



**Minutes of a Meeting of the
STRATEGY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chambers and via Teams, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim
on THURSDAY, 27 AUGUST 2026 commencing at 9.00 am**

Present

Clrs G A Hope (in the Chair), R J Innes (Deputy), S J Arbuckle, B G Dawson, C M W Dawson, J C Hyndman, T P Sowman, B D Stace and Acting Mayor J D N Croad

In Attendance

Mr N P Henry (Group Manager Strategic Management) and Ms N Chauval (Committee Secretary)

Apologies

The Chair/Clr B Dawson:

That the apology for absence from Mayor N P Taylor, Clrs S R W Adams, A R Burgess, D A Dalliessi, B A Faulls and M J Taylor be received and sustained.

Carried

S&CP-0826-81 Declaration of Interests

Clr B Dawson declared an interest in Item 4 – Business Trust Marlborough 2025/26 Annual Report.

ATTENDANCE: Mr John Patterson, Chief Executive, Marlborough Research Centre, was present for the following item.

**S&CP-0826-82 Marlborough Research Centre Research
Allocations 2026/27 E100-011-01**

The Chief Executive of the Marlborough Research Centre (MRC), John Patterson, presented the annual research allocations for the 2026/27 financial year. It was noted that the annual report to be presented later in the year would provide a comprehensive update on MRC activities, research outcomes, operations, and regional growth initiatives, while the current report fulfilled the annual requirement to advise Council of research allocations approved by the MRC Board and Trust.

The MRC annual research allocation 2026-2027 was attached to the agenda item for members' information.

Mr Patterson advised that the allocation process is undertaken annually and that funding decisions are made with the objective of supporting research initiatives that deliver benefits across a range of primary industries. Examples were provided of projects with applications extending beyond viticulture into other horticultural and agricultural sectors, including spore trapping, smart irrigation, and research relating to dryland farming and phosphorus management. It was also noted that MRC continued to focus on leveraging external funding, particularly from central government, to maximise the value of research investment.

In response to questions regarding the insect bioconversion project, Mr Patterson advised that the project was progressing, subject to funding and administrative processes associated with the Waste Minimisation Fund. Further information would be available prior to the annual reporting cycle.

Acting Mayor Croad/Clr Sowman:

That the report be received.

Carried

Note: The order of the agenda was altered at this point of the meeting and the following Item 5 was heard ahead of Item 4.

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

S&CP-0826-83

**Annual Plan 2026-2027 Economic
Development Team**

E101-000-002-01

The Committee considered the Annual Plan 2026/27 for the Economic Development Team. The Economic Development Portfolio Manager, Dorien Vermaas, presented the plan and outlined the key projects and priorities for the coming year. The 2026-2027 Innovate Marlborough Annual Plan was attached to the agenda item for members' information.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26191034).

In response to questions regarding the coverage of industry sectors within the plan, it was explained that while agriculture, farming, and pastoral industries were not the focus of specific Economic Development Team programmes, they remained important contributors to Marlborough's economy and would continue to be reflected within the Marlborough Economic Wellbeing Strategy. It was noted that these sectors had their own leadership structures and strategies, with Council's role being one of collaboration and engagement alongside industry organisations and stakeholders.

Discussion took place regarding the measurement of outcomes and value generated from the Economic Development Team's activities. Members were advised that an annual impact report was being developed to provide information on return on investment, investment attraction, and other economic benefits arising from programmes delivered or supported by the team, with the next report scheduled to be presented to Council later in the year.

Members sought clarification regarding the sister region initiative. An overview was provided of the relationship between Marlborough and Ningxia, China, noting its origins in economic and industry connections, particularly within the viticulture and wine sectors. The relationship was described as supporting industry exchanges, technology transfer, educational partnerships, and wider economic opportunities, with Council maintaining government-to-government relationships that assist local organisations and businesses undertaking activities within the region. It was noted that the relationship had delivered positive outcomes and continued to support economic development objectives

Cllrs Innes/Stace:

That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Cllr B Dawson declared a conflict of interest and withdrew for the following item.

ATTENDANCE: Ms Beth Barnes, and Gina Jewell, Business Trust Marlborough were present for the following item.

S&CP-0826-84

**Business Trust Marlborough 2025/26
Annual Report**

E101-005-001-01

Beth Barnes and Gina Jewell presented the Trust's 2025/26 Annual Report and provided an overview of the organisation's governance, activities and performance during the reporting period.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 26191035).

It was reported that the Trust continued to provide business support services through one-on-one consultations, mentoring, training opportunities, referrals to specialist support agencies, and business networking activities. Client engagement remained strong, with 43 businesses currently participating in mentoring programmes, and noted increased participation in training and events delivered throughout the year.

Members were advised that practical digital and business skills training courses continued to be popular across businesses of all sizes. Members were also advised of the introduction of a revised business start-up programme, which condensed the previous Startup Weekend format into a two-day event. Positive participant feedback had been received, with examples highlighting increased confidence and progress in developing business ideas.

Future priorities for the Trust were outlined, including increasing mentor and mentee participation, expanding training programmes, continuing business networking events, supporting businesses through targeted workshops, strengthening engagement with town centre and rural businesses, and increasing stakeholder partnerships. It was noted that work is underway to broaden governance representation on the Trust Board.

Discussion took place regarding Council funding provided to the Trust and the value of services delivered. It was noted that Council funding remains an important part of the Trust's operating model, helping to ensure business support services remain accessible and affordable. The role of mentoring, training and business support in promoting business resilience, capability development and growth across the district was also noted.

In response to a query on performance measures, it was noted that mentor matches were slightly below target. However, demand for training opportunities had increased, and some mentoring relationships established through national mentor selection systems were not reflected in local performance statistics. It was confirmed that existing performance indicators would remain in place for the coming year.

In response to a query regarding the Trust's financial position, it was noted that additional sponsorship had been secured and further funding opportunities were being explored to support a return to a break-even position while maintaining services. The Trust's reserves continued to provide for long-term sustainability, with trustees actively monitoring its financial performance. It was also noted that contractor expenditure included operational personnel costs, while governance functions were undertaken by volunteer trustees.

Acting Mayor Croad/Clr Sowman:
That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Ms Tracey Green, General Manager Destination Marlborough, was present for the following two items.

S&CP-0826-85

Destination Marlborough Annual Report 2025-26

D080-005-001-26

Tracey Green, General Manager of Destination Marlborough, presented the 2025/26 Annual Report and provided an overview of performance, achievements, challenges and emerging opportunities for the region's visitor economy during the reporting period. Members were advised that strong results had been achieved across a number of performance measures, including the training of 744 frontline travel trade agents, hosting of domestic and international travel sellers and professional conference organisers, and significantly increased visitor survey participation associated with the Queen Charlotte Track. These outcomes were attributed to changes in operational delivery models, increased engagement with industry, and targeted marketing activity.

To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2619037).

It was reported that Destination Marlborough had benefited from significant national and international exposure during the year, including international media coverage supported through Tourism New Zealand, participation in collaborative promotional campaigns, and successful tourism marketing initiatives targeting priority international markets. Positive trends were reported in international visitor spending, particularly from the United States, Australia and emerging Asian markets, while cruise visitation showed signs of recovery following the challenges experienced in previous years. Members were advised that Picton was expected to receive an increased number of cruise ship calls in the coming season.

In response to questions from members, clarification was provided on international media coverage, biosecurity matters affecting the cruise industry, regional representation within national tourism marketing, and changes to Tourism New Zealand programmes. It was noted that continued exposure for smaller regions within national marketing activity remains important. Members also noted the strengthening relationship between

Destination Marlborough and Port Marlborough, with ongoing collaboration to enhance the region's visibility within the cruise sector and support the recovery of cruise visitation.

An update was provided on the Destination Marlborough Advisory Group and destination management planning work. It was reported that the Advisory Group had met regularly and was providing industry advice, feedback and strategic input on destination management and tourism-related priorities. The group was also contributing to broader economic wellbeing and tourism planning initiatives and assisting with the identification of future priorities and projects.

Acting Mayor Croad/Clr Innes:

That the Destination Marlborough Annual Report 2025/26 be received.

Carried

S&CP-0826-86

Destination Marlborough Annual Plan 2026-2027

E100-004-01

Tracey Green, General Manager Destination Marlborough, presented the plan and outlined the organisation's key priorities for the forthcoming year. These included strengthening regional partnerships, expanding tourism collaboration initiatives, building industry capability in digital marketing and artificial intelligence, growing international visitor markets, identifying tourism product opportunities, and advancing business events aligned with Marlborough's key industry strengths.

Members were advised that regional partnerships continued to support the sharing of resources and maximise marketing opportunities. The importance of strengthening digital capability across the tourism sector was highlighted, with a particular focus on adapting to emerging technologies and maintaining Marlborough's competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

Members were advised that the Chinese and Indian visitor markets present significant growth opportunities. Engagement with local tourism operators had commenced to support understanding of these markets and the development of products and services aligned with visitor needs.

Discussion also addressed the identification of tourism product gaps within the region. It was noted that an audit of existing tourism products had been completed and that future work would focus on opportunities to broaden Marlborough's appeal across a wider range of visitor interests, including family experiences, accessibility-focused tourism offerings, and cultural tourism products. It was noted that addressing such gaps would support a more diverse and resilient visitor economy over time.

Clr Innes/Acting Mayor Croad:

That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 10.44 am and resumed at 10.57am

S&CP-0826-87

Long Term Plan Working Group D050-001-L27

The Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 14 July 2026 were presented for ratification by the Committee.

Acting Mayor Croad/Clr B Dawson:

That the Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 14 July 2026 be ratified.

Carried

S&CP-0826-88

Delegations to Authorise Staff to Licence the Edwin Fox Logo to Third Parties

L150-003-08

The Committee considered a report seeking the establishment of delegated authority for specified Council staff to approve and enter into written, non-exclusive licences authorising third-party use of the Edwin Fox Maritime Museum logo. Members were advised that the logo constituted Council-owned intellectual property and that enquiries had been received from third-party vendors and tourism operators seeking permission to use the logo on merchandise and promotional material. It was noted that no staff members currently held delegated authority to approve such use.

Members were advised that the proposal was primarily procedural in nature and was intended to ensure that any third-party use of the logo was authorised consistently and documented through written licence agreements that protected Council's ownership and control of the intellectual property. It was reported that licences would include appropriate conditions relating to use, duration, quality control, approval processes, termination rights and protection of Council ownership interests.

Cllrs Hope/Hyndman:

That Council, under Schedule 7, clause 32 of the Local Government Act 2002, delegates authority to approve and enter into written, non-exclusive licences for third-party use of the Edwin Fox logo, subject to Council's policies and any applicable intellectual property protections to the following Council staff:

- a) Chief Executive Officer
- b) Group Manager Council Operations
- c) Arts Culture and Heritage Manager
- d) Heritage Manager
- e) Edwin Fox Maritime Museum Manager

Carried

S&CP-0826-89

Information Package

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Cllrs Hope/Innes:

That the Strategy & Community Partnerships Information Package dated 27 August 2026 be received and noted.

Carried

S&CP-0826-90

Decision to Conduct Business with the Public Excluded

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Cllrs Arbuckle/C Dawson:

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

- Confirmation of Public Excluded Minutes

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.

Carried

The meeting closed at 11.15 am.

Record No: 26191036