

20.0 Utilities

20.1 Introduction

Utilities form an essential part of community infrastructure. Utilities must be maintained and developed in order to contribute to the health and safety, and social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the community. Most communities are unsustainable without the provision of water supply, drainage, sewage disposal, energy and communications. Reticulated provision of essential utilities enhances the efficient use of natural and physical resources, and enables consistent management of adverse environmental effects of human settlement.

Utilities include:

- Energy, electricity lines, cables, pylons, receivers, transmitters, substations;
- Telecommunication and radio communication, lines, cables, masts, antennas, dishes, aerials, microwave towers, telephone booths;
- Water, collection and distribution structures, water supply catchments, water pipes, open drains, irrigation channels, stock water races, reservoirs, treatment plants;
- Stormwater collection and removal facilities, pipes, pumping stations, treatment plants, ponds;
- Sewage collection structures, pipes, pumping stations, treatment plants, ponds;
- Air, land and water navigation aids and beacons;
- Trig stations and survey marks;
- Street lighting structures and traffic direction and control devices; and
- Road and rail networks.

20.2 Issue

Adverse environmental effects resulting from the establishment, maintenance and operation of utility networks necessary to sustain communities.

There are three main reasons why particular provision is being made for utilities. These reasons are:

- Utility networks provide services, such as water and electricity, that are essential to the health and safety of the community;
- Reticulated and integrated utility provision is essential to avoid cumulative adverse effects of settlements on the environment; and
- Utility networks require an integrated and comprehensive infrastructure which treats them as whole units rather than addressing their individual parts.

The maintenance and development of utility networks can have adverse land stability, water quality and visual effects. Some utility network structures, such as transmitters and masts, need to be sited in prominent positions in the landscape in order to fulfill their function. The essential nature of utility services, the specificity of site

suitability, and the adverse effects of their prominence all need to be taken into consideration.

Adverse visual effects tend to be the most obvious and persistent while land disturbance and adverse water quality effects are generally related to construction and maintenance and tend to be short-term. Other adverse effects can include noise, electro-magnetic radiation and interference between similar electrical and telecommunication equipment.

20.3 Objectives and Policies

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| Objective 1 | To provide for the operation, maintenance and development of utility networks in a way that promotes sustainable management of natural and physical resources and avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment. |
| Policy 1.1 | Enable Utility Operators to maintain and develop reticulated utility networks throughout the Plan area provided adverse environmental effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. |
| Policy 1.2 | Enable individuals to contribute to or provide their own utility needs in appropriate areas. |
| Policy 1.3 | Ensure Plan provision for sustainable management of utilities and planning certainty for Utility Operators. |
| Policy 1.4 | Enable buildings, structures and equipment necessary or ancillary to utility networks to be established throughout the Plan area. |
| Policy 1.5 | To ensure that when development occurs the full costs of remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment are met. |
| Policy 1.6 | Assess proposals for new utilities by acknowledging the necessary roles, and the locational and operational constraints they experience. |
| Policy 1.7 | Require construction and maintenance practices which avoid, remedy and mitigate land disturbance associated with utility management. |
| Policy 1.8 | Ensure that utility network construction, maintenance and operation avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on water quality. |
| Policy 1.9 | Enable the provision of individual water supplies and electricity generation where appropriate to supplement services to rural households. |
| Policy 1.10 | Locate utility network structures to avoid, remedy or mitigate significant adverse effects on visual amenity. |
| Policy 1.11 | Encourage utility networks to be placed underground in urban areas and, where practicable, in areas of identified landscape significance. |
| Policy 1.12 | Promote the establishment of utilities in locations in such a way as to not adversely affect any known natural hazard. |

Policy 1.13 Co-locate services, structures and ancillary equipment where practicable.

As settlements such as Blenheim and Renwick continue to expand there is a continued demand for utilities. The Plan encourages the provision of co-located networks in order to avoid cumulative effects of piecemeal service provision.

To enable the sustainable management of utility networks as a resource, operators of those networks require consideration of the demands for and provision of services at the earliest possible time. These policies seek to ensure early consideration and provision of utilities and thereby avoid cumulative effects of provision of similar services by individual communities.

The establishment of utility networks can have adverse effects on resources and amenities, and defined areas of special interest. Policies seek to ensure that the construction and maintenance of utility networks will not have adverse effects on identified areas prone to natural hazards, or areas with ecological or landscape value.

20.4 Methods of Implementation

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| Rules | <p>Rules provide for utility networks as Permitted Activities, subject to standards and terms where there are minor adverse environmental effects. The placement of equipment underground and in or alongside road carriageways reduces likely disruption from natural hazards and long-term visual effects, and minimises land disturbance.</p> <p>Plan rules require special consideration for the location and construction of utilities in areas of identified special interest including natural hazard prone, ecological and landscape value.</p> |
| Other Statutory Documents | The Annual Plan provides a vehicle for setting priorities for provision of Council operated utility networks. |
| Information/ Codes of Practice | Most Utility Operators conduct their operations according to industry-based codes of practice. Landscape and screening guidelines are often included in these codes. The Marlborough Code of Practice for Subdivision and Development establishes a means of complying with the Plan's requirements. |
| Designation Process | This Plan recognises and provides for designations established by Utility Operators. |
| Liaison | The Council will liaise with Utility Operators to ensure continued provision of utility network services throughout the area. |
| Monitoring | <p>Council monitoring of compliance with Resource Consent conditions and the results of State of Environment Monitoring will provide feedback on the adverse effects of utilities.</p> <p>Provisions built into industry-based codes of practices for Utility Operators specify monitoring requirements.</p> <p>The incidents of public health issues relating to utility networks will indicate the effectiveness of utility management.</p> |

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| Information/ Advocacy | Energy and water conservation devices and systems will be promoted. |
| Other Legislation | The Council will continue to administer the requirements of the Building Act relating to aspects of utility provision including water supply, drainage, waste disposal and electricity. |

Plan rules enable utility operators to sustainably manage their structures, buildings and facilities provided adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. The health, safety, and wellbeing of the community is dependant on the services provided by utility networks. However, the provision of these services should not allow reduction of amenity values or cause adverse effects in the environment.

There is a continuing need for consultation and exchange of information relating to the operation and maintenance of utility networks. Utility Operators, customers and the Council all need to remain aware of the many statutes, controls and guidelines relating to the provision of utility services.

20.5 Anticipated Environmental Results

Implementation of the policies and methods for the management of utilities will result in:

- Sustainable utility networks which operate without adverse environmental effects; and
- Small settlements with sustainably managed community-based utility services.