

MINUTES

First Meeting (Inaugural)

F25/96/005– D25/40171

Date: 28 October 2025 at 2.30 PM

Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

The Chief Executive will chair the meeting until the District Mayor has completed his declaration (item 4.1)

Present

The District Mayor N C Volzke (the Chairperson), the Deputy Mayor A K Harris, Councillors: S J Beck, J Bertie, J R Best, G W Boyde, D K Chadwick, , A M C Dudley, J M S Erwood, E E Hall, K A Sextus and M J Watt.

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs R Johnson, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the HR & Governance Administrator – Mrs C Reynolds (*part meeting*), the Communications Advisor – Mrs S Clarkson (*part meeting*), the Community and Economic Development Manager – Mrs S Afzal (*part meeting*), the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig (*part meeting*), 27 members of the public (*part meeting*) and one member of the Media (Stratford and South)

Via audio/visual link: Mr Chris Webby – Audit New Zealand (*part meeting*)

1. Welcome

The Chief Executive welcomed Elected Members, members of the public, staff and the media to the meeting.

The opening karakia was read.

The Chief Executive reiterated the health and safety message and emergency procedures.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Announcements

There were no announcements.

4. Declarations

The Chief Executive will receive the individual declaration of the District Mayor.

"DECLARATION BY MAYOR"

"I, Neil Volzke, declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgement, execute and perform, in the best interests of the Stratford District, the powers, authorities, and duties vested in, or imposed upon, me as Mayor of the Stratford District Council by virtue of the Local Government Act 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or any other Act."

The Chief Executive vacated the role of chair for The District Mayor to chair the remainder of the meeting.

4.2 Elected Members

The District Mayor received the individual declarations of the Elected Members.

"DECLARATION BY MEMBER

"Ko ahau, ko _____, e oati ana ka whai ahau i te pono me te tōkeke, i runga hoki i te mutunga kē mai nei o āku pūkenga, o āku whakatau hoki kia whakatutuki, kia mahi anō hoki i te mana whakahaere, te mana whakatau me ngā momo mahi kua uhia ki runga i a au kia whiwhi painga mō te takiwā o Te Whakaahurangi hei kaikaunihera o te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Whakaahurangi, e ai hoki ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Taiao 2002, ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Taiao Whakapae me te Hui 1987, me ētahi Ture anō rānei"

"I, _____, declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgement, execute and perform, in the best interests of the Stratford District, the powers, authorities, and duties vested in, or imposed upon, me as a member of the Stratford District Council by virtue of the Local Government Act 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or any other Act."

5. Decision Report - Appointment of Deputy Mayor

D25/39443 Page 10

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/WATT
Carried
CL/25/112

2. THAT the Council notes that under Section 41A of the Local Government Act 2002 the Mayor has the power to appoint the Deputy Mayor.

3. THAT the Council notes the Mayor's decision whether to exercise his power to appoint the Deputy Mayor or leave this task to Council.

VOLZKE/BECK
Carried
CL/25/113

If the mayor exercises his power to appoint:

4. THAT the Council notes that the Mayor has appointed Councillor AMANDA HARRIS as Deputy Mayor.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD
Carried
CL/25/114

5. THAT the Council endorses the appointment of Councillor AMANDA HARRIS as Deputy Mayor.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
CL/25/115

If the mayor does not exercise his power to appoint:

6. THAT where there is more than one candidate for the position of Deputy Mayor, Council choose voting system A or B to decide the successful appointee.

7. THAT the Council elects Councillor _____ as Deputy Mayor of the Stratford District Council.

Recommended Reason

The Local Government Act requires the appointment of the Deputy Mayor in the first meeting of Council following an election. Under Section 41A of the Local Government Act 2002 the Mayor has the power to appoint the Deputy Mayor. If the Mayor decides not to exercise his power to appoint, Council has the responsibility to appoint the Deputy Mayor.

The Chief Executive noted the following points:

- The District Mayor has the power to appoint the Deputy Mayor under the Local Government Act. If the District Mayor chooses not to exercise this authority then the decision lies with council.

The District Mayor noted the following point:

- He noted that it takes courage put yourself in the public arena and acknowledged all those who put their names forward for this election.
- He noted that the 54% voter participation that Stratford saw was one of the highest voter turnouts in the country.
- He congratulated all those who had now been sworn in as an elected member and acknowledged those who have been re-elected and noted this is an endorsement from the community of the work that has been done in the past.
- He noted that he had spoken with all elected members over the past week and sought their input into the role of Deputy Mayor. He announced that he has chosen Councillor Amanda Harris for the role of Deputy Mayor. Councillor Harris fulfils her role on council with a great deal of passion and her commitment is exemplary. He felt as a good thinker, trustworthy, well respected and skilled debater she will bring added value to his role as Mayor with gender balance, a different age demographic to his own and complimenting an urban mayor with a rural Deputy Mayor. He noted he looked forward to working with her as his deputy over the next three years.

The meeting adjourned at 2.59pm with the Community and Economic Development Manager and members of the public departing at this point.

The meeting reconvened at 3.08pm with one member of the public and one member of the public present at the meeting.

6. Information Report - General Explanation of Various Acts

D25/39129 Page 15

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/25/116

2. THAT the Council notes the general explanation of various Acts pursuant to Section 21 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 as provided by the Chief Executive.

HALL/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/25/117

Recommended Reason

Elected members should be informed of various statutory matters that impact on their responsibilities.

The Chief Executive noted this report was a legal requirement to form part of the first meeting. Guidance is provided within every decision report on legislation and legal opinion is also provided if required. Mr Hanne went through each piece of legislation within the report and provided examples relevant to this council for context.

The Communications Advisor left the meeting at 3.25pm.

The Corporate Accountant joined the meeting at 3.27pm.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- The District Mayor noted it was important to note perceived conflicts of interest, where it could be perceived that an elected member has a conflict. He urged all councillors to seek advice if they are unsure.
- It was noted that the Pecuniary Interest Return forms would be circulated to elected members for completion. Mr Hanne noted that these are the responsibility of the elected members to complete and return. The Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant noted the previous return dates had been in February each year.
- It was noted that it is a good idea to record interactions with members of the public but this will depend on the situation.

7. Decision Report - Setting of Date of First Meeting of Council

D25/38751 Page 316

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

CHADWICK/BERTIE
Carried
CL/25/118

2. THAT Council confirms the first meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday 11 November at 3.30pm.

BECK/BEST
Carried
CL/25/119

Recommended Reason

The Local Government Act 2002 requires the fixing of the date and time of the first meeting of the local authority or the adoption of a schedule of meetings at its first meeting.

The Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant noted the it was legislatively required to set the date of the first Ordinary Meeting of Council at the Inaugural Meeting. This date had been proposed based on the meeting cycle in the previous term.

Mr Chris Webby, Audit New Zealand, joined the meeting via Audio/Visual link at 3.47pm.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.
2. THAT the 2024/25 Annual Report be received and approved for adoption, subject to any further changes as requested by Audit New Zealand, the independent auditors.
3. THAT the Mayor and the Chief Executive be given authority to sign the 2024/25 Annual Report and the Summary 2024/25 Annual Report, incorporating any late, minor, changes that may be required by Audit New Zealand.
4. THAT the Chief Executive be authorised to publish the 2024/25 Annual Report and the Summary 2024/25 Annual Report within one month of adopting the Annual Report 2024/25.

BOYDE/SEXTUS
Carried
CL/25/120

BOYDE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/25/121

Recommended Reason

Section 98 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires Council to adopt the 2024/25 Annual Report by 31 October 2025. The audited Annual Report gives the community transparency on the Council's performance for the year. It is a statutory requirement for a local authority to, within one month after the adoption of its Annual Report; make publicly available its Annual Report and a summary of the information contained in its Annual Report.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- Council's Annual Report is an important document required by law to be completed and audited by 31 October each year. It compares council's achievements and progress to what was planned in the Long Term Plan.
- The report is now complete, it is an extremely large document which takes a lot of work but highlights the amount of work council does for its community.
- She noted that council had adopted a back to basics approach in the last Long Term Plan and there has been a significant focus on infrastructure and resources. It is also important to consider the impact that government reforms have had on our targets, however council has performed very well financially.
- There were late updates required from the Auditors, these were circulated by email and today in hard copy. This process has taken longer than usual largely due to the change in auditors as when this is changed they require extra time to document internal controls and sometimes they question information that has already been questioned by the previous auditors.
- There has been a qualification for a service measure as the auditors are of the opinion that council did not do a sufficient number of traffic counts to reliably measure our smooth travel exposure. Officers will review the processes to ensure this qualification doesn't happen again in the future.
- Mrs Johnson acknowledged those officers involved mentioning the Corporate Accountant, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant and the Communications Manager for the work put into the document. She noted this will go through a design process now it is adopted.

Mr Webby noted the following points:

- He thanked management and staff and noted that this was a big achievement especially having changed auditors and elections.
- He noted there was nothing to report on any of key issues identified in the audit plan and that auditors had gained assurance over those and the financial statements.

- If council adopts the annual report today he will be in the position to issue an unmodified report apart from a qualification on the service performance measure regarding smooth travel exposure. He clarified that auditors did not think there were enough traffic counts to prove the estimations, he noted they were not saying the results were wrong just that it required the work to prove they represent the estimates. He noted a few other councils have been qualified for the same issue around traffic counts.
- The District Mayor noted there are no guidelines around traffic counts and asked how Audit New Zealand determines what is or isn't enough? Mr Webby noted it was looking at the counts, over the last two years no rural roads were counted and 23 urban roads were counted, so it is low compared to the whole network. There is no set amount but the results were too low to determine if they are correct. There were also variances in the estimates vs the counts.
- Councillor Boyde noted this felt quite minor and if auditors were letting the sector know that these issues were cropping up? Mr Webby noted that other councils were qualified on the same issue and it comes down to the measures assessed as material as they cannot audit every performance measure. He was looking to give guidance to his sector group that will help councils in the future.
- The District Mayor noted the discrepancy between the achieved capital works projects and the ones carried forward and asked if this was a concern? Mr Webby noted it would be if it continued, the main concern would be if more projects were added at the Long Term Plan while being unable to complete the current ones.
- Councillor Boyde questioned the inventories not yet realised – subdivision, note on page 325. Mrs Johnson noted this was due to consenting issues with the subdivision and the delay due to the wetlands, so the subdivision was not yet at a position to be listed at as inventory to be sold. It will move to this when it is ready to be sold.
- Mr Webby noted the reference to Local Water Done Well decision, he noted that this was just to reference that it had not yet been approved at signing.

The member of the public left the meeting at 4.04pm.

9. Questions

There were no questions.

10. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 472

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.09pm. .

N C Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 11th day of November 2025

N C Volzke
District Mayor