

3 UTILITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The provision of **utilities** enables people to undertake their everyday activities and provide for their social and economic well being, health and safety. Such **utilities** include power generation and supply facilities, water, electricity and sewage reticulation, telecommunications, radio communications, weather recording facilities and waste disposal facilities. Generally, transport **utilities** such as roading are dealt with in more detail under the Transport Section.

Some of the providers of **utilities** have status as requiring authorities under the **Act** and are able to provide for their **utilities** by designation. Requiring authorities include a Minister of the Crown, a local authority or an approved network **utility** operator.

3.2 ISSUES

1. The adverse effects the location and operation of **utilities** can have on the environment.

While **utilities** provide significant social and economic benefits to the community (such as the provision of electricity, water or telecommunications), they can also result in the generation of adverse effects. For example, the erection of structures and overhead services can have an adverse visual impact on the character of an area. Similarly, **utilities** such as landfills and **roads** can have potentially adverse effects such as odour and noise.

2. Effects of activities adversely impacting on the safe and efficient operation of **utilities**.

Utilities are essential for the welfare of the community. Activities can have an adverse effect on the operation of these facilities by restricting their operation (e.g. residential uses adjacent to **oxidation ponds**, unsafe **accesses** onto **roads** etc.) and needs to be considered in the establishment of **utilities**. There is therefore a need to balance the importance of the **utilities** in providing community services against the environmental effects.

3.3 OBJECTIVE

1. The installation and operation of **utilities** in a manner which maintains and enhances the well-being of the community while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment.

3.4 POLICIES

1. Adjoining activities should not have an adverse effect on the operation of **utilities**.
2. **Utilities** should, among other matters, provide for:
 - a) Disposal of sewage in a manner that maintains public health and does not adversely affect water quality, ground condition, habitats and air quality.
 - b) Adequate water supplies for drinking and firefighting.
 - c) Disposal of stormwater that does not affect water quality and avoids inundation.
 - d) The operation of landfills in an acceptable environmental manner.
 - e) Supply of electricity streetlighting and telecommunications using a method that is appropriate to amenity values of the area including visual impact, landscape and habitat value.

- f) Their operation in an environmentally acceptable manner in such matters as air quality, noise, traffic and visual impact.
3. Where operationally feasible, **utilities** should be jointly located at one site or on one structure wherever possible.

3.4.1 EXPLANATION AND REASONS

Due to the importance of the role of **utilities** to the community, their often-high capital cost and long life expectancy, it is appropriate to provide for their establishment, ongoing functioning, maintenance and upgrading. **Utilities** may have a variety of impacts depending on their characteristics. It is important to protect the quality and amenity of the environment by minimising potential adverse effects. **Utilities** are important for the well being of the community. **Utilities** should therefore be allowed to operate without unreasonable restriction from adjoining activities provided their operation itself does not lead to effects which cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Policy 2 sets out how **utilities** should be developed while having regard to their operation in an environmentally acceptable manner. (See also Appendix 5 - Subdivision for more details.) Where operationally feasible, **utilities** should be co-located in order that their visual impact is minimised, congestion for repairs and servicing is lessened and public safety enhanced. In particular, the **road** reserve offers the opportunity to co-locate services.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

1. Rules in the district plan allowing for **utilities**, including their maintenance and upgrading, subject to controls on their location, size and bulk of **utilities**.
2. Undergrounding of new reticulated services by rules and the replacement of existing overhead lines as the opportunity arises.
3. Co-location of **utility** structures.
4. Conditions of resource consents.
5. Education and advice on good practices e.g. landfill sites.
6. Design of **utilities** which avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects (e.g. on environmentally managed landfill, structures compatible with landscapes etc).

3.5.1 REASONS

There are a number of methods that can be utilised including rules to provide for and control structures, conditions of resource consent (particularly subdivisions) and the replacement of existing overhead lines if financially feasible and allowable. Rules allowing for maintenance and upgrading can be an effective method of controlling potential adverse effects. The co-location of structures results in a reduced visual impact and congestion (particularly in the **road** reserve) and public safety is enhanced. Good design of **utilities** can reduce adverse effects while education and guidelines are also important.

3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED AND MONITORING

Anticipated Environmental Results	Monitoring and Review Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of utilities consistent with local, regional and national needs, the nature of the local environment and local amenities, operational needs, and the cost and scale of facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints regarding the adverse effects of utilities. • Expenditure of authorities on utilities • Feedback to the Annual Plan in respect of utility provision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained and enhanced public health, safety and welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents' views regarding the effect of utilities on local amenity values.