

B: DISTRICT WIDE OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are applicable to the district and are not specific to one particular zone or activity. Further objectives and policies can be found in the individual zone and rule sections of the Plan.

B1 NOISE

Under Section 16 of the Resource Management Act 1991 *“Every occupier of land and every person carrying out an activity in, on, or under a water body...should adopt the best practicable option to ensure that the emission of noise from that land or water does not exceed a reasonable level.”*

Excessive noise occurring for a continuous period can adversely effect the community's health and well-being especially where such noise causes sleep disturbance.

Some activities which take place within the Kawerau district produce very high noise levels, which have the potential to adversely affect the district's community. High noise levels may disturb the pleasantness of residential areas, intrude on human conversation and at night cause sleep disturbance. The Plan enables such effects to be significantly mitigated by requiring large scale noise producing activities to locate in the industrial zone some distance from residential areas. The separation distance and the direction of prevailing winds reduce the effects of such noise.

It is recognised that a significant proportion of Kawerau's workforce are shift-workers and the community are more tolerant of night-time noise than perhaps other communities. Therefore the Plan should ensure that the noise environment of different areas of the district is not degraded by activities producing levels of noise which do not maintain the character of those areas.

Large separation distances between noise producing activities and receiving environments significantly mitigate the effect of noise. The Plan recognises that the unique wood processing industries of Kawerau produce high levels of noise on a continuous basis. By enabling such activities to locate some distance from residential areas, the Plan seeks to provide maximum operational flexibility for the industries while protecting amenity values and community health and well-being in residential areas.

In the commercial areas the maximum allowable noise levels are set at a level that recognises the nature of activities likely to be operating and the particular

amenity values of the area. The noise control rules allow the flexibility for noise producing activities to operate while recognising the mixed use nature of the area and the desire for other activities not to be subjected to excessive noise.

Within the residential area the maximum allowable noise levels recognise the need to have lower levels of noise in the evenings and at night-time in order to maintain the character of the areas and to protect community health and well-being.

Reverse sensitivity effects should be taken into consideration when new development is undertaken. Reverse sensitivity can be described as the effects on an established activity from complaints from a more sensitive land use which may lead to a restriction of that established activity. A relevant hypothetical example for Kawerau would be a complaint about the operation of the mill (noise/odour) from residents of a nearby residential dwelling. The reverse sensitivity effect is the adverse effect the complaint may have on the mill's ability to operate its lawfully established activity. Relevant policy is included in the Plan to address the potential for reverse sensitivity effects.

B1.1 OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

B1.1.1 Objectives

- 1.1.1.1 To ensure that the background noise environment of the district does not adversely affect community health and well being.
- 1.1.1.2 To ensure that the noise levels experienced in different areas of the district and in the surrounding environs are appropriate to the character of those areas.
- 1.1.1.3 To minimise potential conflicts between high noise generating activities and more sensitive land uses.

B1.1.2 Policies

- 1.1.2.1 Activities which produce high levels of noise should be required to locate in areas separated from residential dwellings.
- 1.1.2.2 The maximum noise levels received at various affected zone or site boundaries should be specified where appropriate.

- 1.1.2.3 To manage land use, development and subdivision to ensure compatibility with the operation of roads, rail and industry, including the effects of reverse sensitivity.
- 1.1.2.4 The assessment of potential noise sources to ensure that proposed activities will not incrementally increase noise levels resulting in an adverse effect on amenity.

B2 SIGNS

The purpose of signage is to inform the public of the availability of goods, services and events to provide identification of a particular site or premises and to provide directions or information to traffic.

Lack of control can lead to a proliferation of signs and a resulting undesirable visual impact on those areas where signs are displayed. Signs also have the potential to distract motorists and may endanger road safety. Major factors affecting the visual impacts of signs are their size and height and the information they contain.

In order to encourage transport safety it is important that distractions encountered by drivers and obstacles affecting pedestrian movement are minimised. This is particularly important in high speed areas (State Highways and arterial routes) or areas where motorists already face complex decisions (roundabouts, intersections). Distraction of road users can occur not only when signs are sited on roads, but also on adjacent properties where they may also restrict visibility at intersections and access points.

B2.1 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

B2.1.1 Objectives

- B2.1.1.1 To maintain a visually pleasant, inoffensive and safe environment.
- B2.1.1.2 To create a safe traffic environment which is not compromised by the inappropriate location of signage.

B2.1.2 Policies

- B2.1.2.1 Advertising signs (excluding temporary signs as provided for) should be located on the site to which they relate.

- B2.1.2.2 The size, height, number and luminosity of signs should be controlled in a manner which reflects the zone's function and character and which does not detract from the visual amenity of the area.
- B2.1.2.3 The display of signage on and adjacent to roads or footpaths should not cause potential danger to public safety or traffic.
- B2.1.2.4 The display of signage should not be offensive or objectionable.
- B2.1.2.5 Provide for temporary and public information signs related to local body and parliamentary elections, to advertise community activities or events, to provide for real estate signs in relation to the sale of land or buildings on the same site, and to provide for off-site “advance warning” signs in relation to activities located within the district.

B3 NATURAL HAZARDS

A ‘natural hazard’ is simply a natural event.

Natural hazards are not only associated with major events such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes but can also be less spectacular with less immediate effects such as erosion of hillsides. People have the potential to influence natural hazards and the rate and severity at which they occur. Proactive management of the effects of activities on the potential risk of natural hazard is important.

Hazards are assessed according to the risk they pose to the community. The concept of risk involves the physical characteristics of natural events and the probability of occurrence of the hazard compounded by the vulnerability of the human infrastructure.

Section 31(I)(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 gives the District Council specific responsibilities for the management of natural hazards.

“Every territorial authority shall have the following functions for the purpose of giving effect to this Act in its district:

- (b) *The control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purpose of the avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards”*

The Resource Management Act states that natural hazards may be either “avoided” or “mitigated”. Section 31 of the Resource Management Act is interpreted in this district plan to mean that certain uses of land have the potential adverse effect of contributing to natural hazards. If, however, suitable rules or other means are implemented, (ie if people are required to use land wisely, taking into account the physical conditions, and in accordance with appropriate hazard reduction approaches), then the natural hazard ie the potential adverse effect of an extreme natural event on a vulnerable use of land will be avoided or mitigated.

B3.1 OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

B3.1.1 Objective

- B3.1.1.1 To promote, support and, where appropriate, adopt the most suitable means or combination of means for avoiding or mitigating natural hazards in the district.

B3.1.2 Policies

- B3.1.2.1 To identify where possible the district’s natural hazards and the measures which should be taken to mitigate their effects.
- B3.1.2.2 To promote community understanding of the risks associated with natural hazards.
- B3.1.2.3 To ensure that new subdivision, use and development are located to avoid or mitigate the effects of natural hazards.¹

¹ Section C7.7 (Subdivision and Development) contains rules relevant to the mitigation of natural hazards and should be read in conjunction with these objectives and policies.