

Date: Tuesday 30 June 2026 2026 at 2.00pm
Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

The District Mayor (the Chairperson) Neil Volzke, the Deputy Mayor Amanda Harris, Councillor Mathew Watt.

In attendance

Councillors: Steve Beck, Grant Boyde, Jono Erwood. The Chief Executive – Sven Hanne, the Director – Environmental Services – Blair Sutherland, the Director – Assets – Victoria Araba, the Governance Advisor and Executive Assistant – Gareth Hancock, General Manager - Water Services Business Unit - Deron Sharma.

1. Welcome

The opening karakia was read. The District Mayor reiterated the health and safety message and emergency procedures.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from the Director – Community Services – Kate Whareaitu, the Director – Corporate Services – Raelene Johnson.

3. Announcements

The Chief Executive introduced Deron Sharma, General Manager – Water Services Business Unit, to the committee. It was noted that he is from the Waikato and has an extensive background in water services and associated infrastructure.

The Mayor noted that he was acting as the interim Chair and that it was his intention to become a committee member as soon as an independent Chair was appointed.

4. Declarations of members interest

Elected members were asked to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda. There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5. Information Report - Stratford Waters Internal Business Unit – Establishment Update

D26/22101 Page 7

Recommendations

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/HARRIS
Carried
WS/26/1

Recommended Reason

The report provides the Committee with an update on the establishment programme of the Stratford Waters Internal Business Unit.



The General Manager - Water Services noted the following points:

- Key discussion points included the establishment programme outlined in the report. The programme is required by legislation and is linked to the Water Services Strategy. It is monitored by the Department of Internal Affairs who will soon transfer to the new ministry, MCERT. The programme consists of nine workstreams and is intended to be delivered in bite-sized chunks, providing clear operational and governance visibility.
- It was noted that the Water Services Steering Group will provide reporting to the Water Services Committee.
- It was highlighted to elected members that the City Care contract would be rolled over.

Questions/points of clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted the proposed changes relating to the Simplifying Local Government reforms and their potential impact. The General Manager advised that planning for the establishment programme is underway and must comply with the legislative requirements of the Water Services Act. The programme allows for some flexibility, and at the next decision gate, officers will assess what flexibility exists.
- The District Mayor noted that the next report to the DIA is due on 31 July and sought confirmation that the requirements would be met. The General Manager advised that work on the report is underway. The report will be submitted to DIA and subsequently brought to the Committee.
- The District Mayor raised a query regarding three waters and sought clarification on stormwater. It was noted stormwater is associated with roading and receives NZTA funding. It was further advised that work is underway in accordance with the Water Services Delivery Plan in the area.
- Councillor Beck reiterated that it was good to have greater clarity regarding stormwater.

6. Information Report - Appointment of an Independent Chairperson to the Water Services Committee

D26/22358 Page 12

Recommendations

THAT the report be received.

WATT/VOLZKE
Carried
WS/26/2

Recommended Reason

This report provides the Committee with the proposed criteria that will be used to support the Mayor's appointment of an independent Chairperson, congruent with the Committee's Terms of Reference and Council's approved Water Services Delivery Plan.

The General Manager - Water Services noted the following points:

- The key elements are summarised in Table One, which outlines the core criteria. These have been developed from available guidance. While the guidance relates to a CCO, it has been adapted for use for an in-house business unit.
- The intention was to seek the Committee's feedback on what the criteria should look like.

Questions/points of clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted that the criteria would likely result in a limited pool of candidates and queried whether a candidate could hold roles across multiple councils, and whether there would be any issues with that. The CE noted that experience and insights gained would be beneficial and was similar to that of an Audit and Risk Committee Chair. The Mayor suggested strengthening the wording relating to familiarity with Taranaki by including the local community and context.
- The District Mayor queried whether the Chair could be the CE of another water entity. The CE advised that this would likely depend on workload and contractual arrangements in place.
- The Deputy Mayor expressed support for the inclusion of the local community context.
- Councillor Boyde queried the financial implications of the appointment and whether budget existed. It was confirmed that funding exists.
- Councillor Watt sought clarification on whether there was a timeframe for appointing the Chair. The Chief Executive noted that the Committee was meeting the necessary requirements, while the Mayor expressed a preference for the appointment to be made sooner rather than later as development progressed.

- Councillor Beck reiterated the importance of integrity and public trust, noting that if the public did not have confidence in the Chair, it would be difficult to gain traction.

7. Information Report - Appointment of a Mana Whenua Representative to the Water Services Committee

D26/22515 Page 32

Recommendations

THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/WATT
Carried
WS/26/3

Recommended Reason

This report provides the Committee with the proposed approach that will be used to support the appointment of a Mana Whenua Representative, congruent with the Committee's Terms of Reference and Council's approved Water Services Delivery Plan.

The General Manager - Water Services noted the following points:

- The report outlines the process. As part of this, a representative with the appropriate mana and a regional connection to the committee is required.
- This is a feature of the WSDP and outlines the proposed process and criteria.
- This will also be a remunerated role.

Questions/points of clarification:

- Councillor Boyde sought clarity on the budget and process, and this was further expanded.
- The District Mayor sought clarification on whether the discussion related to iwi or mana whenua. The CE noted that engagement was occurring with the three iwi and that a range of options was being explored.
- The District Mayor queried right of objection. The process was clarified, and officers advised that they would be engaging with iwi throughout the process.
- The District Mayor also raised the proposed changes to voting rights by central government and asked whether these would be discussed. It was noted that an exception process would likely exist but was not yet known. The District Mayor further noted that he may revisit the possibility of appointing another elected member to the committee once the exception process was clearer.
- It was also noted that the integrity and trust criteria should be carried over to this appointment criteria.

8. Questions

- None.

9. Closing Karakia

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 2.39 pm.



Neil Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 8th day of October 2026.



Neil Volzke
District Mayor

