

Taupō District Council

Notes of Council Workshop

Group	Council
Date	Tuesday 18 February 2025, 2.27pm -3.36pm
Venue	Waiora House
Topic	Local Water Done Well Update
Facilitated by	General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services (T Hale) and Programme Manager (J Walton)
Elected Members present	Deputy Mayor Cr Kevin Taylor (in the Chair), Mayor David Trewavas (from 2.44pm), Cr Duncan Campbell, Cr Sandra Greenslade, Cr Kylie Leonard (until 3.09pm), Cr Danny Loughlin (via MS Teams), Cr Anna Park (until 3.29pm), Cr Christine Rankin (from 2.56pm), Cr Rachel Shepherd, Cr Yvonne Westerman (until 3.31pm), Cr John Williamson
Officers present	<p>Chief Executive (J Gardyne), General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services (T Hale), Acting General Manager People and Community Partnerships (H Tattle), General Manager Strategy and Environment (W Zander), Policy Manager (N Carroll), Three Waters Manager (S Lealand), Iwi and Co Governance Manager (D Rameka), Executive Manager Mayors Office (J Later), Programme Manager (J Walton), Iwi Engagement Partner (T W Walker), Digital Content Creator (C Hollinger), Governance Quality Manager (S James), Legal and Governance Coordinator (D Periam)</p> <p>Via MS Teams: Finance Business Partner (H Rowe), Senior Financial Planner (J Caldwell), Senior Policy Advisor (K Goode), People and Culture Business Partner (S Ingham), Communications Advisor (C Harrison), Senior Community Development Advisor (G Smith), Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō District (C Dredge), Co-Governance Management Partner (S Mavor)</p>
Public / media present	No public or media present
Documents either pre-circulated or tabled	PowerPoint Presentation (A3723696)
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 an update to elected members on the progress of Taupō District Council's (TDC) Water Services Delivery Plan, share detailed information on the options analysis conducted and explain a possible public consultation plan.

The General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services and the Programme Manager presented a PowerPoint (A3723696) to elected members.

The following points were clarified:

- While the Water Services Delivery Plan was due 3 September 2025, the team were looking to have this completed around June or July due to local elections.
- A lot more information had been provided by Central Government on the requirements for local government.
- Waikato Water Done Well had continued to progress, and seven councils had signed the Heads of Agreement.
- The estimated cost increases due to Local Water Done Well (even under the "do nothing" option) was between \$500,000 - \$800,000. Part of this cost was a levy to the Commerce Commission for them to monitor us, and additional roles to support the financial separation and economic regulation.
- By 2027, financials and services would sit outside of the Long-term Plan/Annual Plan process however what this would look like was still to be determined.
- There would be an increase of work within the three waters space and more staff would be required to complete this work, including staff to work with the Commerce Commission and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).
- Public consultation was scheduled to begin at the end of March and be open for one month. Hearings were scheduled to be held in May with the final decision in June.
- Public consultation was being done under the Local Services (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 which explained councils only need to consult on two options.
- There were currently no concerns regarding debt capacity.
- Any alternative needed to show that it would be better for the Taupō District and meet Central Governments criteria.
- Long list of options was presented, and it was explained that the yellow ones were options being investigated further.
- Advantages and disadvantages of an inhouse council model was shown. There would be a level of governance to this model, DIA would need to see that the Water Delivery Services Plan had oversight and reporting lines. It was unclear what this would look like, but it could be a water services committee.
- Advantages, disadvantages and neutral benefits of a Taupō CCO were shown. It was explained that there would be more access to borrow debt however this was not something Council needed at this stage.
- Advantages, disadvantages and neutral benefits of a multi-owned Council CCO such as Waikato Water were shown. Central Government were encouraging councils towards this option.

In answer to questions, the following was clarified:

- There was a period before local elections where significant decisions should be avoided, which meant the timeline had been pushed forward.
- Public consultation would show different options and officers would indicate what their preferred or proposed option would be. It was required through legislation to have a preferred option and advise the public.
- A requirement of the Water Services Delivery Plan was it had to cover a ten-year period.
- Officers had engaged WSP to provide individual external advice and officers were also working with DIA to ensure they had oversight into TDC's plans.

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

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- A phased approach could be keeping the water services in house but keeping options open to join a multi-council Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) in the future.
- Level of risk had been considered, and officers had determined what staff would be required in the water team to reach the requirements of Bill 3.
- While there was a limited time to get this work completed, officers wanted to do what was right for the communities now and in the medium and long-term future.
- The water team made up 30% of the staff at TDC.
- There would be another workshop that would discuss financials further, this workshop was an overview and to bring elected members up to speed with the new information that had been received from Central Government.

The following feedback from elected members was received:

- An elected member encouraged other members and staff to look at the past decisions that had been made and the outcomes of these decisions when thinking about Local Water Done Well.
- An elected member explained that how TDC currently delivered water services was amazing and elected members felt the officers did a great job.
- It would be helpful to have further information about the other councils that might be a part of the Waikato Water multi-CCO.
- Central Government were asking local governments to make these changes, it would be beneficial to have some assurances that all the time, money and effort being put in was going to be worth it.

Elected members thanked the General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services and the Programme Manager for the workshop and acknowledged the amount of work staff were doing over and above their standard work.

The workshop closed at 3.36pm.