

# *Ashburton Airport*

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022 - 2052



**Ashburton**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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# Introduction

Ashburton Airport is Mid Canterbury's dedicated aerodrome. It has been providing facilities for the district's aviation enthusiasts since 1930. It was the first aerodrome in the South Island to be owned by a local authority, and has been enjoyed by residents and visitors for many years. Beginning as a 20 hectare site, north-east of Ashburton, the Airport has evolved into a 100 hectare hub for recreational flights, museum tours, and events which contribute to the district's character and appeal.

While the Airport's development has progressed, it has not been guided by a strategic long-term plan. By 2021, Ashburton Airport was seeing increased interest from people and businesses wanting to build more aircraft hangars there. This interest prompted Ashburton District Council to consider how best to manage future growth and development at the Airport in a way that benefits not only those using the facility, but also the district and its people.

Council has conducted both pre-engagement with Airport users and neighbours and a formal public consultation on a draft Development Plan. The consultation attracted 109 submissions covering a broad range of related issues and perspectives. Council thanks all submitters for their time and effort in participating in this process and for the information and ideas they have contributed.

This Ashburton Airport Development Plan sets out how the Airport will be enhanced over the next 30 years.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Development Plan. We hope Ashburton Airport will continue to benefit our district, and contribute to our attractiveness as a great district in which to live, play and do business.

Neil Brown

**Mayor**  
**Ashburton District Council**



## About Ashburton Airport

Ashburton Airport is a rural aviation facility that provides a base for Mid Canterbury's pilots, aviation enthusiasts, and visitors. The 100 hectare site is located eight kilometres east of Ashburton, on the corner of Seafield and Morris Roads. The facility is a significant local asset. It is owned by Ashburton District Council and is managed through the Council's Ashburton Airport Authority.

### HISTORY

Ashburton Airport has enjoyed a rich history since it opened in 1930. Importantly, it was the first airport in the South Island to be owned by a local council, and only the second to be owned by a local body in the whole of New Zealand.

In May 1929, the Canterbury Aero Club proposed that the two councils at the time, Ashburton County and Ashburton Borough, should purchase land together near Ashburton to develop an aerodrome. The Councils agreed and jointly bought 50 acres (20.2 hectares) at Seafield, with the option to purchase a further 43 acres (17.4 hectares) of adjoining property. Canterbury Aero Club members then prepared a runway and built the very first hangar. The Ashburton Aerodrome officially opened on 19 May 1930.

During its first nine years, Ashburton Aerodrome was not well maintained and in August 1939 its licence was cancelled. In the same year World War II began, and the Aerodrome was made available to the New Zealand Government for pilot training. At its peak use during wartime, 50 Tiger Moth aeroplanes were based there. During this time, the Airport was substantially upgraded for flight training, with a control tower and aircraft hangars built, and new tarmac laid.

When World War II ended, the Canterbury Aero Club resumed its lease of the Aerodrome, forming a new Mid Canterbury Branch in 1947.

On 7 June 1967, the Aerodrome's management, administration, control and maintenance were jointly transferred to the Ashburton Borough Council, Ashburton County Council and Canterbury Aero Club. The Ashburton Airport Authority was formed almost 20 years later in 1985, with the County Council becoming the administering body and the Mid Canterbury Aero Club, the principal Aerodrome lessee. Other leases were granted to two commercial groups, the Ashburton Speedway Association and Ashburton Aviation Museum Society.

When Ashburton Borough and Ashburton County Councils amalgamated in 1989, the land was transferred to the ownership of Ashburton District Council. This Council then became the Ashburton Airport Authority.



## FEATURES AND FACILITIES

### Recreational and commercial hangars

Aircraft hangars that are owned and used by recreational flyers and commercial operators are located in several areas of Ashburton Airport. Hangars store aeroplanes, helicopters and other aircraft. They can also provide room for owners to carry out activities, such as light maintenance, museum displays, or business practices. Through its lease conditions, Council categorises hangars at Ashburton Airport based on what they are used for:

- **Recreational hangars** are used by people who fly for personal enjoyment. The tenant is charged a recreational rate for their lease. This is because, aside from possible membership fees they might charge, they do not make money from their activities. District Plan rules allow these hangars at Ashburton Airport.



- **Commercial hangars** are used by aviation businesses and companies. The tenant is charged a commercial rate on their lease because their activities generate income (not including membership fees). District Plan rules allow these hangars at Ashburton Airport.

Council considers other hangars, such as those owned by Ashburton Aviation Museum and Mid Canterbury Aero Club, to provide a community benefit. Council charges lower community rates for these leases.

### Grass runways

One of the unique features of Ashburton Airport is its runways. Ashburton is fortunate to have four runways that allow aircraft to land and take off from eight different directions. Pilots are able to assess factors such as wind and sunlight glare, and select a runway most suitable for their safe arrival and departure.

Runway 16 is lit up to allow night flying. This feature is primarily used for pilot training.

The grass runways are a practical surface for the small-to-medium aircraft that come to Ashburton. This includes small, private passenger aircraft (eight-nine seat aeroplanes). Ashburton's close proximity to Christchurch Airport means it is unlikely large passenger flights would be interested in coming to Ashburton. These flights would require sealed runways and taxiways.

Council holds limited information on landings having only recently put in place systems to track them. Six months of data, including the quietest winter months, indicates that current annual usage is around 7500-8000 movements. At times, this level of usage can put stress on the grass runways, requiring steps to be taken to manage wear and tear. This could be expected to worsen if the Airport grows.

### *Taxiways*

Two main taxiways allow pilots to transport their aircraft to and from the runways. The first runs parallel with runway 06/24 and provides close access to the run up area, while the runway is being used. The second main taxiway runs parallel to 02/20.

### *Aeronautical services*

Light aircraft maintenance and minor avionic services are available, including pilot training and fuelling.

### *Fuel services*

The Airport offers onsite Avgas and Jet A1 fuel, which are used for propeller and jet aircraft respectively, including helicopters.

### *Approach services*

Council is investigating the installation of an Area Navigation (RNAV) Global Positioning System (GPS) approach. This technology would allow suitably equipped aircraft to land at Ashburton Airport when there is poor visibility. A decision on RNAV has been deferred at the request of airport users, pending the adoption of this Development Plan, and a decision on a lease to NZ Airline Academy.

### *Terminal facilities*

Pilots can stop for light refreshments and use the bathroom at the Mid Canterbury Aero Club's base, located along the Airport's Seafield Road boundary.

## **MAJOR LESSEES**

### *Mid Canterbury Aero Club*

The Mid Canterbury Aero Club is Ashburton Airport's principal lessee, providing a wide range of aviation and educational services, including flight training for private and commercial pilot licences, biennial flight reviews, and Young Eagles programmes for people aged 12 to 18. In 2021, the Club's original base was replaced with a re-purposed building from the Ashburton CBD.

### *Ashburton Aviation Museum*

The Ashburton Aviation Museum operates daily at Ashburton Airport. It boasts an outstanding collection of aeroplanes and memorabilia.

### *Ashburton Speedway*

The Ashburton Speedway is the district's home of stock car racing. It has been at the Airport since 1970 and is located on the Airport's far east boundary. The Ashburton Speedway Association holds a long-term lease for the space until 2050.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ashburton Airport has traditionally had two sources of income: site leases and landing fees. The shortfall between its income and annual expenses has been covered by Council rates. Each year, rates have generally accounted for more than half of the Airport's funding. For the 2021/22 year, \$92,558 of rates had been budgeted for the Airport.

The Airport's expenses include site repairs and maintenance, insurance, security, and rates.

## **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

Like many industries, the aviation sector is evolving with significant technological advancements. Some of these include the increased use of Unmanned Autonomous Vehicles (UAV) or 'drones'; the development of more sustainable aviation fuels; and new aircraft propulsion systems like hydrogen combustion, electric aircraft and hybrid systems. These alternative fuels and electric aircraft could see an aviation future that is quieter.

These new options are already being considered for use by major companies. Air New Zealand announced in December 2021 that it could have its first zero emissions aircraft as early as 2025. The shorter flights offered by electric aircraft could be suitable for a 'hub and spoke' model of domestic flying. This is where freight and small passenger planes are flown from a centralised 'hub' to smaller locations (or 'spokes') for further distribution or travel.

Additionally, in 2017 Wisk Aero became the first USA company to fly an entirely self-operating electric vertical take-off and land air taxi. The company is now part of the New Zealand Government's Airspace Integration Trial Programme, which is investigating how piloted and unpiloted aircraft can operate in the same airspace.

While Council cannot predict how ongoing advancements and aviation trends will impact Ashburton Airport over the coming 30 years, it is important for Council to continue monitoring the situation throughout the life of this Development Plan. Additionally, any new infrastructure that may be needed to support these trends, should be funded by users and align with the vision, values and goals of this Plan.

# *Development Plan - vision, values and goals*

This Development Plan is guided by Ashburton District Council's vision for Ashburton, which is for it to be the district of choice for lifestyle and opportunity. The Plan has also been developed to align with Council's community outcomes:

## **COMMUNITY OUTCOMES**

- Residents are included and have a voice.
- A district of great spaces and places.
- A prosperous economy based on innovation and opportunity.
- A balanced and sustainable environment.

## **VISION**

Ashburton Airport is a vibrant facility that contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of Ashburton district.

## **VALUES**

The key values that inform this vision are:

**Safety** – Council will have regard to safety in all decisions relating to the development and management of Ashburton Airport.

**People** – Ashburton Airport serves residents as a place for their aviation passions, businesses, events and gatherings. It also hosts visitors from outside the district.

**Recreation** – The Airport supports various recreational activities and events, bringing the community and special interest groups together for enjoyment, sharing, and learning.

**Heritage** – The Airport reflects the historic events and activities that have shaped its path, and celebrates its stories, collections and historic features.

**Economy** – Ashburton Airport plays a part in supporting the local economy and, where practical, enables opportunities that support investment, jobs and growth.

## **GOALS**

1. Ashburton Airport is enabled to become more financially independent.
2. More people are attracted to Ashburton Airport for activities that support the vibrancy and viability of the facility.
3. Ashburton Airport is safely and sustainably managed to support increased use of the facility over the next 30 years.
4. Ashburton Airport remains an appealing, thriving hub for the local community and visiting aviation enthusiasts for the next 30 years.



# Overview of Ashburton Airport Development Plan

This overview sets out the Development Plan's central ideas and proposals. More information is provided in greater detail further down in the Plan.

## Overview:

1. Council believes Ashburton Airport has the potential to generate more income from rents and landing charges to reduce rates funding.
2. Council recognises that growth and development must be balanced with the needs and interests of those that use the facility, as well as the Airport's heritage and recreational values.
3. Growth and development planned is to be within the Airport's existing footprint. Its existing runways are to be retained in their current position, and all current users are enabled to remain at the Airport.
4. Council expects that both Airport and neighbouring residential activity is likely to intensify over the life of this 30 year Plan. This may create competing interests. A key consideration is that the Airport's significant resources and activities are not provided anywhere else in the district.
5. Council intends to consider a review of District Plan provisions for controlling airport site noise.
6. Council proposes to plan for:
  - a. A new recreational hangar precinct to accommodate more recreational aviators and their aircraft.
  - b. A commercial hangar precinct for aviation companies and businesses.
  - c. Enabling the proposed Ashburton Aviation Museum expansion to proceed, and maintaining the Airport's existing heritage values.
  - d. Exploring the development of a hangar home precinct where people could live on the Airport. This would require a District Plan Change process.
  - e. Developing activity performance standards that would enable growth while:
    1. managing the effects of airport activities on neighbouring residential activity and visual amenity, and
    2. recognising the Airport's value as the district's only aviation hub.
  - f. Providing essential infrastructure to support new and increasing use of the Airport. This would be funded by those who use the infrastructure.



## *Areas, issues, and activities shaping future development*

When looking at the long term development options for Ashburton Airport, Council has considered a range of contributing factors, including regulatory requirements, other airport users, those who live nearby, and the wider community.

### **AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### *Runways*

The Airport's four runways (which allow take-off and landing from eight different directions) are important for pilot safety and amenity. Discussions with airport users showed great support for these runways to remain available. In this Development Plan, Council is seeking to keep all four runways, where they are. They provide options for pilots to take off and land in the safest and most appropriate direction for their needs. Headwind, tailwind and crosswind conditions on the day, as well as sunlight glare all affect aircraft take-off and landing. The runways are a standout characteristic of Ashburton Airport that Council wishes to retain for new and existing users. In doing so, Council recognises that land immediately alongside runways cannot be developed for safety reasons.

#### *Utility infrastructure*

Essential infrastructure such as sewerage, water, power and fibre are not readily available across the entire airport, and this affects how Council could develop the facility. It is important that essential services are carefully planned to ensure the most feasible and efficient use of services. One way of doing this would be to group similar activities to specific areas of the Airport. This would also reduce the risk of disjointed development taking place that negatively affects other users.

#### *'Uncontrolled' operations*

Ashburton Airport does not have a control tower and is classed as 'uncontrolled'. This is typical of many regional airports like Ashburton, and it affects the types of development or activities that would be suitable there. Because there is no control tower, pilots entering and departing Ashburton Airport follow recommended operational and communication procedures to manage the safe flow of aircraft. These rules are managed by the Civil Aviation Authority. Council is conscious of encouraging development activities that fit with the Airport's 'uncontrolled' status.



AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS	RESPONSE
<p>The Airport maintains a 75m clearance on either side of Ashburton’s runways, measured from the centre of the runway. This area is kept free of buildings and obstructions, for the safety of airport users. Council does not propose to allow development inside these runway clearances.</p>	<p>Council expects that the existing runways and safety margins can be maintained without limiting the land available for gradual development. The land available for development can see Council advance its goals for financial self-sufficiency.</p>
<p>Providing and funding essential services for Airport users.</p>	<p>There is a variety of potential solutions available to meet these needs. Further investigation is needed to identify which solutions are best for the Airport. Any infrastructure option must be funded by its users. This is the same funding model currently used to pay for this district’s water and wastewater services.</p>
<p>Ensuring the nature, scope and intensity of activity at Ashburton’s uncontrolled Airport is a good fit with both a strong community aviation focus and the desire to grow revenue generating activities in a safe and sustainable way.</p>	<p>Submitters raised concerns about the capacity of runways to cope with significant changes in demand, such as a large-scale flight training operation. Similar concerns were raised about aviation safety risk related to significant changes in demand. These will require more active management which may impact the Airport’s operating costs. The Civil Aviation Authority has processes to trigger a review of air traffic controls as airport activities increase. These can also impact operating costs.</p>

## MANAGING LAND USES

### *Residential neighbours*

The Airport’s proximity to neighbouring residents is important to take into account. Since the rural aerodrome opened in 1930, residential development has progressively spread out to the Airport. The facility is surrounded by a mixture of farms, lifestyle blocks and smaller residential properties. Council’s conversations with neighbouring residents revealed that many appreciate the visual and recreational appeal of living close to the Airport. Some were also concerned about the effects a growing airport may have on their residential amenity, such as increased traffic and noise. Council wishes to encourage development that is suitable for the Airport’s rural residential surroundings. Likewise, there are types of development that are not listed in the District Plan, due to their likely impact on other airport users and neighbouring properties. This includes businesses that build aeroplanes or carry out major repairs/remodelling.

At the time of preparing the draft Airport Development Plan, Council is planning to review the noise contours for Ashburton Airport.

Over the life of this 30 year Development Plan, it is likely that residential and airport activities will both intensify. This increases the risk of competing interests between the two land uses.

### *District Plan*

District Plan rules permit several activities at Ashburton Airport. Under the current District Plan (2014), the Airport can be used for:

- All forms of private, commercial, recreational and rural aviation activities such as pilot training, model aircraft and parachuting
- Air shows
- Aviation museums
- Aero club activities
- Aircraft maintenance
- Hangar construction and storage
- Fuel storage and sale
- Food and beverage sale (as long as these are consumed on site)
- Farm animal and machinery sales.

In its current form, the District Plan enables aviation activities to be established at Ashburton Airport. The District Plan does not control the noise of flying aircraft, as this is outside the scope of the Resource Management Act. In its current form, the District Plan might also enable activities at the Airport that could, in time, lead to ‘reverse sensitivity’ impacts on other airport operations. Reverse sensitivity is the legal vulnerability of an established land use (such as an airport) to complaints from a newly established sensitive use (such as new residential development). There is a need to consider performance standards to guide the nature and scope of activity that can be established in the future. These should have regard to the cumulative effects of intensifying residential and airport activities; the benefits of allowing aviation activities to establish on the district’s only designated aviation facility; and the opportunities for residential development in other locations.

These performance standards could be developed through a District Plan Change process. This would require evidence-based and robust proposals that could be challenged in a public process and ruled on by an independent decision-maker. Performance standards for specific lessees can be written into new leases.





### *Recreation and events*

Events (including air shows and open days) are an important feature of Ashburton Airport. Space to accommodate these activities is crucial for the facility's future vibrancy. These events attract visitors from outside Mid Canterbury and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy special occasions. Open space in front of the Ashburton Aviation Museum has traditionally been used to host these events. This Development Plan proposes to keep this space open so that these activities can continue in the years to come.

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS	RESPONSE
Feedback from submitters noted that residential neighbours and the wider community enjoy the visual amenity of the airport and its vistas. While this is not a core purpose of the Airport, it is valued. Residents around the Airport have also noted concerns around noise, safety and the impact of growth.	Council intends to build on these existing relationships.  It also seeks to facilitate an informed and balanced conversation between affected people and groups on developing performance standards and control mechanisms that will enable Airport users and neighbouring properties to continue co-existing harmoniously.
Impact of residential growth. Currently, the relationship between the Airport and residential neighbours is generally positive. Some airport users are concerned that increasing residential development could lead to 'reverse sensitivity' issues.	This could be achieved through a District Plan Change process. Council also has leverage through leasing policies and decisions. Equally, Council needs to remain open to new lessees and continue to enable appropriate private investment.
Ensuring that the aviation economy is enabled to develop over time. The District Plan has set aside this site for airport activity. There are other locations where Council could enable more intense residential development. Some submitters noted that Council should acquire more land for future development.	This Development Plan is limited to the existing Ashburton Airport footprint and its runways. No expansion of Airport boundaries is expected. Council does not foresee any immediate need to acquire more land based on current and historic demand. Should circumstances change, Council may review its position.

## **RECREATIONAL, HERITAGE AND COMMERCIAL USES**

### *Recreational hangars*

An area used for recreational hangars is now full. This hangar area is directly west of the Ashburton Speedway and is used by people, who fly for personal enjoyment, to store their aircraft. Twelve hangars are located here, ranging from single-plane hangars to some big enough for four planes. The sites are leased at a recreational rate, providing a steady income for the Airport.

### ***Ashburton Aviation Museum***

The Ashburton Aviation Museum is one of the principal lessees at Ashburton Airport. It boasts an outstanding collection of aeroplanes and memorabilia from throughout the world, including the GR3 Harrier VTOL, a JetFighter, a Skyhawk, and the 1942 German Veihe Glider.

The Museum is run by local volunteers, who open the facility every day for visitors. The Museum Trust is seeking to build another hangar and reception area at the Airport, in between its two current hangars along the eastern Seafield Road boundary. These plans are discussed in more detail under New Recreational Hangar Precinct on page 18.

### ***Ashburton Speedway***

The Ashburton Speedway has a long history at the Airport. Opening in 1970, the speedway provides a home for the Ashburton Speedway Association and its regular race events. The Association's lease runs until 2050. This Development Plan intends for the speedway track to remain in its current location. However, parking for events at the track may need to be reassessed as new accessways are established for new development at the Airport. Council would work with the Ashburton Speedway Association on any proposed changes.

### ***Heritage features***

Historic features at the Airport capture important moments from its past. As a central value of the Development Plan, Council wants to protect important pieces of the Airport's heritage for the future. The historic Kittyhawk hangar, built on the Airport's far east boundary during World War II, is one such feature. Council wants to restrict development in this area that could be detrimental to the Kittyhawk hangar. Efforts have already been made in recent years to celebrate the site's history, with an eight-metre-high control tower attraction built near the Aviation Museum. It is a replica of the one that was at the Airport during World War II. This attraction overlooks the event space used at the Airport and recreational hangars.

### ***Future commercial use***

Ashburton Airport is the district's principal location for commercial aviation activity. Other forms of commercial activity can establish in other parts of the district. Ashburton Airport enjoys a mix of recreational, heritage and commercial use. The financial return from commercial activity is higher and Council needs to enable these opportunities to meet its financial goals.



RECREATION, HERITAGE AND COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	RESPONSE
The existing recreational hangar space is full.	Council proposes to create a new area for more recreational hangars to meet demand. See 'Recreational Hangar Precinct' on page 17.
Ashburton Aviation Museum expansion.	Council proposes to set aside space for the Museum expansion. Together with the new Recreational Hangar Precinct, this development makes Airport vehicle entrance improvements a necessity.
Ashburton Speedway parking.	It is expected that in the medium-to-long term access improvements at the Airport will need to involve an assessment of parking for speedway events. Council would work alongside the Ashburton Speedway Association and other Airport users to resolve this.
Enabling future commercial opportunities.	Council proposes to develop a dedicated commercial hangar precinct along the Airport's Seafield Road boundary. See 'Commercial Hangar Precinct' on page 19.  Council also proposes to develop performance standards and control measures for managing appropriate land use in and around the Airport. Planning frameworks need to enable ongoing and appropriate development at the Airport, especially as new technologies emerge.

## CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

Given current and intended use, areas that are not suitable for future development are marked on the map in orange:

- Land either side of runways must be kept clear for aircraft
- Event space in front of Ashburton Aviation Museum
- Space used by Ashburton Speedway
- The historic kittyhawk hangar
- The existing recreational hangar area
- Space for Ashburton Aviation Museum extension

Council has no plans to expand the Airport at this time.



*The Museum extension will be built next to its current hangar (pictured).*



# Projects

## NEW RECREATIONAL HANGAR PRECINCT

The space used for recreational hangars at Ashburton Airport is full to capacity, and it is proposed that a new precinct should be established to cater for more users. Council proposes to develop two hectares of land on the far north-east boundary of the Airport for a new recreational hangar precinct. Officers estimate that this location could accommodate hangarage in a combination of one, two (2T), four (4T) or six (6T) berth hangars. Depending on the mix, Council estimates 27 aircraft could be safely accommodated, which is at least a 50% increase in capacity for recreational aircraft. Sites would be available to lease at a recreational rate, and tenants would be responsible for building and funding their hangars. The recreational precinct would also be available for specific commercial activities that would be better situated at a greater distance from residential neighbours.

The Airport has experienced steady, ongoing demand for recreational hangars since 2001. Council anticipates that with ongoing interest from new and existing recreational flyers, the Airport will need to provide a space for future hangars to be built, and the new precinct would cater to these needs.



### Why develop here?

The far north-east site has been used for cropping and is otherwise undeveloped. It sits a safe distance from three runways that operate in the area, and does not encroach on other airport users.

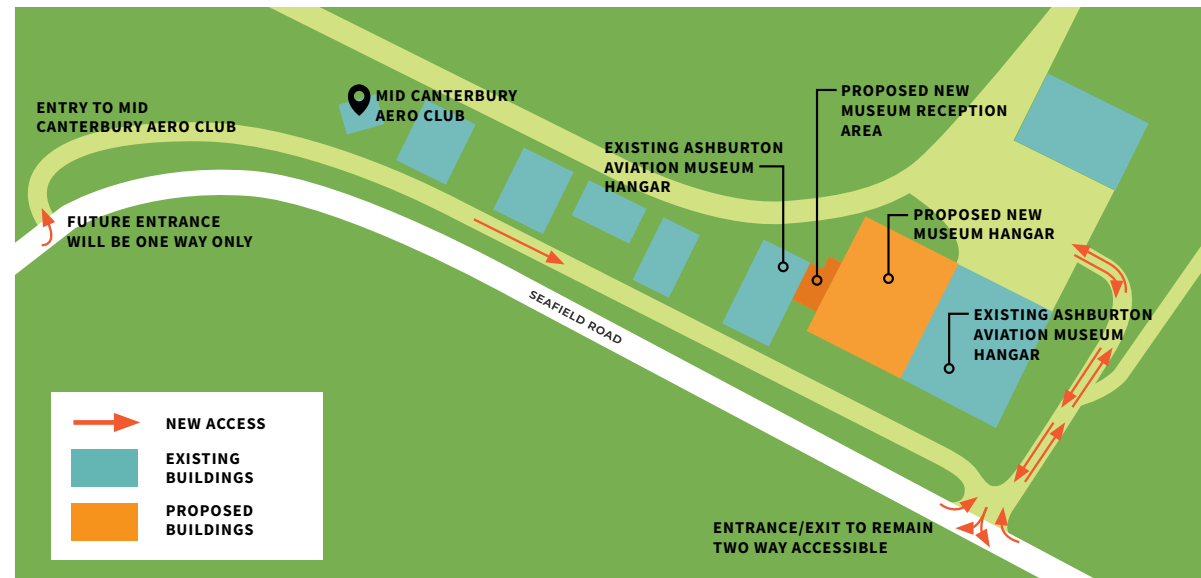
Recreational hangars have been a positive activity at Ashburton Airport, helping to generate reliable, yearly income. Their place at the Airport provides a home for the district's aviation enthusiasts to enjoy their hobby. With the original recreational hangar space (near Ashburton Speedway) now full, a new precinct would ensure there is ample space available for future recreational flyers. The new precinct would also mitigate the risk of disjointed recreational development happening across the Airport that could begin to negatively affect other users.

Providing a new space for more recreational hangars would increase the Airport's revenue stream. This income would help support a more economically sustainable future for the Airport.

### *What is involved?*

There is no supporting infrastructure available on this piece of land to service new hangars. Council would investigate connecting power, water and fibre here. It is envisaged that these capital expenses would be recovered from Airport tenants.

Council has work underway to improve the safety of road access to the Airport, to cope with existing and future traffic to the Airport. The new access arrangements will make the western entranceway, near Mid Canterbury Aero Club, a one-way entrance only. This one-way entrance would improve safety for vehicles on this sweeping corner of Seafield Road. The main eastern entrance, near the Aviation Museum, is considered safe for increased traffic use. It will remain a two-way entrance/exit. Internal roads will be upgraded to provide defined access to the Ashburton Speedway and Museum, as well as access to the proposed recreational hangar precinct.



*Proposed changes to Ashburton Airport entrances (including proposed Ashburton Aviation Museum extensions)*

The internal road from the western (one-way) entrance will continue to link through to the eastern entranceway for traffic exiting the Airport.

### *Aviation Museum expansion*

Ashburton Aviation Museum has signalled that it wishes to build another hangar in between the two it already owns along Seafield Road. The new 1900m<sup>2</sup> to 2000m<sup>2</sup> hangar would provide more space to display the Museum's expanding collection, as well as room for events, gatherings, a kitchen and bar area. A separate 210m<sup>2</sup> reception area is also proposed to be built that would adjoin the new hangar on its western side. The timeframe for building the hangar and reception area is unknown due to funding constraints.

Council acknowledges that the Aviation Museum provides great benefits to the community and visitors, and is supportive of this project. For this reason, Council would not consider other development proposals for this space between the Museum's existing hangars. This proposal adds further justification to the need for Council to upgrade the Airport entrances, shown in the map above.

## COMMERCIAL HANGAR PRECINCT

It is proposed that 1.3 hectares of land on the southern side of the Airport (along the Seafield Road boundary) should be developed as a commercial hangar precinct for businesses. It is envisaged that this area would fit about eight similar-sized hangars. Sections would be available to lease at a commercial rate, and tenants would be responsible for building and funding their hangar.

Ashburton Airport has always allowed commercial hangars to be built at the Airport, but until recently, there has been little uptake. A significant barrier to this type of development has been the lack of supporting infrastructure needed to service business hangars.



### *Why develop here?*

In recent years, Ashburton Airport has seen growing interest from commercial operators wanting to come to the Airport. A dedicated precinct would ensure these commercial hangars are contained to a specific area. In 2022, a skydiving business set up along the Airport's Seafield Road boundary.

In addition to skydiving, the types of businesses that could be interested in the Airport might include scenic tourism operators, chartered helicopter flights, and agricultural spraying services. Council will consider relevant criteria such as District plan provisions, normal lease conditions, activity performance standards, and the values and goals of this Development Plan when assessing the suitability of businesses wanting to come to the Airport. Performance standards would provide a basis to understand the suitability of different activities at the Airport. They could include measurements such as traffic movements, noise, and impact on Airport infrastructure. Council intends to develop performance standards within the first two years of this Development Plan.

Council noted that submitters value the visual amenity of views from Seafield Road across the Airport and to the Alps. It acknowledges that careful thought needs to be given to the location, density, built amenity, and landscaping in this area.

More commercial activity would contribute to Ashburton District's economy, encouraging growth, investment, and greater value for residents. Council would lease these sites at a commercial rate, which would assist the Airport to generate more income.

### *What is involved?*

Before this Development Plan was written, water and power had been connected at the Seafield Road boundary for the existing skydiving business. Council is working with Chorus to connect fibre at the site. Other services, such as wastewater infrastructure, would either need to be installed for the precinct or each business install their own holding tank. Council would seek to recover the capital expenses of reticulated infrastructure from Airport users.

Drinking and wastewater infrastructure options could include extending Ashburton's piped services to the Airport; installing a potable water solution; and/or installing septic holding tanks. To date, Council has not made any funding provisions for this infrastructure to be installed at the Airport. Any decision to extend Ashburton's drinking or wastewater infrastructure to the Airport would go through a community consultation process, via Council's Long Term Plan or Annual Plan. These decisions are also part of longer-term thinking around the growth of urban Ashburton, future infrastructure investment, and appropriate land use planning processes.

### *Flight school proposal*

While preparing this Development Plan, Council was approached by a flight school interested in expanding into Ashburton. Pilot training already operates out of the Airport and is permitted under the District Plan. The flight school indicated that it expects to grow its business quickly in the first few years of operation, as shown in the table below:

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>2022 - 23</b>	<b>2023 - 24</b>	<b>2024 - 25</b>
Land requirement	2000 sq. metres	2000 sq. metres	2000 sq. metres
Building	Hangar/office	Classroom	Classroom
Aircraft	5	10	12
Staff	12	30	40
Student numbers	30	75	100
Average number of flights per day	13	32	42

This proposal attracted many submissions raising issues related to the impact of a sharp and substantial increase in air movements. These included concerns about impacts on grass runways and the consequences for safety at an uncontrolled airport. These issues are relevant to the capacity of the Airport to manage increased air traffic arising from any cause. Council acknowledged that Ashburton Airport is the right place for pilot training. It deferred decisions on the NZ Airline Academy proposal until the overall framework in this Development Plan had been adopted.



## HANGAR HOME PRECINCT

Hangar homes, where people live in the same building as their aircraft, have become increasingly popular in New Zealand, including locations like Blenheim and Pauanui. Interest has been shown in this type of hangar being at Ashburton Airport.

Council proposes to establish a hangar home precinct on the western boundary of the Airport, alongside Morris Road. This two-hectare precinct would allow people to build and then live in their hangar home.



In keeping with the rural residential atmosphere that surrounds Ashburton Airport, Council proposes that up to about 14 hangars would be built. Hangar homes at other New Zealand airports and aerodromes are generally no higher than a normal single or two storey house.

### *Why develop here?*

Allowing people to live at the Airport would contribute to the vibrancy of the facility, attracting more life and activity. Ongoing service fees for these hangars would also help to generate income, helping to pay for the Airport's operating costs, and reducing input from Council rates.

The far western boundary of Ashburton Airport is currently unused. The space proposed is a safe distance from runways 06/24 and 16/34, meaning development would not restrict other airport users from accessing the runways.

### ***What is involved?***

Hangar homes are an entirely new activity for Ashburton Airport. At the time of preparing this Development Plan, District Plan rules did not allow people to live there. Council intends to explore a Resource Management Act process that would allow people to live at the Airport.

This proposal, the timing of development, and any specifications about the hangar homes, depends on the outcome of that Resource Management Act process. If it resulted in hangar homes being allowed, further consideration would need to be given to supporting infrastructure such as entrances; roading, kerb and channel; power; fibre; drinking water; wastewater; and stormwater. Submitters also raised issues about design standards, density, and the quality of built amenity.

New power, fibre and entranceways would need to be installed, and a solution for drinking water and wastewater would need to be investigated. Options might include extending Ashburton's drinking and wastewater infrastructure to the Airport; installing a potable water solution; and/or installing septic holding tanks. To date, Council has not made any funding provisions for this infrastructure to be installed at the Airport. Any decision to extend Ashburton's drinking or wastewater infrastructure to the Airport would go through a community consultation process, via Council's Long Term Plan or Annual Plan.

### ***How will this be funded?***

People building a hangar home would be responsible for meeting their capital and operating costs. Power, fibre, water and wastewater service costs would be recovered from the people who use them.



## Costings

In the years leading up to this Development Plan, Ashburton Airport's annual budget has been around \$150,000 per year. Approximately 60 per cent of this has been funded by rates.

For the 2021/22 year, the budget was \$152,023. Of this:

- \$49,465 came from airport leases, licences and sales
- \$10,000 came from landing fees
- \$92,558 came from rates

As previously acknowledged, Council anticipates activity at Ashburton Airport to continue gradually intensifying over the life of this Development Plan. Each new proposed hangar precinct is expected to attract new users over a period of years, and this means new tenants/users (and the resulting income) will build over time to ideally achieve self-sufficiency. In addition to the income from new leases, commercial activities at the Airport will also generate income through commercial landing fees and licences.

### *Expected income from the proposed projects:*

PROJECT	NUMBER OF HANGARS	TYPES OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTIONS	ONE-OFF INITIAL USER CHARGES/ CONTRIBUTIONS	ANNUAL INCOME
Recreational hangar precinct	8	-	Nil	\$16,560
Commercial hangar precinct	8	8	\$175,000	\$36,000
<i>Skydiving business (after 3 years of operating)</i>	-	Landing fees, parachute landing zone fees, aircraft licences	-	\$8,700
<i>Proposed flight school (after 3 years of operating)</i>	-	Landing fees, aircraft licences	-	\$14,400
Hangar home precinct	14	-	Dependent on District Plan Change outcome	\$25,200
<b>Total</b>			\$175,000	\$100,860

## *Future investment*

We know that investment in infrastructure to support new hangars and hangar homes will be required. The timing and nature of this investment will depend on demand.

The purpose of the following information is to outline Council's current thinking on future investment priorities and funding. Activities are listed in order of priority.

### *Commercial hangar precinct*

A skydiving business has begun setting up in the commercial precinct for operations to begin in late 2022. Services need to be available to meet its needs. Water and electricity have already been provided. Internet access to buildings in this area is yet to be provided. These works will be funded over time from lessees' rental payments.

### *Recreational hangar precinct*

The existing recreational hangar precinct is now full and Council's second priority is to establish a new recreational hangar precinct. This will include developing an internal access road to the precinct and providing electricity and water supply.

### *Hangar home precinct*

Through this Development Plan, Council has agreed in principle to the establishment of hangar homes on the Morris Road end of the Airport. As noted, residential activity is not permitted at the Airport, so Council will need to work through a Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) process - either a District Plan change or a resource consent application.

This work will take some time and effort to complete, and much of the first twelve months will be taken up exploring the different approaches to hangar home developments at other regional airports in New Zealand. We will need to understand the advantages and disadvantages of these and identify an approach that is the best fit for Ashburton Airport.

The next step would be documenting that approach for the preferred course of action under the RMA. This would include describing the proposed activity, assessing its environmental effects, and evaluating the activity against the District Plan and the RMA. A decision on a resource consent or a District Plan change would follow an appropriate public process and would be made by an independent decision-maker.

This work would be funded by Council's Property Unit, which would be the applicant. This investment would reduce the rates offset from property activities in the years it is funded.

### ***Noise***

As noted previously, Council intends to consider a review of District Plan provisions for managing the effects of airport noise. This would be funded in the same way as planning for the hangar home precinct.

### ***Utilities***

In northeast Ashburton, Environment Canterbury has changed its position on issuing consent for septic tanks, due to a risk of increased nitrates. The change is centred on protecting groundwater for all that use it - including neighbouring properties with drinking water wells. In response, Council has funded investigations into reticulated wastewater solutions. Depending on the outcome of these investigations, infrastructure solutions could also service Ashburton Airport. New reticulated infrastructure is generally loan funded, with the loan repaid through rates on serviced properties. This may include Airport users connected to the system, if it is installed.