

15 TOWNSHIPS

15.1 RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES AND VALUES

Waitaki District contains numerous townships containing populations ranging from 50 to over 500 people. For the purposes of consideration of townships in the District Plan, Weston has not been included but rather is considered in combination with Oamaru because of the close functional and physical relationship that these two towns have. Palmerston, Kurow, Otematata and Omarama, because of their larger sizes and populations, have also been excluded from consideration as a rural settlement as they are considered in the sections dealing with residential and business areas. (Refer Part III, Sections 13 and 14). Ohau Village is limited to residential dwellings and for this reason is also included in the residential zone. The townships considered in this background statement and subsequent Issues, Objectives, Policies and Methods are:

- Maheno
- Ngapara
- Moeraki
- Livingstone
- Pukeuri
- Macraes
- Georgetown
- Richmond
- Windsor
- Enfield
- Herbert
- Waitaki Bridge
- Deborah
- Alma
- Tokarahi
- Reidston
- Lake Waitaki
- Kakanui
- Hampden
- Peebles
- Shag Point
- Goodwood
- Dunback
- Waynes
- Duntroon

Overall, the indications given by general population information of the Waitaki District indicates a gradual decline in population within the townships over the last ten years. However, during the period 1986 to 1996, a gradual increase in occupied dwellings occurred. This combination of declining or static population combined with increase in the number of occupied dwellings mirrors a national trend of fewer occupants per house.

The townships vary considerably in terms of numbers of houses (ranging from 9 to 400). The future of these townships will be dependent on the types and intensity of surrounding land uses and the ability of the townships to provide for increased development, including their ability to provide for water supply and sewage disposal systems, and the constraints of development due to natural hazards such as flooding.

Despite their generally small scale and low intensity, the townships of the District are an important resource which provide residents with pleasant and sometimes a low cost place to live. It also enables people who wish to work in the country but who do not own farmland or a rural enterprise to live close to their place of employment. In addition these townships contain convenient social, recreational and retail services for people of these townships and for the population of the wider rural area. Some of these townships are also a base for tourist accommodation and recreational facilities that are of District or regional significance.

15.2 ISSUE 1 - Extent of Townships

Unrestrained development of townships can and does adversely affect the environment, and in particular can result in:

- **an increased risk from natural hazards;**
- **an increased risk to traffic safety;**
- **an increased risk in conflicts with neighbouring rural activities;**
- **the loss of the productive potential of high class soils;**
- **visual impacts on landscapes;**
- **a lack of adequate servicing.**

The issue remains as to whether the current boundaries of these zones are satisfactory. The boundaries between the townships and their surrounding rural areas are drawn so that the provisions of the District Plan are to be applied with certainty.

In addition to the amenity issues discussed below, the issues of natural hazards, loss of agricultural production, and the provision of servicing have also influenced the location of the township boundaries in this Plan.

Flood Hazard: Historically Maheno, Enfield, Waynes, Dunback, Richmond, Ngapara and Hampden are all subject to localised flooding. The extent of this flooding is shown on the Planning Maps. The information was obtained from a study carried out by the Otago Regional Council (Report on *Floodplains Within Part of Waitaki District Within the Otago Region*, December 1991). To date, the amount of damage to property in these villages has been limited due to the low intensity development of these townships. Future development should be subject to careful scrutiny with the implication that some developments should not be permitted.

Coastal Erosion: Of the three coastal townships, Kakanui, Moeraki and Shag Point, Kakanui appears to be the only one which is currently subject to erosion by the sea. The northern section of Kakanui, to the north of the Kakanui River on the river flats, is relatively low lying and has suffered significant erosion associated mainly with the demise of the northern pier on the river mouth. The rate of this erosion has slowed more recently to less than 1 metre per year as the river mouth has become increasingly stable.

Moeraki has suffered some sea storms, particularly in the late 1970's. Although a breakwater and coastal protection works have been constructed, further attack by sea storms is a possibility. Some houses at Tikoraki Point and Tawhiroko Point (the Kaik) are very close to the beach line and are currently reliant on structures to protect the land from further coastal erosion.

The past District Plan contained a restriction preventing any building within 100 metres of MHW (mean high water mark) from establishing without Council's consent in the former Waitaki County. This control has effectively prevented new buildings being built in areas that could be subject to coastal erosion.

Land Stability: Moeraki is the only settlement affected by instability. This instability which results in slips and slumps is caused by slippage of the clay soils after they become overly damp. Detailed studies have been carried out identifying the areas most affected by stability problems enabling the Council to assess the risks on each building site.

One of the causes of instability is seepage of water into the clay soils. The reticulated sewage system recently installed for Moeraki will reduce the amount of seepage currently resulting from poorly functioning septic tanks. This should reduce the risk of slips in some areas.

Safety and Access: Protection of the road network from activities which reduce their safety and efficiency is desirable where this does not lead to unreasonable or unrealistic restrictions on development. The existence of the townships in the District is accepted as are their access needs to or from adjoining roads or state highways. However, to enable roads to function safely and to permit drivers to anticipate the use of access points it is desirable to have townships confined and easily identifiable. In this way the number and location of access points is restricted to a recognisable stretch of road. The zoning boundary of Alma has been of particular concern as it extends parallel to State Highway 1, thus creating a potential hazard to traffic.

Protection of Productive Land: To enable the efficient use of land it is desirable to encourage productive uses on highly productive and versatile soils. Retaining the productive potential of the District's highly productive and versatile land has been discussed in rural issues (Part II, Section 16). It is also an issue with respect to townships, because 12 of the existing 30 townships are located on or adjacent to high class soils (refer Planning Maps). Specifically, Richmond, Pukeuri, Enfield, Ngapara, Reidston, Deborah, Alma, Weston, Maheno, Hampden, Kakanui and Goodwood occur on high class soils.

High class soils have no or slight limitations to arable use. This land may be used for cultivated crops, pasture and forestry. Most of these soils are either on flat or undulating land with the more common limitations of production being due to soil wetness or shallow soil profiles.

The expansion of townships can cause a loss of agricultural production by increased fragmentation of land and increased building coverage. In addition, some farming uses within or near township boundaries can be limited as residents may be subjected to unacceptable adverse effects such as noise, odour or dust.

If the boundary of the township zone allows for significant future development, and the development does not occur, then there is a loss of opportunity to use that land for some types of farming. In relation to the District as a whole, however, the extent of this lost opportunity is unlikely to be significant. It is also possible that a resource consent mechanism could allow for farming or other use of these areas where they are unlikely to be required for future residential use.

Servicing Limitations: A number of the existing townships have limitations in terms of the public services available and disposal of sewage within allotments. A number of villages have reticulated water supplies with mains which have insufficient pressure to meet the New Zealand Fire Service Standard. Many of these systems also have intake problems during droughts and floods with an inadequate amount of water available for reticulation. Goodwood's water supply is now at maximum capacity in terms of properties reticulated.

Only Pukeuri, Kakanui, Moeraki and Ohau have reticulated sewage disposal most of which involve treatment of sewage by way of an oxidation pond. In general, these systems are adequate for the current population served and there is no indication that there will be significant growth in these townships.

All the other townships rely on individual disposal of sewage from properties by way of septic tanks. Due to a wide range of factors such as soil type with low filtration rates, limestone soils, heavy tar, small section sizes, and rocky formations underlying properties, many septic tanks do not function well with soakage problems occurring. These soakage problems result in the tanks not effectively carrying out primary treatment of sewage and they also result in poor secondary treatment of sewage by way of percolation. Areas of particular concern are Windsor, Shag Point, Reidston, Pukeuri, Ngapara, Maheno (in places), Macraes, Herbert (severe), Hampden (severe), Goodwood, Enfield, Deborah and Alma.

The only new reticulated sewage disposal system being undertaken by the Council in the short term is for Moeraki.

Because of the contamination of ground and surface water that can result from septic tank failure and the subsequent health risks, it seems prudent that development not be permitted where there is inadequate provision for sewage disposal or reticulated water supply. Control on building can be achieved through the Building Act if adequate sanitation is not available, however the District Plan may also have a role through zoning which provides for houses at a certain density thus raises expectation that building is in fact possible. It may be desirable therefore to require larger sites for these areas which are known to have difficulties with sewage disposal and to use the Building Act as a backstop measure to ensure all buildings are serviced to an adequate standard.

15.2.1 Objective 1

Provision for townships in the rural area, which recognises the limitations on the development of settlements in rural area, with respect to servicing, safety and traffic generation, visual impact, natural hazards, the efficient use of rural land, and preserving the natural character of the coast.

15.2.2 Policies

- 1 *To control the subdivision and development of land within areas specified as being flood prone or prone to coastal erosion, so to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the environment.*
- 2 *To limit the extent of the townships having regard to the restraints of or imposed by:*
 - *the risk of natural hazards*
 - *the likelihood of the installation of reticulated sewage disposal systems*
 - *the availability and capacity of a domestic water supply*
 - *the efficient use of highly productive soils*
 - *the effects of activities in the townships on the operation of nearby rural land uses*
 - *efficiency and safety of road transport networks*
 - *the special amenity value of the townships and the amenity of the surrounding rural areas and rural landscapes*
 - *the natural character of the coast.*
- 3 *To ensure through the subdivision and site density standards that disposal of sewage can be satisfactorily accommodated within sites, and only allow for closer settlement if reticulated sewage disposal is made available. (Refer also to Part III, Section 5)*

15.2.3 Explanation and Reasons

The Council considers that there is a need to place some limitations on the extent of zoning which permit urban type development to ensure both that the needs of people living within townships are not compromised and to enable efficient use of the District's natural and physical resources. In particular, it is considered desirable to avoid damage to property and risk to life by only permitting subdivision in areas that are subject to erosion, instability or flooding after the Council has given detailed consideration to the proposal and the risks involved.

With respect to the construction of buildings, the Council has power under the Building Act to assess sites for vulnerability to flooding, erosion and their stability. In addition, the risk of building on these sites must be recorded on Certificates of Title to give warning to persons purchasing these sites. If no safe building site or method was available then the Council has powers not to issue a building permit for the site.

Extension of townships onto high class soils outside current boundaries is not proposed because of the value of that land for production and the range of alternative locations for residential use in the rural area.

Only limited extensions have been made to the coastal townships to include buildings long since established. An important consideration for any future extensions to the coastal townships would be preserving the natural character of the coastal environment.

The re-zoning of Alma to rural is recognition of the traffic safety issues at stake in this location.

15.3 ISSUE 2 - Amenity of Townships

The location, nature, and design of buildings and activities vary considerably in townships and can, without management, adversely affect the amenity of those townships or their surrounding landscapes.

15.3.1 Explanation

The relationship between different activities within the townships varies considerably. In general the larger towns have some separation of activities, reflecting traditional residential, commercial and industrial distinctions. By contrast the much smaller township of Macraes has a mixture of commercial, service and residential uses. These different land use patterns appear to have developed from the time these townships were established rather than as a result of town planning controls.

These distinctions between different land use activities and their relationship to the size of settlement are probably indicative of the expectations residents have about the type of amenity they wish to enjoy. That is, the larger and more structured a town is, the more likely its residents will wish to have a level of amenity similar to that of a larger town. Such a level of amenity can only really be obtained if a reasonable degree of separation between residential and non-residential activities is achieved. The towns of Palmerston, Kurow, Otematata and Omarama therefore continue to be separated into Business and Residential Zones.

In the smaller townships, such as those with fewer than 60 houses, the informal pattern of activities is something residents are happy about. This is, in part, because the non-residential activities in these townships do not cause conflict as they are usually of a small scale; for example, primary schools, halls, and service stations. The extent to which the non-residential activities are acceptable in townships is based not only on their physical attributes such as size, traffic generation and emissions, but also on their role within the community. If, for example, such activities provide a source of employment it appears many residents are willing to put up with some lessening of their amenity. Similarly, the effects of farming activities nearby or within the townships is probably more acceptable to residents. This is a reflection of the close economic, social and physical links between the rural area and the townships within these areas. In fact, because the smallest of these townships, namely Tokarahi, Livingstone, Georgetown, Reidston, Peebles, Waynes, Deborah, Aviemore, and Waitaki, appear so closely integrated with the surrounding rural area, the Council considers there is little justification in them retaining their 'urban zone.' However, for the larger townships the Council considers a higher standard of amenity is still desirable.

15.3.2 Objective 2

A spacious appearance and level of amenity necessary for the enjoyment of residents consistent with the efficient functioning of the townships within the rural area.

15.3.3 Policies

- 1 *To provide subdivision and density controls for townships which promote an open appearance, while at the same time, to inhibit the range of development options.*
- 2 *To provide for a wide range of activities within smaller townships by way of a single zoning, with activities being subject to listed standards which ensure a degree of amenity is attained consistent with both the general rural environment of the area, and with the maintenance of small scale non-residential activities and buildings.*
- 3 *To recognise that the amenity and functioning of the smallest townships is closely aligned and compatible with that of the rural area, and as a result, their previous urban zoning be changed to a rural zoning.*
- 4 *To provide for a general separation of residential activities from business activities within the larger towns of Omarama, Otematata and Kurow in order to protect the amenity of these residential areas.*
- 5 *To restrict intensive farming and extractive industries that are in close proximity to townships, so to protect the amenity of township residents.*
- 6 *To limit the farming of poultry to that for domestic purposes only in order to avoid the potential for conflict between this activity and level of amenity sought by this zone.*

15.3.4 Explanation and Reasons

The Resource Management Act requires that resources such as those contained in townships throughout the District must be protected and developed in a way that provides for the well-being of the community. In addition, the Act requires regard to be had to maintenance and enhancement of amenity values. For these reasons the Council has developed policies to maintain the character of the District's townships by providing for spacious development and a mixture of activities while recognising the different amenity expectations of residents of different townships.

The policies are implemented by the provision of performance standards that maintain spacious development by the use of minimum lot sizes, maximum permitted coverage of buildings on any sites, limits on the height and bulk of buildings, plus set backs from boundaries. Such controls, however, will provide the flexibility of house design and location needed, to enable efficient use of lots regardless of topography or aspect.

The informal relationship of different activities within smaller townships is maintained by the use of a single Township Zone. The larger townships which have a more structured land use pattern have this pattern and its attendant amenity standards maintained through the adoption of separate Residential and Business Zones. The policies also recognise the interrelationship of the townships with the surrounding rural area by providing for a level of amenity which permits a mixture of rural and urban uses subject to appropriate performance standards relating to matters such as the keeping of certain animals, noise and traffic generation.

Several villages given 'urban' zones under the previous District Plan have not been given an equivalent zoning in this District Plan but rather have been included in the surrounding rural zone. Tokarahi, Livingstone, Georgetown, Glenfern, Reidston, Peebles, Waynes, and Deborah have been included in the Rural Zone because the small number of dwellings and

rural amenity did not justify treating them as a township. Aviemore, once associated with hydro-dam construction no longer exists and the Waitaki township associated with the Waitaki dam construction is all but deserted, with few houses remaining.

15.4 IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

To achieve policies through:

- 1 the provision of rules, including performance standards, in the Township, Residential, Business and Rural Zones of the District.
- 2 the re-zoning of the smallest townships from urban to rural, and the re-zoning of Alma from urban to rural for the purposes of traffic safety.

15.5 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED

- Small rural townships comprising a mixture of residential, business, rural and community activities and with a "village" amenity.
- Development of activities which permit satisfactory servicing of that development, in particular sewage disposal to maintain water quality and availability for domestic use, and also water supply, stormwater disposal, and roading provisions.
- Avoidance or mitigation of the loss of life, property damage or disruption to the community from natural hazards.
- Well-defined township boundaries in the event of future consolidation, to avoid conflict between urban and more traditional rural activities and protect amenity values.
- Well-defined township boundaries to avoid loss of landscape quality.
- Pleasant living and working environments for the local population, within a variety of township environments, and which provide a good level of privacy, access to daylight and sunlight.
- Energy conservation in providing for facilities and services close to rural populations.
- Efficient access (vehicle and pedestrian) to all properties without interfering with the safe and efficient functioning of adjacent roads.
- Some infill development and the expansion of settlements without significant intrusion onto high class soils.

