

Taupō District Council

Notes of Council Workshop

Group	Council
Date	Tuesday 17 December 2024, 1.54pm – 2.38pm
Venue	Great Lake Centre
Topic	Tūrangi Aerodrome
Facilitated by	General Manager Airport (W Wootton), Property Management Lead (P Handcock)
Elected Members present	Mayor David Trewavas (in the Chair), Deputy Mayor Cr Kevin Taylor, Cr Duncan Campbell, Cr Karam Fletcher, Cr Sandra Greenslade, Cr Kylie Leonard, Cr Danny Loughlin, Cr Anna Park (via MS Teams), Cr Rachel Shepherd, Cr Yvonne Westerman
Officers present	Chief Executive (J Gardyne), General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services (T Hale), General Manager Organisation Performance (S Matthews), General Manager People and Community Partnerships (L O'Brien), General Manager Strategy and Environment (W Zander), General Manager Airport (W Wootton), Communications Manager (L McMichael), Property and Development Manager (C Haskell), Property Management Lead (P Handcock), Airport Operations Manager (K Gard), Digital Content Creator (C Hollinger), Venues Operations Officer Audio Visual Lead (F Hughes), Executive Manager Mayors Office (J Later), Iwi Engagement Partner (T W Walker), Senior Solicitor (K Hollman), Community Engagement Advisor (R Prisk), Governance Quality Manager (S James), Senior Committee Advisor (K Watts), Legal and Governance Coordinator (D Periam)
Public / media present	Six members of the public, including Ngāti Tūrangitukua whānau members
Documents either pre-circulated or tabled	PowerPoint Presentation (A3693847)
Public or closed¹	Public

¹ Workshops are public (and are always advertised whether public or closed), unless there is a good reason(s) for information to be withheld and there is no overriding public interest in holding the workshop in public. Withholding grounds set out in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) are a guide. If closed, cite relevant LGOIMA section.

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Notes²

The purpose of the workshop was to provide elected members with further information about the Tūrangi Aerodrome and an update on the lease expiry and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) rules.

The Property Management Lead shared a PowerPoint Presentation (A3693847), and the following points were explained:

- The land was roughly 50 hectares in total, it was classed as rural land and had an airstrip running through it.
- The land was transferred to 26 owners and occupiers on 26 July 2024 and Te Kotahitanga O Ngāti Tūwharetoa Custodian Trustees Limited (TKONT).
- 5.66 hectares were under lease to Council.
- Council sub-licenced to occupy with Tūrangi Aero Club roughly 1445m² which was expiring on 27 February 2025.
- Council's lease would expire on 28 February 2025. This lease was restricted and could only be used for an airfield or related activities.
- There was a critical liability issue because the operator needed to ensure there were no protrusions through the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS), however, it is apparent that currently there were some trees protruding through the take-off climb and approach surfaces
- The Taupō Airport Authority (TAA) General Manager was directly responsible to the CAA for compliance of Tūrangi Aerodrome despite having no jurisdiction or oversight. There could be issues under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HWSA).
- The name of the operator needed to be changed which would require 30 days' notice in writing to CAA, if the lease was terminated then Tūrangi Aerodrome's certification would need to be deactivated.
- The land had gone through the Treaty Settlement process with it returning to the original owners.
- The owners had met directly with the aero club, they were prepared to extend the aero club arrangement for a short period to renew the buildings on site.
- Ms Amy Walker, Ngāti Tūrangitukua explained that the handover of the whenua from TKONT to the whānau was continuing and once an entity was established to receive the land. The owners had not decided what they would do with the whenua yet and various options would be explored. It was unclear if they wanted to continue with the aerodrome as they were unsure what was involved with this and needed to understand this further first.

In answer to questions, the following was clarified:

- TAA was the named operator.
- The General Manager Airport felt uncomfortable to continue being responsible for the Tūrangi Aerodrome.
- Landowners were aware of the obligations of having an aerodrome on the land including CAA regulations and the HWSA too.
- The TAA and then Council were exposed if anything goes wrong.
- Taupō Airport is a 50:50 Joint Venture between Taupo District Council and the Ministry of Transport (MoT) representing the Crown and operates through a Deed of agreement between both parties.
- TAA was established as a Council Controlled Organisation in 1960s and manages Taupō Airport operations on behalf of the Joint Venture.

Some elected members expressed the view that it would not be appropriate for Council to try and extend the lease past February 2025. They believed that Council should remove itself from the situation and allow the owners to do whatever their aspirations were with the land. Elected members had now been made aware of the risks and they could not ask officers to carry a risk they were not comfortable with. Another elected member expressed the view that aerodromes

² Workshops are not decision-making forums, therefore this document contains notes of key points discussed only, not decisions.

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were assets, and the lease should be extended for a few months to enable discussions about the future to take place.

Elected members thanked officers for the update. Elected members expressed their concerns with the current risks to Council and that they had a strong desire to cease involvement as soon as possible.

The workshop closed at 2.38pm.