PART 3

DISTRICT WIDE ISSUES, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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. The National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission also requires specific recognition of the national grid electricity transmission network.

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 a secure and efficient electricity transmission network, 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, and compromise, the operation of these facilities by restricting their operation (e.g. residential uses adjacent to oxidation ponds, unsafe accesses onto roads and structures too close to National Grid Transmission lines) 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) The operation of and supply of electricity via the National Grid Electricity Network.

g) 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.

4. To recognise the benefits of a secure and efficient electricity supply network while taking into account:

a) The operational and technical constraints of the network;

b) The extent to which adverse effects (including existing) can be avoided, remedied or mitigated by the route, site and method selection; and

c) The avoidance of adverse effects on outstanding natural landscapes, significant natural areas, areas of high recreational value and existing sensitive activities.

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.

The National Policy Statement for Electricity Transmission (NPSET) provides direction for local authorities in recognising the vital role the efficient transmission of electricity on the national grid has for the wellbeing of New Zealand, its people and the environment. The

NPSET includes policies which recognise the national benefits of electricity transmission, managing the environmental effects of electricity transmission and managing the adverse effects of third parties on the transmission network. These policies have been adapted and incorporated into the District Plan to assist in the network utility operator being able to access, maintain and enhance National Grid Transmission Lines while controlling potential effects, including existing, and ensuring that activities are not undertaken which may create safety risks for those parties undertaking an activity or the users of that infrastructure.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

1. Rules in the district plan allowing for utilities, including their maintenance, protection, 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).
7. Identification of the National Grid Transmission Line network on the planning maps.

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. To assist in the planning, operation and maintenance of the National Grid Electricity Transmission Network the network is shown on the planning maps and setback rules are included to control development within close proximity to the network.

3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED AND MONITORING

Anticipated Environmental Results	Monitoring and Review Data
• 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.	• Complaints regarding the adverse effects of utilities. • Expenditure of authorities on utilities • Feedback to the Annual Plan in respect of utility provision.
• Maintained and enhanced public health, safety and welfare.	• Residents' views regarding the effect of utilities on local amenity values.