MINUTES
Ordinary

TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE O WHAKAAHURANGI
STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

F25/96/005 – D26/13062

Date: 14 April 2026 at 3.30 PM
Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

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 – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs R Johnson, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Governance Advisor & Executive Assistance – Mr G Hancock, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the Senior Accountant – Mrs C Craig (part meeting), the HR and Governance Administrator – Mrs C Reynolds (part meeting), one member of the media (Stratford and South), and four members of the public (part meeting).

1. Welcome

The opening karakia was read and the H&S message was read. The mayor welcomed members, senior staff to the meeting and members of the public.

2. Apologies

None recorded.

3. Announcements

The District Mayor noted that elected members remained behind for councillor-only time, with a number of issues to be updated on.

4. Declarations of Members Interest

Elected members were asked to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda. Councillor Hall noted a conflict of interest in relation to Item 6.2, concerning the adoption of the Audit and Risk Committee minutes relating to the Percy Thomson Trust.

5. Attendance Schedule

The Attendance schedule for Ordinary Council Meetings was attached. Councillor Best clarified that his previous absence was intended to be recorded as a formal apology, as he had advised in an earlier email that he might be unable to attend due to travel time. It was agreed that this be recorded as an apology rather than absence.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Ordinary Meeting of Council – 10 March 2026
D26/11618 (Open) D26/8034 (PE) Page 8

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 10 March 2026, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

BERTIE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/26/27

6.2 Audit and Risk Committee – 17 March 2026
D26/9317 Page 13

Recommendation

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, held on Tuesday 17 March 2026 be received.

BOYDE/ERWOOD
Carried
CL/26/28

2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee, held on Tuesday 17 March 2026 be adopted, *excluding the Percy Thomson Trust – Request for Audit Exemption and Revocation of CCO Status (Item 16 on the Audit and Risk Committee agenda), which will be adopted separately.*

BIOYDE/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/26/29

3. *THAT Council decline the request for revocation of Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) status for Percy Thomson Trust.*

HARRIS/BOYDE
Division
6 for
5 against
Carried
CL/26/30

4. *THAT Council decline the request to exempt Percy Thomson Trust from the standard reporting, auditing and accountability requirements applicable to Council Controlled Organisations as per Section 7 of the Local Government Act (2002).*

BOYDE/WATT
Carried.
CL/26/31

The District Mayor noted the following points:

- The District Mayor drew members' attention to the Percy Thomson Trust recommendation on page 18 and sought agreement from members to consider the recommendation separately.
- Since the report was presented to the Audit & Risk Committee, members have received additional information in the form of a legal opinion obtained by the Trust from Halliwells in Hāwera. This document has been circulated to all Councillors.
- The Chair of the Trust, Ellen Hall, has also advised that, since the A&R meeting, the Trust has received confirmation from Creative New Zealand that it does not fund CCOs. The Mayor read Ms Hall's email, which had not been circulated to members as it had only just been received. The email noted that the Trust operates as a not-for-profit entity with a strong community and cultural focus, rather than as a commercial CCO. It stated that the Trust's current CCO status is creating barriers to external funding and that the request to revoke CCO status is intended to enable access to external funding. That the A&R decision was made without formal legal advice on the Trust's position and maintained that there is a valid basis to progress the request. The legal opinion obtained states that removal of CCO status is a straightforward, inexpensive, and viable option.
- The Mayor outlined the original reasons for the A&R Committee's decision and noted that the statutory obligations associated with being a CCO, such as LGOIMA requests and meeting compliance requirements, have an impact on the Trust.
- The Mayor explained the voting process for the motions, which would be taken separately. Members agreed to and noted this process.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde sought clarification from the District Mayor on whether questions could be asked of the Chair of PTT. It was clarified that, under Standing Orders, this item was for Elected Members' discussion only. Councillor Boyde then sought clarity on Creative New Zealand funding, including how much funding had been received and how many applications had been made. It was confirmed this information was unknown. The Councillor further enquired how many LGOIMA requests had been received in relation to the Trust. The CE recalled one request from the period when Council managed the process on the Trust's behalf.

- The Deputy Mayor sought clarification regarding Toi funding, noting the PTT Chair's email. The Mayor confirmed that Toi funding had been noted in the Chair's email. Discussion occurred, and it was confirmed that Toi funding must be applied for through Council.
- The Deputy Mayor also sought clarification on whether public consultation would be required. The CE advised that legal advice would be necessary. In his view, as PTT is listed as a strategic asset, any change would likely trigger consultation requirements, although this is not black and white under the Local Government Act. He noted that PTT sits under the Significance & Engagement Policy as a strategic asset, in the same category as water assets, and parks and reserves.
- Councillor Sextus sought clarification around funding and queried whether Council could access Toi funding on the Trust's behalf, requesting clarification on the process. The CE advised that the usual practice is a joint application prepared by Council's Community Development Team and signed off by Elected Members. There is no maximum funding amount, and applications are assessed line by line by Toi. Councillor Sextus asked how many times Council had applied for funding on PTT's behalf. The Senior Accountant expanded on this point.
- Councillor Beck noted that Creative New Zealand funding would be significant and that, as a CCO, the Trust could not access this funding. He asked what the funding would roughly be worth and whether Council would need to make up this shortfall if the Trust could not access it. It was confirmed that the Trust does not have access to this funding so would not be known.
- Councillor Best queried what the gains of the CCO model were, and what benefits it provided to Council or the public. The CE provided background history. He noted that the key benefit is Council's ability to step in should anything go wrong, providing oversight and a level of security, as well as some funding support.
- Councillor Erwood questioned what the process would be if the matter was left on the table. The Mayor explained the voting process and advised that, if the recommendation was not adopted, this would likely trigger a further report from the CE on removing CCO status, potentially including a second legal opinion at his discretion.
- Councillor Best read section 15 of the PTT legal opinion to members. Further discussion occurred, noting that the opinion confirmed CCO status could be removed.
- Councillor Sextus queried point 13 of the legal opinion and provided a Nelson example. Discussion followed regarding appropriate audit requirements based on this advice. The CE confirmed that there would be no statutory requirement for reporting to Council if CCO status was removed. While reporting requirements could be written into the Trust Deed, there would be no CCO statutory obligations and no position of power over the Trust.
- Councillor Boyde sought clarification regarding the Audit and Risk Committee meeting and whether the matter could be revisited in the future. The CE advised that, under Standing Orders, this could not occur for a minimum period of six months. The CE advised that the issue could be revisited in the future, but noted there is a six-month legal stand-down period after a notice of motion is deferred.
- Councillor Sextus further clarified Creative New Zealand funding and referenced Google research indicating to members the maximum funding amount available to PTT.

Points noted in discussion for recommendation three.

- The Deputy Mayor noted that while she sympathised with the Trust's position, she was not eager to revisit a decision that the committee had made within its delegated authority. She did not believe the matter was final and noted that there would be opportunities to revisit it. She emphasised that the legal advice should be read as urgent, preliminary, and initial legal advice only.
- Councillor Boyde supported the Deputy Mayor's statements. He noted that the legal advice was interesting, but when considering the broader picture, including the financial implications, he did not have confidence at this time to make a change. He stated that the matter could be revisited once further financial reports were received.
- Councillor Erwood acknowledged what had been said and noted that he found the legal opinion interesting. He advised that he would be voting against the motion. He noted that the Trust appeared to be taking steps in the right direction.
- Councillor Dudley stated that, having considered both sides of the argument, she was in favour of retaining CCO status. She noted that the Trust had only one year of financial experience as self-managed. Funding was significant, and while Toi funding could be accessed, she stated that in a rate-capped environment the Trust could not afford to lose its existing council funding.
- Councillor Watt advised that he was in favour of the motion. He noted the preference of Percy Thomson to retain Council involvement and oversight. He questioned what role Council would have if it was no longer in a position of influence or authority.
- The District Mayor acknowledged the Halliwells report, the availability of Creative New Zealand funding, and the argument for revoking CCO status, noting that the Trust could apply to other funders. He highlighted that PTT is a well-regarded gallery, appreciated by many, particularly beyond the local community. He stated that the key decision was what would best support the Trust's survival in difficult economic times. He noted that the Trust was making progress and that its relationship with Council provided a level of security that was important in the current climate.

A division was called on recommendation three.

Those voting for the motion: Beck, Boyde, Dudley, Harris, Watt, and Volzke.

Those voting against the motion: Chadwick, Bertie, Best, Erwood, Sextus.

Points noted in discussion for recommendation four:

- Councillor Boyde noted his opinion that the audit provided a good overview for Council. This view was supported by Councillor Watt.
- Councillor Sextus noted the financial cost of the audit. The CE advised, with confirmation from the Director – Corporate, that the cost was approximately $25,000.
- Councillor Beck queried whether there was any way to relieve the trust of the audit fees and whether a staff member could undertake the work. The Director – Corporate advised that the audit requirements were comprehensive and exceeded what would normally be expected of a not-for-profit. It was noted that financial reviews can be beneficial; however, when applying for funding, a full audit is often required. As a CCO, they are required to be audited by Audit New Zealand, and an exemption would need to be applied if not.
- The District Mayor noted that one option was for Council to pay for the audit and receive a report on the matter, or alternatively the matter would need to be brought forward by resolution. The Director – Corporate sought clarification and advised that if Council were to fund the full $25,000, this would equate to approximately 0.1% of rates and approximately move the proposed rates increase from 5.9% to a 6% rates increase through the Annual Plan.
- The Deputy Mayor referred to Councillor Beck's question regarding the audit requirements and asked whether these were related to Trust's investment. The Director – Corporate confirmed that there were likely implications from this. The Deputy Mayor advised she was not in favour of making a resolution at this time and considered that the matter should instead be included in LTP discussions, noting that making a decision now would not support good decision-making.
- The District Mayor supported the Deputy Mayor position and requested that the Chief Executive bring back a report for elected members on audit costs.

6.3 Policy and Services Committee – 24 March 2026
D26/11619 (Open) D26/10246 (PE) Page 22

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 be received.

VOLZKE/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/26/32

2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 be adopted *excluding the Elizabeth Maree Watson Estate Fund Policy adoption (item 10 on the Policy and Services Agenda).*

SEXTUS/WATT
Carried
CL/26/33

Points noted in the discussion:

- The Chief Executive noted that the Elizabeth Maree Watson Estate Fund Policy trust be withdrawn. During the last P&S Committee meeting, changes were made to the wording proposed by the Committee, and these were sent back to Public Trust. We have since received feedback from the Trust regarding those changes, and it is proposed that this be brought back as a standalone report rather than being word-smithed during the meeting.
- Councillor Boyde noted that his name did not appear at the top of the minutes and that this would be corrected at the P&S meeting.

NCW

7. District Mayor's Report

D26/12400 Page 30

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

VOLZK/BECK
Carried
CL/26/34

2. THAT the appointments to committees and community representations as listed in Table 1 be confirmed.

VOLZKE/BOYDE
Carried
CL/26/35

The District Mayor noted the following points:

- He wished to acknowledge the Zone Three meeting organisers and noted there had been significant positive feedback, with the meeting being very well received.
- The Mayor noted his formal recommendations on committee appointments and that the first meeting of the Broadway Enhancement Group is being arranged. The SBA has provided a representative.
- Councillor Watt is now Chair of the Creative Communities Committee. Discussion also included the announcement of the new Regional MSD Commissioner and the new Regional Public Service Commissioner.
- Correspondence was received from Minister Simon Watts, following recent dog attack incidents in the upper North Island. The Minister's letter requested that councils exercise all available powers relating to dog control. The Mayor sought councillors' views on whether discussions on the animal control bylaw and related controls should be brought forward.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Sextus sought clarification regarding rural and urban dogs and whether these had been affected by any changes from the 50 km and 70 km road speed changes. The Director – Environment advised that this has not.
- The District Mayor sought members' views on the Minister's letter. The Chief Executive noted that he would bring a report to Council on incidents, dog control, and advice on the bylaw. This would be added to the matters outstanding. Councillor Hall expressed the view that the bylaw should be reviewed now, also supported by Councillor Boyde. Councillor Dudley sought clarification regarding an example she had previously raised which she was advised that this was not a matter covered by the bylaw.

8. Public Forum Response

Speaker Lloyd Morgan and Hugh Barnes
Topic Taranaki Synthetic Turf Trust

Response:
It was noted that a courtesy response be sent. It was also noted that they are setting aside some funds, and this was to be commended.

9. Questions

- The CE noted LGNZ costs and their increase in fees. He sought clarification from elected members as to whether a decision report was required before approving Council's share of $48,000. This represents a 3.1% increase from the previous payment. Given the recent decision by New Plymouth District Council, it was considered prudent to discuss this with members. The CE noted benefits of the membership. Members discussed the matter and agreed that a summary of the benefits be provided but were comfortable with the payment proceeding.
- Councillor Erwood enquired about the Council's two e-bikes, including whether they had been purchased and their cost. The CE advised that they were never purchased but were donated. Councillor Erwood further queried whether staff would begin using them. The CE noted that the e-bikes have reached the end of their useful life.

- Councillor Boyde noted that Council has secured a green loan for water meters and that Stratford is the first council to do so, demonstrating Stratford “punching above its weight”. He expressed his appreciation to staff for their work.

10. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 36

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.48 pm.

N C Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 12th day of May 2026.

Signed by: Neil Volzke
Date & Time: 05 Jun, 2026 11:17:43 NZST

N C Volzke
District Mayor