

## WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CIVIC BUILDINGS, HIGH STREET, RANGIORA ON TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023, AT 9AM.

#### PRESENT

Deputy Mayor N Atkinson (Chairperson), Mayor D Gordon, Councillors T Fulton (arrived at 9.05am), J Goldsworthy, J Ward, and P Williams.

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors A Blackie, B Cairns, and P Redmond.

J Millward (Chief Executive), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roding), N Robinson (General Manager Finance and Business Support), S Hart (General Manager Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development), C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation), P Christensen (Finance Manager), S Nichols (Governance Manager), D Young (Senior Engineering Advisor), M Garrod (Accountant), H Street (Corporate Planner), and K Rabe (Governance Adviser).

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson                      Seconded: Councillor Williams

An apology for early departure was received and accepted from Mayor Gordon who retired from the meeting at 9.50am.

**CARRIED**

#### **2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### **3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

##### **3.1 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on Tuesday 12 September 2023**

Moved: Councillor Williams                      Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Confirms**, as a true and accurate record, the circulated Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, held on 12 September 2023.

**CARRIED**

##### **3.2 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4 PRESENTATION/DEPUTATION**

##### **4.1 Oxford Promotions Association Committee – Annual Report (Trim Ref: 231114182982)**

A representative from Oxford Promotions Association Committee (OPAC), P Reilly, was in attendance and provided the Committee with an update on work carried out during the previous financial year.

P Reilly noted that OPAC's mission statement was currently being reviewed and proceeded to provide a brief overview of the events which OPAC hosted, included the Mother's Day Colouring Competition, Oxford Winter Lights, the Great Oxford Garage Sale Trail, the Father's Day Colouring Competition, two mix and mingle events and the Christmas Carols. OPAC was also involved in establishing a Water Tower Trail, reducing the speed limit in Oxford Town Centre, planning for a Matariki Celebration, the Great Garage Sale, and the Christmas parade.

In giving an overview of OPAC's financial status, P Reilly acknowledged the grants received from Creative Communities and the Council, as well as the donations from Oxford Fresh Choice and the Oxford-Ohoka Community Board. OPAC had also donated \$1,000 to the Oxford School for a new Telescope and bought flags for ANZAC Day and Matariki celebrations.

The Chairperson thanked Peter Reilly for his report and congratulated OPAC on the outstanding events arranged for its community.

#### 4.2 **Kaiapoi Promotions Association – Annual Report (Trim Ref 231114182995 and 231115183321)**

M Pinkham, Chairman of the Kaiapoi Promotions Association (KPA) was in attendance and provided the Committee with an overview of the work being done by the KPA. He noted that all the members were volunteers other than Tracey Inwood. He informed the Committee that people were no longer keen to attend meetings which had prompted the KPA to investigate other means to engage business owners and stakeholders. Another challenge the KPA faced was the lack of sponsorship and funding due to covid, the economic downturn and rising inflation.

M Pinkham reported that the Christmas Carnival had been a success, however, the street market had proved disappointing even though businesses had received requests to hold a market. The Entertainment Zone had been very popular, and musicians were asked to stay longer to accommodate the public. KPA were considering charging for the Entertainment Zone in the future.

M Pinkham further noted that the River Carnival had to be cancelled, however, the Shaun Wallace Quiz Night had been successful. The KPA encouraged the Council to develop the open air event space that had been included in the Kaiapoi Town Centre Plan as it would allow for more events.

Councillor Ward queried the cost of traffic management and suggested that the various Promotion Associations work together to try and mitigate the cost. M Pinkham disagreed as each Association had the chance to negotiate rates, which often worked in the Association's favour.

The Chair thanked M Pinkham for his presentation and the work the KPA did in promoting the Kaiapoi.

#### 4.3 **Rangiora Promotions Association– Annual Report (Trim Ref: 231114182986)**

Several representatives from the Rangiora Promotions Association (RPA) were in attendance and provide the Committee with an overview on the work done by RPA during the previous financial year.

D Taylor-Hayhurst acknowledged that there had been changes to the Board and the staff which had caused challenges during the year, however, several successful events had been hosted which included Do Good Rangiora, the Big Splash, Family Cinema and Guy Fawkes Fireworks Night, Rangiora Santa Parade and Christmas party in the park, Happyhire's Eats and Beats Festival and the last Wednesday Club. Unfortunately, this would be the last time they would be hosting the Happyhire's Eats and Beats due to rising costs.

D Taylor-Hayhurst explained that the challenges faced included the ability to access funding, sponsorship, the loss of experience due to board members and staff leaving and

the drop in business due to the economic downturn. The coming year would see the RPA refocusing its purpose from business to community and rebuilding.

Councillor Cairns thanked the RPA for their decision to review their focus and thanked them for their honest feedback, however, he reminded them that events brought visitors to the towns which resulted in increased business opportunities and economy for the district.

Councillor Fulton acknowledged the increased costs of hosting events and queried if a nominal charge would help mitigate the costs incurred. T Keeling noted that the RPA had ask for a gold coin donation which had helped to a small degree, however, did not believe that charging for events would be productive and may deter some families from attending.

D Taylor-Hayhurst noted that the RPA planned to start the year with a blank page and to be creative to ensure they could re-engage those in the community who had isolated themselves since Covid.

The Chairperson thanked the PPA for their work and the great events which had been held during difficult times.

#### 4.4 **Enterprise North Canterbury – Annual Report (Trim Ref: 231114182990)**

H Warwick and Board members were in attendance and provided the Committee with an update on the work being done by Enterprise North Canterbury (ENC). She noted that the team won a national award amongst its Economic Development peers in supporting start-up businesses. They also took part in the Waimakariri District Council's Economic Development Strategy and developed a ten year strategy.

H Warwick reported that the ENC had successfully secured \$120,000 from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to run workshops to upskill businesses and a further \$147,000 towards other projects. Businesses also contributed \$185,000 via sponsorship, Tourism, North Canterbury wine growers and i-Site commission.

Councillor Williams queried if promoting North Canterbury would detract from the promotion of the Waimakariri District and H Warwick replied that was not the case as once the information was uploaded to the website all the information was on the attractions and features of the Waimakariri District.

Councillor Cairns noted that ENC had stated that they would be looking for an increase of 10% to its funding from the Council. S Hart replied that ENC were not asking the Committee to approve a request for increased funding. It was merely noting its intention of requesting an increase during the Long Term Plan process.

Councillor Fulton asked if ENC considered the wellness aspect of the district and promoted the more rural areas of the district. H Warwick acknowledged that this was an important aspect with the ENC promoting the 4x4 trails, walking and cycling trails as well as the wilderness of the mountains and rivers.

This presentation was made in conjunction to the presentation of the following report.

## 5 **REPORTS**

### 5.1 **Annual Report for Enterprise North Canterbury for the year ending 30 June 2023 – N Robinson (General Manager Finance and Business Support) and S Hart (General Manager Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development)**

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 231017165674.
- (b) **Receives** the Audited Annual Report to 30 June 2023.
- (c) **Circulates** this report to all Community Boards.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Ward thanked H Warwick and her team for their work during a difficult year, noting that in the time she had worked with ENC they had progressed and developed into a very successful entity. Councillor Goldsworthy agreed with Councillor Ward's assessment.

*Mayor Gordon left the meeting at 9.50am.*

5.2 **Enterprise North Canterbury (ENC) Strategic Plan Update – S Hart (General Manager Strategy, Engagement and Economic Development)**

H Warwick introduced the ENC's Draft Strategic Plan 2023-2033 which included the organisation's vision, values, and objectives for the next ten years. ENC's business was grouped under three themes namely Connect, Invest and Grow.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson noted that the report mentioned 'a reduction in Central Government funding' and queried if that was an assumption. S Hart noted that this was a possible risk in the future which was being highlighted. Deputy Mayor Atkinson further questioned if there were provisions in place if the new Government increased funding in an attempt to attract business and improve the economy of the country. H Warwick replied that ENC could always utilise funding in supporting businesses in the district and in better promotion of the district.

Moved: Councillor Fulton

Seconded: Councillor Ward

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No 231031174186.
- (b) **Endorses** Updated Enterprise North Canterbury Strategic Plan 2024 – 2034.
- (c) **Notes** the attached 2024/25 Proposed Enterprise North Canterbury Budget Summary.
- (d) **Notes** the current total allocation of Council funding to Enterprise North Canterbury for the 2023/24 financial year was \$696,870 and proposed this be increased to \$719,870 for the first year of the 2024/34 draft Long Term Plan, the later yet to be considered by the Council and to be consulted on next year.
- (e) **Notes** that Enterprise North Canterbury would work alongside Council staff to develop options for implementation of core strategies such as the new Waimakariri Economic Development Strategy, in time for the 2025/26 Annual Plan process.
- (f) **Circulates** this report to all Community Boards.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Fulton noted that he was happy to support the Plan and congratulated the team on their collaboration and clear direction for the future.

Councillor Ward also congratulated the Board and looked forward to seeing the great work achieved in the next year.

5.3 **Annual Report for Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust for the year ended 30 June 2023 – N Robinson (General Manager Finance and Business Support) on behalf of Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust**

*J Hullen (Chairperson Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust) and Nick Chapman (General Manager Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust) will be in attendance.*

J Hullen spoke to the Committee on the challenges faced by the Trust during the previous financial year which included management of the Waikuku Campground, the resignation of the General Manager and the recruitment of a new General Manager. These events had impacted on the Trust's financial position, however, the Trust was confident that this

could be turned around by the new initiatives introduced by the new General Manager, N Chapman. He acknowledged that the previous General Manager, G Byrnes had got the Trust to a strong start. The Trust's focus was now on becoming financially self-sufficient and growing its education capacity and encouraging more visitors to the park by consolidating its cycling/walking tracks and there was also consideration of introducing a disc golf course within the park.

Another project close to J Hullen's heart was the development of a Tui Bi-node to encourage Tuis to the park and there had already been three sightings of Tuis in the area which was an exciting development.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson noted that in previous years the Trust had held guided tours of the park for elected members and requested if this could be organised again so members could observe the progress in the park.

In response to a query regarding the recent fires at the Pines and at Woodend Beach, J Hullen advised that education was key to ensure that appropriate locations were chosen for activities involving fire. However, he acknowledges that some native plantings were more able to resist fire, and these were used in the park.

Councillor Redmond queried about the impact that the management of Waikuku Campground had on the Trust's finances. J Hullen noted that this had negatively impacted the Trust, however, N Chapman had made a good start in reversing the situation and he was confident that the Trust's finances would recover shortly.

Councillor Williams queried if the Trust worked with ENC to promote the park, and J Hullen confirmed that the Trust had worked with ENC in promoting its cycling infrastructure within the park, however there was further work to be done in improving the promotion of the park to a wider audience.

Councillor Redmon endorsed the return of Tuis to the district and wished the Trust well in its endeavours.

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 231031174213.
- (b) **Receives** the Annual Report for Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (c) **Acknowledges** the work carried out by the Trust and thanked the Trustee's, and staff for their efforts.
- (d) **Circulates** the report to the Community Boards for information.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Ward congratulated the Trust on its work during a difficult year.

Deputy Mayor acknowledged the challenges the Trust had faced, however, he was confident that the Trust would recover from the setback. He encouraged the Trust to continue to work on leasing the Karaki land to enable it to become financially viable noting that the Council supported this initiative.

*The Chairperson called for a 10 minute adjournment at 10.30am and the meeting reconvened at 10.41am.*

5.5 **Exempting the Waimakariri Public Arts Trust from reporting on performance requirements under the Local Government Act 2002 – P Christensen (Finance Manager) and M Garrod (Accountant)**

P Christensen spoke to the report, noting that the Waimakariri Public Arts Trust was a Council Controlled Organisation which currently required a Statement of Intent prepared before the start of each financial year, half-yearly financial reports within two months after the end of the half of each financial year and an Audited Annual Report within three months of each financial year. These requirements were complex and time consuming and as the Trust was a small non-profit charity it was recommended that it applied for an exemption from the reporting requirements under the Local Government Act 2002.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson queried if this meant that the Trust would still report to the Audit and Risk Committee once a year and P Christensen confirmed that it would.

Councillor Williams noted that the report stated that there were financial implications and queried what they were, and P Christensen advised that the cost related to staff time in preparing the financial reports.

Councillor Redmond questioned the amount of money the Trust managed yearly, and P Christensen noted that it was less than \$55,000 per annum.

Councillor Fulton queried if it was likely that other small entities would follow this example and P Christensen responded in the affirmative.

Moved: Councillor Williams

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

(a) **Receives** Report No. 231024169418.

*AND*

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee recommends:

**THAT** the Council:

(b) **Approves** the exemption for the Waimakariri Public Arts Trust from reporting on performance requirements under the Local Government Act 2002.

(c) **Notes** the Council may revoke the exemption at any time.

(d) **Notes** the Council must review an exemption every three years.

(e) **Notes** that it was recommended that the Trust amended the Trust Deed to remove the requirement of an audit.

(f) **Notes** that unaudited financial statements signed by the Chairperson and another Trustee would be provided to the Council annually, with a six month progress report.

(g) **Notes** the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years would be audited by Audit New Zealand.

(h) **Notes** that the Statements of Intent were not prepared for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

(i) **Recommends** that the Trust's financial statements were audited when, in each of the two preceding financial years, the operating expenditure of the Trust was more than \$550,000.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Williams stated that this was a sensible approach and Councillor Ward agreed noted anything to make reporting easier on small entities was welcome.

Councillor Blackie agreed commenting that he believed any Arts Committees should be exempt.

5.6 **Audit New Zealand Management Report for the year ended 30 June 2023 – N Robinson (General Manager Finance and Business Support)**

Y Yang from Audit New Zealand was in attendance to speak to Audit New Zealand's Management Report for the year ended 30 June 2023. She noted that the Council had achieved an unmodified opinion for the Annual Report which effectively meant it was a clean (unqualified) report and that the financial statements present a true and fair view in all areas reported on. However, recommendations had been made that would improve internal controls.

Councillor Williams queried the cost associated with the audit, and Y Yang acknowledged the significant increase in fees. She noted that fees were last negotiated in 2021, and since then costs had escalated, especially in relation to staffing and dealing with work that had been delayed due to resourcing issues. Councillor Williams then queried if there would be a refund offered since it seemed that work schedules were back on track. Y Yang replied that the Auditor General was working through some further efficiencies, however, there was unlikely to be any refunds made.

J Millward informed the Committee that the increase in audit costs had been challenged by Chief Executives and Mayors of neighbouring councils. J Millward acknowledged the increase in costs of doing businesses due to increased insurance costs, increased salary costs and other business related expenses.

Councillor Williams noted that it was the Audit and Risk Committee's responsibility to query costs and asked if Y Yang agreed with that assessment. Y Yang agreed stating that the 'catch-up' costs had impacted the overall increase in fees. Deputy Mayor Atkinson clarified that the proposed timelines were back on track for the coming financial year.

Councillor Fulton raised a concern regarding the perception on non-compliance of water quality and queried if an Auditor had the expertise to make such a determination. Y Yang noted that the data provided showed the status and it was not a judgement by the Auditor. Deputy Mayor Atkinson believed that as the Council had applied for exemption, it should not have been recorded as non-compliant while awaiting a response.

Councillor Goldsworthy requested clarification on the term "contingency asset" and questioned the implications of the correction to the Development Contribution. J Millward explained that the correction was of the nature to be immaterial to the audit. Councillor Goldsworthy also queried the impact of an 'open book' policy and Y Yang replied that this would reduce hours required for auditing, however, she was still awaiting the details on how this efficiency would change the scope of what was required during an audit.

Councillor Redmond noted that the report stated that the drinking water non-compliance was of a technical nature and asked if this would raise concern for the general public that their drinking water was no longer safe. Y Yang acknowledged that the non-compliance was a technicality due to the timing of the Government's directive and G Cleary noted that as all drinking water in the district was now chlorinated the public needed not fear unsafe drinking water.

Councillor Ward noted that Audit New Zealand had struggled to find sufficient resourcing locally in the recent years, and enquired if recruiting and retaining local staff would be a priority in the future. Y Yang stated that currently there were very few local accountants with sufficient experience, however, there was a drive to encourage young people to enter the field.

Councillor Fulton queried if auditors became de facto arbitrators on accounting issues and on performance. He believed that the water quality fell under the performance sector of the report rather than under the accounting standards and wondered if this was a factor why some councils submitted incomplete reports. Y Yang disagreed noting that the incomplete reports were due to timing issues.

Y Yang thanked the Management Team and staff who had assisted with the audit and had made her task a lot easier.

Moved: Councillor Williams

Seconded: Councillor Ward

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** report No. 231031173848.
- (b) **Receives** Audit New Zealand's Management Report for the year ending 30 June 2023 (TRIM 231031173846).
- (c) **Notes** there were no significant matters arising from the management letter. Audit New Zealand had made a number of recommendations where systems could be improved, and these improvements had been made or were programmed to be completed.

**CARRIED**

Deputy Mayor Atkinson stated that he was pleased at the number and quality of the questions from members as this was a vital part of the Committee's responsibility in serving their community.

Councillor Williams noted that he was pleased to hear that Chief Executives were also questioning the increase in fees and that a response was expected.

Councillor Ward thanked the staff for all the work done during the audit and stated she believed that the Council had qualified, efficient staff managing the Council's finances.

Deputy Mayor Atkinson agreed with Councillor Williams stating that the increased fees were unacceptable and requested that Y Yang relayed that message to the Auditor General. He also reiterated his opinion that the water quality should not have received a non-compliance rating given the Council was awaiting a decision on its exemption application.

Councillor Fulton concurred with Deputy Mayor Atkinson and believed it was questionable to include performance within a financial audit.

Councillor Redmond noted that compliance was a subjective issue and thanked Audit New Zealand for a good report.

5.7 **Financial Report for the period ended 30 September 2023 – P Christensen (Finance Manager)**

P Christensen provided a brief overview on the financial results for the period ended 30 September 2023.

Councillor Williams questioned how the average costs of 4.7% and 4.8% had been determined. P Christensen responded that it depended on whether the funds were borrowed on floating or fixed terms and currently the borrowing rate was approximately 6%.

Councillor Fulton queried the impact of that the possible withdraw of Central Government funding would have on the Council's budgets and timelines for the coming financial year. P Christensen replied it was a matter of timing, as the Council funded projects and was subsequently reimbursed by the Central Government. He noted that the second Tranche Funding was currently on hold.

Councillor Redmond queried if loans were paid off or were they just rolled over. P Christensen replied that technically loans were renewed, payments are made to the total funding pool rather than individual loans. New debt is raised as loans mature.



Councillor Goldsworthy queried if special tax revenue was linked to Central Government to reduce the tax base. P Christensen undertook to investigate and circulate the information to the Committee.

Moved: Councillor Fulton

Seconded: Councillor Ward

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No.231031173772.
- (b) **Notes** the surplus for the period ended 30 September 2023 was \$1.4 million. This was \$0.2 million under budget.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Redmond noted that there was good positive information contained in this report which would go a long way to rebut the misinformation being circulated about the Council's financial position and request that this information be widely circulated.

5.8 **Fraud Policy Update – P Christensen (Finance Manager)**

P Christensen noted that the Council's Fraud Policy was last updated in February 2014 and this report highlighted the proposed updates to the policy necessitated by changes in legislation.

Councillor Fulton requested that a workshop be arranged to inform Councillors on the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022.

Councillor Williams queried if there was any indication of fraud within the Council. J Millward stated not to his knowledge and if there had been it would have been brought to the Council's attention.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson

Seconded: Councillor Williams

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 231030173234.
- (b) **Approves** the adoption of the updated Fraud Policy.

**CARRIED**

Deputy Mayor Atkinson stated his appreciation of this report coming before the Committee and noted that the more protections put in place the longer it took to detect fraud, hence this could be a double edged sword.

Councillor Williams noted that there was a fine line between deception and wrongdoing as in acting without intent and actually perpetrating fraud.

5.9 **Non-Financial Performance Measures for the quarter ended 30 September 2023 – H Street (Corporate Planner)**

No questions emanated from this item.

Moved: Councillor Fulton

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** report No. 231101174505.
- (b) **Notes** 82 (74%) of performance measures for the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year were achieved, and 27 were not achieved.
- (c) **Notes** eight of the 27 measures that did not meet target were within 5% of being achieved.

- (d) **Notes** two measures would be reported later in the financial year.
- (e) **Notes** all measures were reviewed and incorporated into the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan. All measures were currently being reviewed for the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan.

**CARRIED**

5.10 **2023/24 Capital Works September Quarterly Report – D Young (Senior Engineering Advisor), G Cleary (General Manager Utilities and Roading) and C Brown (General Manager Community and Recreation)**

G Cleary and C Brown presented the report which advised the Committee on the progress of the delivery of the 2023/24 Capital Works Programme. G Cleary gave a brief update on delayed projects which included the cycleway project which was on hold and including UV projection to water schemes, however processed were being put in place to monitor these projects.

C Brown noted the land purchase for Pegasus Community Centre had been duplicated and the possible purchase of land in Ravenswood had been delayed due to complex negotiation process. Deputy Mayor Atkinson requested that the correct figures be circulated to members for their information.

Councillor Fulton queried if projects at risk of noncompletion were reprioritised and staff reassigned to ensure that timelines were met. G Cleary agreed that staff were reassigned regularly to projects under threat, however, this only applied to inhouse work. He also noted that Environment Canterbury's resource consent process caused delays.

It was noted that there seemed to be conflicting information in relation to the shovel ready projects and staff were asked to check the information and circulate an explanation to members.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Atkinson                      Seconded: Councillor Fulton

**THAT** the Audit and Risk Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 231102175227.
- (b) **Notes** the actual and predicted achievement across all tracked capital expenditure.
- (c) **Notes** that of the \$85.98million total capital spend, \$17.4million (20%) had been completed and \$74.41million (86%) was predicted to be completed (subject to weather and other matters outside our control).
- (d) **Notes** that initial progress towards achieving the 23/24 Capital Works Programme had been good with most projects allocated, with activity well underway. However, there were a number of projects either delayed or at risk, as reported elsewhere, and these would be closely monitored by staff to seek opportunities for improvement.

**CARRIED**

Deputy Mayor Atkinson noted that this was early reporting for the year and as such it was tricky to get predictions correct, however, the indications looked positive.

Councillor Fulton agreed that it was early days, and the trends were encouraging.

Councillor Williams raised his concern that there would be insufficient contractors to ensure the drainage works would be completed in the short time allowed between whitebait season and fish spawning. G Cleary stated he was aware of the pressures on drainage, and work on the Cam River was being planned now. Also, he was reviewing contractors resourcing of the planned projects for the future.

## 6 PORTFOLIO UPDATES

### 6.1 Audit, Risk, Annual / Long Term Plans – Councillor Joan Ward

- Staff were finalising their budgets for first Management review and completing commentary during December.
- Contrary to mistruths being circulated debt was still \$180 million and in four years risen to \$10 million. Most of the debt related to earthquake rebuild. Another false fact circulating was that the Council was not repaying its debt. However, the Council's financial plans show it was.
- Standard and Poors has started their review. The result was likely to be published in the new year. Retaining the AA credit rating, which was better than major trading banks was expected.

### 6.2 Communications and Customer Services – Councillor Joan Ward

#### **Communications**

This was for the July to September 2023 period:

- Ten Comms and Engagement Plans. This includes topics such as:
  - Speed Management
  - Chlorine introduction
  - Kaiapoi Community hub build
  - Economic Development Strategy
  - Mandeville Resurgence Channel
  - Community Outcomes engagement and feedback
- Thirty Media releases
- Engagement platform now had 2,333 registered users. This database was growing in influence. Recently used this database, to increase the public feedback on a topic by 90% through the 'e-news' function. This was because these residents had asked to be informed about the Council topics and could not bear 'direct to inbox' communication.
- Facebook users were now at 23,400. Instagram (which we had recently started aiming to grow) was at 420. LinkedIn had 2,070 followers. The Council's posts were seeing LinkedIn increase in viewers by over 200% in some instances. Staff were also using this to share their professional achievements.
- Over 40+ design projects organised in house. The Council also welcomed a new Graphic Designer Sam Meni who had joined the Council.

#### **Other topics:**

- Chlorine Introduction Planning.

The decision from Taumata Arowai was signalled to the Council in September 2023 and as such we started our community planning and material drafting in advance. Once our narrative was established, which included briefing the Council on distribution methods, we organise the letter drop through NZ post, newspaper wrap, social media campaign, sector communications and website updates. While we knew this was going to be an unpopular introduction, the Council received thanks from customers for the thorough and detailed explanation and advocacy against this introduction the Council had undertaken.
- Website launch.

The Council launched the new website on 9 August 2023. Since launch we had been working significantly in the back end to further improve search, remove ties to the old website domain, and incorporate customer feedback. To date we received great feedback from customers across demographics about the easy-to-use search functionality and navigation. Feedback and changes requested by the Council had been made too FYI. Shortly after launch Google changed their Analytics software

which had been a bit of a curveball in terms of our measurement metrics, but we are tracking well to re-establish our performance dashboard.

- **Civil Defence – Public Information Management.**

During this period there were three significant Civil Defence activations that required PIM support. This included:

- 22 July Heavy Rain event.  
This involved the precautionary evacuation of Tuahiwi and surrounding areas.
- 11 August Oxford Rural No.1 Boil water notice.  
Unexpected turbidity resulted in a boil water notice being issued for this Oxford scheme. The notice went on for well over a month until repairs could be undertaken that would stop this issue happening again. As with any boil water notice you need to get communication to those affected asap. To do this we used the text alert system, community contacts, social media.
- 22 September Heavy Rain and Snow Watch.  
While this event didn't eventuate to be as severe as the late July one staff were on standby given the soggy ground conditions.

### **Customer Services**

The main focus over the last couple of months had been working with Datacom and the in-house Programme Team on requirements for the new Datacom computer system. For the team phase one includes Rates, Customer Contacts, Service Requests, Debtors and Receipting.

The second instalment of rates was due next week so payment volumes were starting to increase.

Notices of rates default had been sent to 308 mortgagees where rates were still owing from the last financial year. In three months, the Council was able to demand payment from the mortgagee if rates arrears remained owing.

Getting a great response to letters being sent to ratepayers seeking alternative contact details where currently no email or mobile phone number was recorded in the Customer database. This was being done in stages over several weeks so the team can manage the response among other work.

Recruitment to a couple of vacancies being filled with Temp staff was going well and we are on track to complete this before Christmas.

The Rates team, assisted by Customer Services staff in Kaiapoi and Oxford had been busy processing rebate applications from retirement village occupants. So far 2,651 rebates had been issued for the current year, ahead of 2,405 for the same period last year and closing in on last year's total of 2,944.

LIM applications were increasing and are back to Business as Usual levels prior to the peak of 2020 and 2021. Applications were being completed in an average of four days.

## **7 QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

## **8 URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil.

## 9 **MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED**

In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act (or sections 6, 7 or 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may be), it was moved:

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

1. That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting:

Item 9.1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Public Excluded portion of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 12 September 2023

Item 9.2 Update on Insurance Matters

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public was 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 were as follows:

Meeting Item No. and subject	Reason for excluding the public	Grounds for excluding the public-
9.1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Public Excluded portion of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 12 September 2023	Good reason to withhold exists under section 7	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations). To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage LGOIMA s 7(2)(h) and (j).
9.2 Update on Insurance Matters	Good reason to withhold exists under section 7	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) LGOIMA s 7(2)(i).

**CARRIED**

### **CLOSED MEETING**

The public excluded portion of this meeting commenced at 12.18pm and concluded at 12.32pm.

### **OPEN MEETING**

#### **Resolution to resume in open meeting**

Moved: Councillor Ward

Seconded: Councillor Goldsworthy

**THAT** open meeting resumes and the business discussed with the public excluded remains public excluded until determinations by the Civil Aviation Authority have been made.

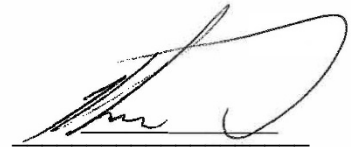
**MOVED**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee will be held on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 9am.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12.33pm.

**CONFIRMED**



Chairperson

12 December 2023  
Date