

News from Marlborough District Council.

New proposal for annual and long-term planning

Council is changing its annual and long-term planning in an effort to streamline the process, find greater cost efficiencies, and improve the region's long-term outcomes.

A report presented by Chief Executive John Boswell and Chief Financial Officer Geoff Blake to the Economic, Finance and Community Committee was strongly supported by the mayor and councillors.

"Our traditional annual and long-term planning process has limitations, reducing the time available for Council to identify opportunities to be both more effective and efficient in the delivery of services," Mr Boswell said. "The new process means we will engage with the public earlier, giving ourselves time and space for a broader assessment of options and more focused analysis of fully costed activities and outcomes."

The new Annual Plan budget proposes:

- Starting this year with the 2025-26 Annual Plan, Council will provide an extended opportunity for public input - primarily online - from November 2024 to January 2025 (dates to be confirmed)
- For the 2026-27 Annual Plan, Council will provide a similar opportunity for public engagement in late 2025

- For the 2027-37 Long Term Plan, the third year of the revised planning cycle, Council will again provide an opportunity for early engagement and, in line with statutory requirements, undertake full consultation with public hearings

Mayor Nadine Taylor said she welcomed the new approach, saying Council would continue to carry out a formal consultation with public hearings every three years for the Long-Term Plan.

"A formal Annual Plan consultation with hearings each year is onerous for both the Council and the community. There is actually no requirement under the Local Government Act for a formal consultation each year, unless a significant change is proposed to Council budgets. However, Council does consider it important to continue to provide the community an opportunity to have input into the process."

Mayor Taylor said the Council had very little 'wiggle room' for additional funding requests and a rates increase of 10.62% is currently proposed in the LTP for next year, 2025-26.

"We will be working hard to reduce that increase by looking critically at our funding requirements and finding efficiencies. It's a tough environment right now but the benefit of this new planning process means Council can spend more time examining its own operations and seeking savings," Mayor Taylor said.

The proposed new process is subject to ratification at the full Council meeting on 31 October.



Resident satisfaction with Council services 'on the up'

Council's 2024 resident survey recorded an increase in satisfaction of 68%, up from 66% last year and 62% in 2022. The survey and report were presented to the Economic, Finance and Community Committee last week.



Satisfaction with public sports grounds such as Lansdowne Park was consistent in the latest Resident Satisfaction Survey with results overall well ahead of the national council benchmark

Mayor Nadine Taylor said satisfaction was tracking up again, which was good to see.

"Despite the negative impacts of inflation and recovery from extreme weather events, there has been an increase in public satisfaction for many services compared to 2023."

"Thirty two out of 47 (70%) services rated by residents achieved satisfaction of 60% or above, with nine services achieving 80% satisfaction or higher, indicating generally positive sentiment across most areas."

The top five performing services remained consistent, with minor changes in rank compared to 2023: public sports grounds (90% satisfaction; 2nd in 2023), libraries (89%; 4th in 2023), swimming pools (89%; 7th in 2023), cemeteries (88%; 1st in 2023), and parks and reserves (86%; 6th in 2023).

"While many results have remained consistent, there were also notable increases in satisfaction," Mayor Taylor said.

"The greatest increases were in housing for seniors (65% in 2024, up from 49% in 2023), stormwater drainage (70%, up from 56%), Building Act consent services (55%, up from 45%), community safety (76%, up from 66%), resource consent management (60%, up from 42%), and flood protection (65%, up from 57%). Satisfaction with roads also saw a notable increase to 58% compared to 40% last year," she said.

"It is very pleasing to see such a high level of public satisfaction with these core Council services."

"Overall Marlborough - at 68% satisfaction - tracks well ahead of the national council benchmark of 54%."

"Of course there is always room for improvement but generally I'm very pleased with the results," Mayor Taylor said.

The survey is carried out independently by SIL Research. Six hundred residents are randomly selected via telephone directories, a postal mailout and social media promotion.

Data is weighted to reflect area, gender and age group proportions as per the Census. The sample size allows a 95% confidence level, +/- 4-5% when the results are reported as totals.

The report is available to read at www.marlborough.govt.nz/your-council/long-term-and-annual-plans-policies-and-reports/residents-satisfaction-survey

Elmslie Bay jetty replacement needs government funding

The future of a critical link between French Pass and Rangitoto ki te Tonga / D'Urville Island was discussed at last week's Assets and Services Committee meeting.

Marlborough Roads Manager Steve Murrin presented a 'Low Cost, Low Risk' roading programme report which had included \$1 million for replacing Elmslie Bay jetty, which services the local community and visitors.

This project, and a number of others including an urban Whale Trail connection through Blenheim and implementation of the Speed Management Plan around schools, were listed in Marlborough Roads' bid for funding.

"I hate to be the bearer of bad news but Marlborough was not successful in obtaining any subsidies," he said. "The only positive is there is still an opportunity to apply for resilience funding for the jetty."



The Elmslie Bay jetty is at the end of its life and needs replacement

Mr Murrin cited the jetty replacement as critical.

"The jetty is at the end of its life and Marlborough Roads will apply for resilience funding through NZTA but we don't know whether it is likely to be successful," he said.

Sounds Ward Councillor Barbara Faulls said the jetty was a key link between D'Urville Island and the mainland and also provided access to Stephens Island.

"On any given day there are a number of boats in the area so it provides emergency access as well," she said.

The committee decided to go ahead with the replacement of the jetty subject to access to resilience funding. Councillors voted to proceed with other projects not funded by NZTA in the order recommended, which was the urban Whale Trail connection and Speed Management Plan around schools.

This will be subject to full Council approval later this month.

Awatere Valley Road slip

Recent rain and high river levels in the Awatere River have caused a large underslip on the Awatere Valley Road, below.

A gabion wall has collapsed along with part of the hill between the road and the river, about two kilometres past the Jordan Bridge.

Marlborough Roads Manager Steve Murrin said options for repairs are being assessed but it is likely there will be road closures in future.

Currently the road is open to one lane with a 30 km/h temporary speed limit.

Travellers using the upper part of the Awatere Valley Road are urged to use caution.



National gravel bed river project's final findings out

Groundbreaking national research on how braided rivers such as the Wairau interact with groundwater systems including the Wairau Aquifer is complete.

The report's findings were presented to Council's Environment and Planning Committee recently.

Senior Environmental Scientist Groundwater Peter Davidson said the study - which looked at the Wairau, the Ngaruroro in Hawke's Bay and the Selwyn/Waikirikiriri in mid-Canterbury - had its origins in Marlborough as part of work to understand the long-term trend of decline in Wairau Aquifer levels.

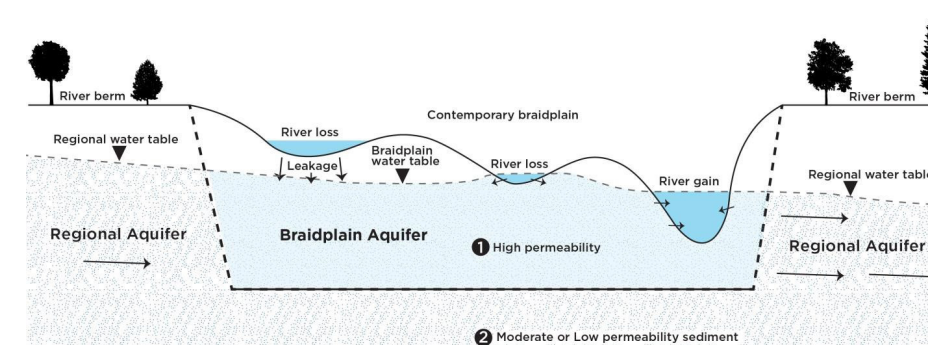
"We are focussed now on how we can apply the research. It will be a valuable piece of work for the upcoming review of the Lower Wairau River Scheme and the sustainability of gravel extraction volumes through the Gravel Extraction Strategy," Mr Davidson said. "Under the Marlborough Environment Plan the Wairau Aquifer needs to be managed to maintain spring flows.

Council manages the river to provide recharge to the aquifer which in turn maintains the springs."

The effect of the decline in aquifer levels was often felt over summer with a flow-on effect to the springs on the plains, Mr Davidson said. "Council is working on the causes of this - some we can regulate and some we cannot."

Funded by the MBIE Endeavour Fund with contributions from Marlborough District and Hawke's Bay Regional Councils and Environment Canterbury, the four-year study was carried out by Lincoln Agritech and was a cross-council collaboration involving the Rivers, Policy and Environmental Science teams.

Rivers and Drainage Engineering Manager Andy White welcomed the report. "My key takeaway is we need to move away from seeing flood management as an independent activity to viewing it as part of a whole river system," he said. "The most appropriate way to do this is through the upcoming Wairau River Scheme Review."



How the Wairau River interacts with groundwater systems has been the focus of a national gravel bed river research project

Passion for planting natives

Planting natives on a 30 hectare Arapaoa Island block has become a passion for Toni Halliday (pictured below).

With the help of Council's Hill Country Erosion Programme, Toni, and her young neighbour Micaela Bowler, planted 500 natives this year including cordyline, mānuka, kānuka and totara.

Jointly funded by Council and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the programme supports farmers, enabling them to combat erosion on marginal farmland.

The fund provides advice and financial support to landowners.

The Hallidays bought the property in Te Awaiti Bay in Tory Channel/Kura Te Au, in 2005, building a house there 10 years later.

Toni had links to the area as her father had been an engineer at the former whaling station in the 1950s and 60s.

The block was regenerating native having once been farmed and in 2022 the Hallidays fenced off previously grazed areas which had become prone to erosion.

"In heavy rain the creek would run brown with sediment," she said. "Already we are noticing a difference with young plants popping up in the fenced off areas."

Toni works closely with the Arapaoa Island Kiwi Trust which traps stoats and rats and has noticed an increase of native birds in recent years.

"Our philosophy is to leave the land in better condition than we found it and part of that was planting more trees to stop erosion and improve water quality," she said.

If you're interested in finding out more about the Hill Country Erosion Programme, please contact Jenny Buck at jenny.buck@marlborough.govt.nz



Public Notices

Meet your Council



Mayor Nadine Taylor leads a team of 14 elected councillors. They are responsible for making decisions and developing policies that will help shape our province into the future.

Council's vision is that Marlborough is a globally-connected district of smart, progressive, high-value enterprises, known for its economic efficiency, quality lifestyle and wellbeing, caring community, desirable location and healthy natural environment.

For more information or to contact one of your elected representatives, go to: www.marlborough.govt.nz/your-council/councillors or Ph: 03 520 7400.

Control of aquatic vegetation in rivers

Council's river injection and spray programme for controlling aquatic vegetation will begin on 4 November 2024. Treatment will be applied to parts of Spring Creek, Ōpaoa River, Tuamarina River and, if necessary, the Taylor River and Murphys Creek.

Those using river water for irrigation or stock should contact Council for details about specific areas affected.

For further information contact Senior Rivers Engineer Gregor Punzel; Ph: 03 520 7400.

Council services on Labour Day

Council's Blenheim office will be closed from 4.30pm on Friday 25 October until 8.30am on Tuesday 29 October.

Opening times for the Waste Sorting Centre, transfer stations, Re-use Centre, Resource Recovery Centre and E-waste on Labour Day, Monday 28 October are below.

Marlborough Waste Services

Marlborough Waste Services are fully operational including kerbside collection. Please make sure your wheelie bin and maroon crate are out on the kerb by 7am.

The transfer stations, Resource Recovery Centre and Re-Use shop are all open normal hours.

Marlborough District Libraries

Marlborough Library, Te Kahu o Waipuna and Picton Library and Service Centre will be open as usual over the weekend but will be closed on Monday 28 October.

Bus services

Bus services will not operate on Monday 28 October. Normal services resume on Tuesday 29 October.

Proposed road closures, navigation warnings and alcohol licensing

For the latest public notices, please go to: www.marlborough.govt.nz/your-council/latest-news-notice-and-media-releases/all-news-notice-and-media-releases

Blenheim Customer Service Centre

15 Seymour Street, Blenheim 7201

Ph: 03 520 7400

mdc@marlborough.govt.nz

Mon - Tues 8.30am - 4.30pm

Wed 8.30am - 12.30pm

1.30pm - 4.30pm

Thurs - Fri 8.30am - 4.30pm

Picton Library & Service Centre

2 Dublin Street, Picton 7220

Ph: 03 520 7493

pictonlibrary@marlborough.govt.nz

Mon - Tues 8.30am - 5pm

Wed 9am - 5pm

Thurs - Fri 8.30am - 5pm

Sat 10am - 4pm

Sun 1pm - 4pm

Council & Committee Meetings

The following meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. Copies of the agendas will be available online and at Council's Office, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim.

Council

Thursday 31 October 2024 at 9am

Assets & Services Committee

Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 9am

Environment & Planning Committee

Thursday 14 November 2024 at 9am

The times and dates may be subject to change, please contact the Committee Secretary, Ph: 03 520 7400 for confirmation.

Awatere and Dashwood rural boil water notice

Water from Council's reticulation network to the Awatere and Dashwood rural areas should be boiled.

It does not currently meet the NZ Drinking Water Standards and may contain bacteria or protozoa that are harmful to human health.

All water used for drinking, food preparation or cleaning teeth should be boiled before use.

Treated water is available at the public taps on Marama Road, outside Seddon School. For further information contact Council on Ph: 03 520 7400.



FANCY A
**Picnic in Picton or
Brunch in Blenheim**
SATURDAYS - RETURN
UNDER 5 | 5-18 YRS | ADULT
Free | **\$4** | **\$8**
SUPERGOLD (9AM - 3PM)
Free
get on BOARD