



**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
ECONOMIC, FINANCE & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE  
held in the Council Chambers and via Teams, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim  
on WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2024 commencing at 9.00 am**

**Present**

Cirs J D N Croad (Chairperson), S R W Adams (Deputy), J A Arbuckle, S J Arbuckle, A R Burgess (from 9.15 am), D A Dalliessi (from 9.33 am), B G Dawson, B A Fauls, M R K Flight, G A Hope, R J Innes, B J Minehan, J C Rosene, T P Sowman and Mayor N P Taylor

**In Attendance**

Mr G K Blake (Chief Financial Officer), Mr D G Heiford (Manager, Economic, Community & Support Services), and Ms N Chauval (Committee Secretary)

**Apologies:**

**Cirs Croad/Adams:**

**That the apology for lateness from C/r A R Burgess be received and sustained.**

**Carried**

**EFC-0224-244 Declaration of Interests -**

C/r Dawson declared an interest in PE Item 1 – Trust Board Representative.

**EFC-0224-245 Introduction of Additional Item -**

**Cirs Croad/Minehan:**

**That the following additional item be considered for reason of the urgent nature of the business and insufficient time being available to include the item on the original Agenda and Meeting Notice.**

**In Public Excluded:**

- **East Coast Bylaw**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 9.04 am due to a sound issue with Teams and resumed at 9.10 am once issue was resolved.

ATTENDANCE: Mr Neil Henry, Council's Manager, Strategic Planning and Economic Development and Freya Thompson, (Summer Student Economic Development Team) were present for the following item.

**EFC-0224-246 Marlborough Town Centre Health Checks  
2023-24 E100-005-009-22**

Mr Henry advised that the purpose of the report was to inform the Committee of the results of the 2023-24 Marlborough Town Centre Health Checks (covering Blenheim and Picton CBD's). To highlight the report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 2427490).

Mr Henry noted the following amendment – page 5 of the agenda ... *Vacancies in Picton were are similar to the 2022 survey at 7% (13 units) in 2024 compared to 8% (27 12 units) in 2022.*

Members were advised that Council has undertaken research on the 'health' of Blenheim CBD since 2011 and Picton since 2013. The research is undertaken every two years following a consistent methodology and provides a snapshot of how each town centre is performing across a range of key parameters.

It was noted that 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, CBD businesses, business associations and the community.

This year's reports show a general consistency with those of previous years and show a positive picture for both CBD's across the many factors that are measured. Overall, both towns are performing well and are providing the services and activities required by locals and visitors.

During the presentation members made some suggestions on the questions for the survey. Mr Henry advised that they look at some of the messages for the next survey as improvements are always positive but do need to be careful regarding consistency because if the questions are continually changed there won't be the ability to check things over time.

**Cllrs Innes/Fauls:  
That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Ms S Young, Council's Regional Events Advisor, was present for the following item.

## **EFC-0224-247 Regional Events Update**

**E100-002-011**

Ms Young noted that the report provided members with an update regarding the activities of Council's Regional Events Advisor (REA) and Marlborough's events sector.

Ms Young advised that we're currently in the middle of peak event season and various events of all scales are being held around the region. The feedback from event organisers is that costs are skyrocketing which means event costs are also increasing particularly in traffic management costs. Ticket costs aren't being increased to cover those costs. It is a national problem and it is something the National Association are addressing with different parties.

Members were advised that the funding from Council's commercial and community events funding is enabling a lot of these events to continue for which organisers are very grateful as they would struggle to run the events otherwise.

Ms Young noted in respect to Garden Marlborough they had record sales, 15% more than in 2022 and 58% of those attendees were out of Marlborough and 42% of those attendees were from the lower north island. 45% of those attendees were first timers which was put down to the extensive advertising of the event which was funded from Council's Commercial Events Fund. A full accountability report will be provided within three months of the event being held.

The feedback on Council's Blenheim Christmas Parade and New Year's Eve events which were run by Pure Events Marlborough for the first time has been fantastic. Ms Young noted that she has received feedback directly from attendees thanking Council for hosting the events and saying how good the New Year's Eve event was.

Ms Young noted the following amendment to the report – there were 38 floats and walking groups in the Blenheim Christmas Parade, not 35 as noted in the agenda report.

Ms Young extended her thanks to the Fulton Hogan Team for stepping in at the last minute to fulfil the traffic management requirements and going above and beyond.

It was reported that a Weekend Events Guide has been created covering events happening over the Wine & Food Festival weekend that people can do while they are here. The guide has been widely circulated.

Members were advised that the Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival has experienced some technical issues with ticketing through Eventfinda which resulted in tickets not being on sale for a week. The issue has been resolved and sales are now tracking well and are on par with last year's event.

Ms Young provided members with information on the Marlborough Energised event by Marlborough Lines. It will be a free community event held in Pollard Park, 12 – 14 April, with interactive lighting and visual effects. They are estimating 10-15,000 people over the three-day event. Parks and Open Spaces and Ms Young are working closely with Marlborough Lines and the event organisers.

It was noted that the new owner of the Saint Clair Vineyard Half Marathan has done a fantastic job bringing the event back from the brink with ticket sales being on-track to sell out this year.

Members were advised that round two of the Commercial Events Fund opens on Monday 12 February until 11 March. The Community Events Fund is also open and will close once all the money has been allocated. Ms Young advised that if Councillors get any inquiries from potential applicants, please get them to contact her to discuss the process.

During the discussion it was raised whether it may be time to review the criteria/policy of the Commercial Events Fund to ensure that it is still fit for purpose.

The Regional Events Fund has reopened as there is a small sum to allocate. It was noted that the fund supported the Omaka Wings and Wheels Day - this is the first of three events that has been supported through the fund this year. The event organisers have indicated that there may be the potential to hold it on alternative years to the Airshow.

Members were advised there is no Follow-Me stats this period as there are still technical issues. Destination Marlborough are working with the developers to find a solution.

**Cirs Croad/Dalliessi:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Ms Nicola Neilson, Council's Project Lead – Arts Culture and Heritage, was present for the following item.

## **EFC-0224-248      Adoption of the Arts Culture and Creativity Strategy**

**A200-000-01**

Nicola Neilson reported that the purpose of the report was to provide Council with the Arts Culture and Creativity Strategy 2024 and Implementation Plan for Marlborough. The Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy and Implementation Plan were attached the agenda report for members' information.

It was noted that the item had been presented to the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting and the report being presented today is a highlighted version of that report.

The Arts and Culture Strategy was last reviewed in 2008 and Council approved a strategy refresh in 2022 which coincided with the employment of a dedicated Arts, Culture and Heritage staff member. Consultation with the community and iwi, and development of the strategy took place throughout 2023.

It was noted that adopting the new Arts, Culture and Creativity strategy would bring Council's approach in line with other regions that aim to collaboratively establish the essential resources, platforms, skills, partnerships and infrastructure to build a vibrant and flourishing creative economy.

The Strategy is currently with Council's design team who are incorporating the iconography that has been gifted by iwi and Ms Neilson will circulate once completed. Ms Neilson will be meeting with the Iwi Advisory Panel next week to sign off on the text and if there are changes the document will be brought back to the Committee.

In considering the strategy it was proposed that for 'Our Story' that a paragraph be included on European and other migrants journey here and that before being finalised the Reo is rechecked.

In response to a query on the importance of the funding to ensure the strategy is implemented, Ms Neilson noted that it is but have tried to be very realistic in any budget request and projects are staged over a number of years in recognition of that.

**The Mayor/Clr Faults:**

- 1. That the Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy be accepted and adopted by Council subject to any amendments.**
- 2. That the Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy implementation plan be accepted subject to budget approval as part of the Long Term Plan.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-249      Audit & Risk Sub-Committee**

**D050-001-A05**

The Minutes of the Audit & Risk Sub-Committee meeting held on 13 December 2023 were attached for ratification by the Committee.

**Cirs Croad/Hope:**

**That the Minutes of the Audit & Risk Sub-committee meeting held on 13 December 2023 be ratified.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-250      Sister City Sub-Committee**

**D050-001-S02**

The Minutes of the Sister City Sub-Committee meeting held on 21 December 2023 were attached for ratification by the Committee.

The Mayor advised that all Councillors are invited to attend the Global Cities New Zealand Conference 2024 hosted by Marlborough on 18 March 2024, Mike Porter, (Council's Democratic Services Manager) will be making contact in due course.

It was suggested that the Tendo and Otari sister city relationship be strengthened and that a visit would be prudent. To be included as an agenda item for the next Sister City meeting.

**Cirs Rosene/S Arbuckle:**

**That the Minutes of the Sister City Sub-committee meeting held on 21 December 2023 be ratified.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-251      Long Term Plan Working Group**

**D050-001-L24**

The Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 28 November 2023 were attached for ratification by the Committee.

**Cirs Croad/Rosene:**

**That the Minutes of the Long Term Plan Working Group meeting held on 28 November 2023 be ratified.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Meeting adjourned at 10.32 am and resumed at 10.53 am.

## **EFC-0224-252 Treasury Management Report 31 December 2023**

**F290-006-23**

Mr Blake, Council's Chief Financial Officer, noted that the purpose of the report was to present the Treasury Management Report for the period ending 31 December 2023.

The report contained information on Cash, Investments and Borrowings with additional information including details of the market interest rate movements; a summary of the investments Council held, and that these continue to comply with the Investment Policy section of the Treasury Management Policy; and a summary of the Council borrowings as at 31 December 2023. These do not currently comply with the Treasury Management Policy but will as Council's borrowing increases. Council has already approved these variations at previous meetings. A number of graphs were provided in the report to show the policy boundaries.

The MDC Groups' borrowings currently attract an average interest of 4.07% and the Groups investments achieve an average interest return of 6.03%.

There was general discussion regarding the Flaxbourne Irrigation Scheme and iRex projects that are currently budgeted for. Management to report back as more information becomes available.

**Cirs Croad/Dawson:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

ATTENDANCE: Ms Tessa Dever, Council's Financial Accountant, was present for the following item.

## **EFC-0224-253 Financial Report for Council – Period Ended 31 December 2023**

**F275-002-16**

Ms Dever presented Council's financial report for the period ended 31 December 2023.

Members were advised that the major variances between actual and budget were lower than anticipated draw down of better off funding with delays in expenditure in a number of approved projects; lower than anticipated roading reinstatement expenditure and subsidy for the impacts of the August 2022 flood event. In the 2023/24 year \$10M has been spent on the July 2021 and August 2022 events; Grants received for the College Park Hockey Turf relocation; Grants received for the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme; lower than anticipated expenditure on Flood Protection and Control Works flood damage; interest expenses are lower than anticipated due to the savings, deferrals and delays in past capital expenditure programmes resulting in less external borrowings.

It was reported that capital expenditure progress is impacted by many reasons including finalising community consultation, obtaining land access, obtaining resource consents, the availability of external professional expertise and receiving an acceptable contract price and contractor availability. To achieve this a capex programme of \$122.6M has been planned including \$16.6M of carryovers from previous financial years. This will ensure that multiple projects can continue to progress.

Comments were provided in the report on variances greater than \$100,000.

**Cirs Dawson/Dalliessi:**  
**That the financial report for the period ended 31 December 2023 be received.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-254 Debtors Overdue Reports as at 31 December 2023**

**F220-002-020-21**

Mr Blake presented the Debtors Overdue Reports as at 31 December 2023 to members.

The report detailed the level of debt relating to the revenue streams for Building Consents; Resource Consent; Resource Consent Monitoring; Development Contributions; Licences; Tradewaste; Water and Sewerage Connections.

It was reported that the annual resource consent administration fees were charged in July 2023 totalling approx. \$1.3M, 95% have been paid as at the end of December with a balance owing of \$73,093.

The 90 Days balance includes several Development Contribution invoices that will be paid once the building project is near completion. It also includes invoices for the annual resource consent administration fees that have not been paid. Copies of the invoices have been emailed requesting payment.

The Property Leases and Licences Debtors Report was attached to the agenda item for members' information.

**Cirs Croad/J Arbuckle:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-255 Rates Report as at 31 December 2023 F270-36-21**

Mr Blake advised that the purpose of the report was to advise Council of the rates position as at 31 December 2023.

Members were advised on the current rating year arrears. It was noted that 1,352 properties have received a penalty and overdue letter. Of these properties, 395 accounts remain due. There are a further 94 properties still overdue from the Q1 instalment. The collection rate for payments due to date is 48.66%. This is comparable with last year's collection rate of 48.84%.

It was further advised that 207 properties with mortgages were identified as having arrears. 126 of these properties have since paid 12 have a payment arrangement in place to clear arrears. 64 still have a Notice of Default with the bank. 5 have yet to be actioned.

There are 26 properties which do not have mortgages and have arrears. Most continue to make no or minimal payments towards their arrears or on-going 2023-2024 rates. The Rates Team are continuously following up with these rate payers to collect overdue rates or to arrange mutually agreeable repayment plans.

Mr Blake to provide a response to Clr S Arbuckle's query regarding the process to recoup rate arrears from an overseas ratepayer's property.

The Water Billing Debtors Report as at 31 December 2023 was attached to the agenda for members' information.

**Cirs Croad /Dawson:**  
**That the information be received.**

**Carried**

## **EFC-0224-256 Information Package -**

**Cirs Croad/Flight:**  
**That the Economic, Finance & Community Information Package dated 7 February 2024 be received and noted.**

**Carried**

## EFC-0224-257 Decision to Conduct Business with the Public Excluded

Cllrs Dawson/Adams:

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

- Trust Board Representative
- Marlborough Events Centre
- Property Lease
- East Coast Bylaw

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
Trust Board Representative	In order to protect the privacy of natural persons, as provided for under Section 7(2)(a).	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.
Marlborough Events Centre  Property Lease  East Coast Bylaw	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 12.45 pm.

Record No: 2427795

*Annexure*

## **Public Forum**

1. **Robert Terry** – Topic - the passing of Sir Michael Hardie Boys, former Governor General.