of parameters to test the 'health' of Blenheim and Picton town centres. The parameters include types of businesses, environment, street vitality, user surveys and spend data. Over time, the reports show a picture of how each town has changed and areas of improvement and where changes may be required. The information is useful to a range of stakeholders including Council, businesses, business associations and the community.

Members noted the following results of the survey. For Blenheim — the vacancy rate had decreased from 8% to 5%, while overall spend had reduced by \$21.5 million compared with the previous period. The services sector continues to grow, although some pedestrian routes remain poorly rated. Seymour Square and the Library were highlighted as the strongest attractions. In Picton — vacancies had decreased to 6% and spending had increased by \$2.4 million, supported significantly by cruise ship days. The recent upgrades to London Quay were acknowledged as having made a substantial improvement to the area's vibrancy.

Members raised several questions during the meeting and expressed a shared view that the results were generally positive. It was noted that some level of vacancy can be beneficial, as it provides opportunities for new businesses to establish themselves within the town centre. Members also observed that a number of large retailers have relocated from the town centre to Westwood, and proposed that Westwood be included in future surveys to ensure the results reflect the whole of the Blenheim area.

**Cllrs Croad/Fauls:**

**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 10.32 am and resumed at 10.46 am.

**S&CP-0126-254**

## **Long Term Plan Working Group**

**D050-001-L27**

The Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 16 December 2025 are attached for ratification by the Committee.

**Cllrs Croad/B Dawson:**

**That the Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 16 December 2025 be ratified.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Nicola Neilson, Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Manager and Jodie Griffiths, Council's Community Partnerships Advisor, were present for the following item.

**S&CP-0126-255**

## **Realignment of Arts, Culture and Heritage Funding**

**C150-001-000-01**

Nicola Neilson noted that the purpose of the report was to consider the transfer of the Marlborough District Council Community Grants 'Arts & Culture' and 'Heritage' categories (valued at \$50,000), from the Grants Sub-Committee to the newly established Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee; and to understand the requirements of Creative Communities Scheme funding, as set by Creative New Zealand, and transfer the management of the funds from the Grants Sub-Committee to the newly established Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee.

Members were advised that the current structure of the assessment committee for the Creative Communities Scheme does not meet Council's obligations under its agreement with Creative New Zealand. It was explained that removing the Scheme from the oversight of the Grants Sub-Committee and establishing a dedicated Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee would give Council greater flexibility to appoint members in line with Creative New Zealand's requirements.

Members were advised that the Community Grants includes several categories, including Arts & Culture and Heritage. Funding for these categories has averaged approximately \$50,000 per year, based on an average of 18 applications annually, and this figure has been used to determine the proposed transfer amount of \$50,000 from existing budgets. By reallocating these funds to the new sub-committee, decision making will be better informed and more closely aligned with the *Te Atatū: Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy 2024–2034* and the new Heritage Strategy, which is expected to be completed later this year as part of the Long Term Plan.

**The Mayor/Clr Sowman:  
That Council:**

1. **Approve the transfer of the Creative Communities Scheme and Arts & Culture and Heritage Community Grants funding from the Grants Sub-Committee to the newly established Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee.**
2. **Approve the transfer of \$50,000 from Marlborough District Council Community Grants, under the category of Arts & Culture and Heritage to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee.**
3. **Confirm the number of external committee members as follows:-**
  - (a) **Marlborough District Council Grants Sub-Committee - 4 community representatives**
  - (b) **Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee - 5 community representatives**
4. **Confirm the Chair of Council's Community Grants as alternate Councillor representative on the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sub-Committee.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Samantha Young, Council's Events & Community Partnerships Manager, was present for the following item.

## **S&CP-0126-256                      Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund                      C150-001-011-19**

Samantha Young noted that the purpose of the report was to seek Council approval of proposed changes to the administration and oversight of the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund.

It was reported that funding is available for rural sports club teams and rural school club teams within the Territorial Authority region, for members aged between 5 and 18 years, who require financial assistance with transport costs to enable their participation in local sporting competitions and events. These events refer to organised, regular sports competitions undertaken through club membership outside of school hours.

The Fund is administered on behalf of Sport NZ by 35 eligible Territorial Authorities across Aotearoa, including Marlborough District Council. Council's Grants Sub-Committee currently considers applications - these are considered at the same meeting as those received for the Creative Communities Scheme.

It was noted that the current process is lengthy for clubs and schools applying for funding and a Decision-Making Panel could be more appropriate given the relatively small annual budget and number of applications received each year. It was reported there are minimal risks associated with the proposed change, and any administrative adjustments required can be managed within existing resources.

Ms Young noted that proposed membership of the Decision-Making Panel is the Panel Chair (Chair of Grants Sub-Committee), staff representative from Sports Tasman and a staff member from Council's Events & Community Partnerships team.

Members were advised that the Panel Chair would have full delegation for funding decisions but changes to the Fund's criteria (in line with Sport NZ guidelines) would be reviewed and approved by the Strategy & Community Partnerships Committee. All funding decisions will be reported to the Strategy & Community Partnerships Committee.

**Cllrs Croad/Faulks:**  
**That Council:**

1. **Establish a Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund Decision-Making Panel, comprising the Chair of the Grants Sub-Committee, a staff representative from Sport Tasman, and a staff member from Council's Events and Community Partnerships Team.**
2. **Transfers the oversight of the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund from the Grants Sub-Committee to the newly established Panel.**
3. **Appoints the Grants Sub-Committee Chair to the position of Chair of the new Panel.**
4. **Approves full delegation for funding decisions to the Panel Chair with decisions reported to the Strategy & Community Partnerships Committee.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Nicola Neilson, Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Manager, and Liz Ward, Council's Heritage Marlborough Manager were present for the following two items.

**S&CP-0126-257      Edwin Fox Strategic Plan – Year One Report**  
**A200-001-01, A200-002-05**

Nicola Neilson noted that the purpose of the report was to report on progress made in the first year of implementing the Edwin Fox Maritime Museum Strategic Plan 2024–2027, approved by Council in October 2024.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2622541).

Members were advised that at the end of Year One approximately 80% of Year One actions have been completed with a further 20% in progress; the remaining actions are either ongoing, staged across multiple years, or subject to external dependencies and approximately 20% of Year Two actions have been progressed ahead of schedule during Year One.

Members were advised that, in the first year, achievements included the establishment of an expert-led preservation panel, delivery of a comprehensive preservation plan, completion of a branding refresh and the launch of a new website, completion of targeted building refresh work, installation of modern IT infrastructure and point-of-sale systems, and the successful delivery of the descendants' muster and new membership programme.

The second year will focus on further investigating the options outlined in the Edwin Fox Preservation Plan, progressing plans for improved visitor access and infrastructure, continuing enhancements to museum displays and exhibitions, expanding education and learning programmes, and strengthening key partnerships.

It was reported that a Memorandum of Agreement has been signed with the Edwin Fox Bequest Society and relationships with Heritage New Zealand and sector organisations have been strengthened. The 2025 descendants' muster was successfully delivered.

Iwi engagement has been identified as a priority area for further development, with opportunities linked to future museum development and long term planning.

Members were advised that a full environmental footprint has been undertaken and there is now an outline of practical and achievable steps that can be implemented. It was further advised the Edwin Fox Maritime Museum sits at silver Qualmark status and by implementing the environmental footprint this will help to reach gold status.

Members noted the next steps for Year Two which were further detailed in the agenda item.

**Cllrs Burges/Arbuckle:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

Liz Ward noted the purpose of the report was to present the Edwin Fox Preservation Project Report and the Expert Panel's recommendations for the future management of the Edwin Fox and to seek Council approval to refer the project to the Long Term Plan Working Group for further investigation.

By way of background members were advised that the Edwin Fox is a Category 1 historic place listed by Heritage New Zealand, and Council therefore has a legislative obligation to ensure its appropriate care, protection, and long-term preservation.

It was noted that at the time of the transfer, there were known issues with the dry dock, which had been ongoing since the mid-2000s, and remedial work had been undertaken in early 2023 to prevent failure of the dry dock gate. In October 2023, Davidson Engineering carried out a survey of the propping system and determined that it was failing and no longer adequately supporting the ship. As a result, public access to the vessel was closed on health and safety grounds, creating a significant challenge for the museum given that onboard access was a major visitor attraction and key point of difference. In mid-2024, recognising the complexity of the issues and the need for specialist expertise, Council initiated an expert panel and appointed a project manager to source the experts, convene the workshop, and prepare a comprehensive report.

The Expert Panel has provided its final report (available on Council's website), which outlines three options to guide future public access, development, and preservation of the Edwin Fox. Members considered the report and agreed that the report be referred to the Long Term Plan Working Group for further assessment.

The Expert Panel has provided its final report, available on Council's website, outlining three options to guide future public access, development, and preservation of the Edwin Fox. Members considered the report and proposed that the report be referred to the Long Term Plan Working Group for further assessment.

It was noted that the three options (A, B and C detailed in Appendix 1 – Edwin Fox Preservation Project), carry costs well beyond the Council's current budget. Therefore securing government funding and undertaking substantial external fundraising will be essential for their implementation.

**Cirs Burgess/Innes:**

- 1. That the report be received.**
- 2. That council notes options A, B and C (below) for the long-term preservation of the Edwin Fox and refers the report to the Long Term Plan Working Group for further assessment.**
  - (a) Keep Dry Dock (new structure inside)**
  - (b) Shallower Dry Dock**
  - (c) Raise Above Ground**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Tracey Green, General Manager Destination Marlborough, was present for the following item.

Tracey Green noted that the purpose of the report was to approve the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Destination Advisory Group to include an eighth seat allocated to Māori Tourism / iwi.

By way of background, it was noted that following the Destination Marlborough 'Future Path Project' review in 2024, Council approved the transition of Destination Marlborough staff and functions to a Council Unit which has been implemented. One of the key recommendations of the Future Path Project was that an Advisory Group be established to enable visitor industry representation input on the key activities of Destination Marlborough.

It was noted that Terms of Reference have been developed that describes the purpose, role, structure, membership and other relevant matters relating to the Destination Advisory Group with seven seats allocated. The Terms of Reference were approved at the meeting of the Economic, Community and Finance committee on 4 September 2025.

Members were advised that the Marlborough Destination Management Plan places a strong emphasis on Te Ao Māori principles and on developing and engaging Māori tourism operators. Adding an eighth seat to the Advisory Group ensures representation from this important and growing sector. This seat will be filled by either a Māori tourism operator or an iwi tourism representative, reflecting the region's commitment to inclusivity and its significant opportunity for growth.

**Cllrs Dalliessi/Fauls:**

**That Council approves to amend the Terms of Reference of the Destination Advisory Group by adding an additional seat which is specifically for Māori Tourism/ iwi as detailed below.**

1. ***To ensure the visitor economy reflects the cultural identity of Marlborough and supports iwi aspirations, at least one member should bring deep knowledge and experience in:***
  - a) ***Māori tourism development, including opportunities for Māori-owned or Māori-led tourism initiatives.***
  - b) ***Iwi/hapū engagement, whakapapa connections, tikanga, and kawa relevant to mana whenua.***
  - c) ***Applying Te Ao Māori perspectives in decision-making, aligning with values such as kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, and whanaungatanga.***
  - d) ***Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and the role of iwi as partners in destination planning and management.***
  - e) ***This expertise helps ensure culturally aligned destination development and authentic storytelling while supporting strong, enduring relationships with iwi.***

**Carried**

**S&CP-0126-260**

## **Housing for Seniors Sub-Committee**

**D050-001-H01, C600-004-002-01**

The Minutes of the Housing for Seniors Sub-Committee meeting held on 27 November 2025 were **attached** for ratification by the Committee.

**Cllrs Croad/B Dawson:**

**That the Minutes of the Housing for Seniors Sub-Committee meeting held on 27 November 2025 be ratified.**

**Carried**

**S&CP-0126-261**

## **Information Package**

**-**

Query raised regarding the opening times of Council's Park toilet facilities.

**Cllrs Burgess/Croad:**

**That the Strategy & Community Partnerships Information Package dated be received and noted.**

**Carried**

*Postscript: Following the meeting Councillors were advised that the public toilet installations located at Westwood, Oliver Park, Horton Park, Picton High Street, Picton Town Basin have auto lock/unlock times.*

*The female and male cubicles auto lock at 11:00 pm and unlock at 5:00 am.*

*The accessible cubicles in these toilet blocks are available 24/7 (a facility always available).*

## Decision to Conduct Business with the Public Excluded

-

Cllrs Taylor/Faulks:

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- Market Place
- Sub-Committee Reports (Public Excluded Sections)

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 Section 48(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. |
| Market Place                                    | 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 12.15 pm.

Record No: 2622549