



Topic 7: Soils, Minerals and Earthworks

November 2016

Introduction

As part of the District Plan Review, Timaru District Council has commissioned a Discussion Document on soils, minerals and earthworks to stimulate discussion and form a basis for public consultation. This can be found at www.timaru.govt.nz/dpr.

It identifies three main issues with how the current District Plan manages soils, minerals and earthworks, establishes potential options to address these issues and discusses the associated strengths and weaknesses. We seek your feedback on the issues and options.

Issues and Options

Issue 1

Do higher quality soils need to be specifically protected in a manner different to other soil types within the Rural area, and if so how?

The current District Plan protects high quality soils through a specific Rural 2 zoning which differentiates it from the lower quality soils in the downlands and plains areas, which have Rural 1 zoning. Because the zone boundaries follow soil types many properties have both Rural 1 and 2 zoning. The Rural 1 and 2 Zones have many of the same activity controls, but there is a difference with how subdivision is controlled respectively in these zones. Given the limited differences between the two zones, there is a question whether the Rural 2 Zone sufficiently protects the soil and/or whether these high quality soils actually require specific protection.

The options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current Rural Zones and associated rules; (ii) retain the current zoning but increase the minimum lot size in the Rural 2 Zone; or (iii) amalgamate the Rural 1 and 2 Zones with the Rural 1 Zone rules prevailing.

This summary outlines the issues our district faces in relation to soils, minerals and earthworks.

We welcome your feedback on this topic.

Richard Lyon
Pleasant Point/Temuka
Ward Councillor





Issue 2

Should mining and quarrying be more or less controlled in the District Plan?

Mining and quarrying make valuable resources available but their extraction can give rise to significant dust, traffic, noise and visual effects. The District Plan provides for limited extraction as a permitted activity and all other extraction requires consent as a discretionary activity. The Regional Council also controls extraction in relation to dust and, in particular, controls extraction of gravel from riverbeds. There are queries then as to whether there is sufficient control over the effects of mining and quarrying (including mining of a resource not yet identified) and whether there is unnecessary duplication of control.

The options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current zone rules that permit small scale mining or quarrying within any given year in the rural area and require consent for greater volumes or within other areas of the District; (ii) provide for mining and quarrying that either meets similar standards to the regional plan or for which there is a regional resource consent; or (iii) provide for mining and quarrying activities with a higher permitted volume but include minimum standards setting limits for truck movements per day, noise generation, hours of operations, noise, dust and setbacks from sensitive activities and setback of activities that are sensitive to mining and quarrying. Standards requiring financial contributions for damage to roading could also be introduced.

Issue 3

Should earthworks (excluding quarrying) be controlled within all parts of the District?

The District Plan controls on earthworks are limited to controls through subdivision consents or when land is being filled to a depth of one metre or more. There are potential adverse impacts on the environment from uncontrolled earthworks such as dust, heavy traffic movements, vibration, noise, erosion and diversion of natural drainage channels.

The options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current District Plan rules and standards for earthworks; (ii) retain the Rural Zone earthworks controls but introduce controls for other parts of the District such as in the Residential Zones; or (iii) introduce rules to control earthworks within all zones that set permitted thresholds for volume, depth of cut and depth of fill, slope, setbacks from sensitive activities, including requirements for dust control and erosion and sediment control plans. An option could be to exempt activities where they are permitted by a regional plan or have obtained regional council consent.