

**MINUTES OF CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
HELD AT THE CARTERTON EVENTS CENTRE, 50 HOLLOWAY ST, CARTERTON  
ON WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026 AT 9:00 AM**

**PRESENT:** Deputy Mayor Grace Ayling, Cr Brian Deller, Cr Lou Newman, Cr Steve Laurence, Cr Steve Gallon, Cr Simon Casey, Cr Rachel Round

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Staff  
Geoff Hamilton (Chief Executive), Marc Ferguson (Chief Financial Officer), Lawrence Stephenson (Group Manager Infrastructure), Glenda Seville (Group Manager Community and Facilities), Sara Renall (Senior Communications and Engagement Advisor - via video conference), Katrina King (Democratic Services Officer)

## **1 REPORTS**

### **1.1 COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

To discuss Council's economic development strategy.

Council discussed the following strategies for economic development:

#### Economic development funding and strategy

Current economic development funding of approximately \$233,000 is distributed across various organisations including WEDS, Destination Wairarapa, and Business Wairarapa, with contracts expiring this year and in 2027. Discussion focused on whether current investments are delivering desired outcomes for the district and the need for clearer vision and direction.

#### Town centre revitalisation

Community survey results show declining satisfaction with the town centre's appearance, with feedback emphasising the importance of addressing vacant shop fronts and improving the overall look and feel of High Street. Various approaches were considered including building facade grants, shop window improvements, and potential rates incentives for business improvements.

#### Trails and tourism infrastructure

The potential for connecting cycling trails from Wellington through to the district was discussed, including a proposed bridge crossing, and detailed trail designs already completed. This infrastructure could support both Dark Skies tourism and general visitor numbers, with measurable economic benefits through increased foot traffic and accommodation bookings.

#### Economic development governance structure

The establishment of an Economic Development Advisory Group was proposed to provide oversight of funding decisions and strategic direction. The possibility that an Economic Development Committee may be more appropriate was also discussed, as this could hold delegations and budget.

Next Steps

- Staff to draft a Terms of Reference for a possible Economic Development Committee.
- The Mayor and elected members to discuss economic development plans with Masterton District Council and South Wairarapa District Council to ensure alignment.
- Prepare a paper for the May Ordinary Council meeting to formalise the next steps.