

LANDSCAPE

Summary of Visual Effects

An assessment has been undertaken to determine where the proposed wind park will be visible from, and to identify the potential visual, landscape, and amenity effects that may arise. The assessment methodology drew upon information gathered through background research, site inspection, comparison and analysis of different views and potential visual effects from representative view locations, analysis of a digital terrain model and visual simulations.

Within close proximity to the wind park, fewer turbines will be visible than from more distant locations, but the resultant visual effect will be greater due to the apparent scale of each turbine in relation to surrounding topographical features.

Screening afforded by existing topography means that fewer viewing opportunities exist between 7km and 15km from the site. While a greater number of turbines will be visible from the more distant view locations, these would be seen within the context of the wider landscape and are therefore considered to have a lesser effect on landscape character and visual amenity.

The turbines will potentially draw attention to their presence due to their significant size and the movement of the blades. They will be highly obvious, and will change the existing rural characteristics of the Wharauora Plateau skyline. The turbines will be clearly visible from many surrounding rural locations as well as the more densely populated settlements of Te Uku, Waitetuna, and parts of Raglan and Hamilton. The wind park will not be visible from Te Mata Village.

Other components of the wind park, such as the access road and substation, can be screened from view, or mitigated so that they are visually integrated into the existing rural landscape.

Shadow flicker and blade glint (reflected light off the blades) will have no effect on the houses closest to the site.

Mitigation

The assessment process has allowed feedback to be considered throughout the design process. This has enabled the avoidance, remedying or mitigation of a number of potential visual, landscape, and amenity effects.

It is recognised that the scale of the proposed turbines is such that they can not be effectively screened from view. However, a number of factors have been taken into consideration during turbine selection and wind farm layout / design, to ensure that, where possible, adverse effects on visual and landscape amenity are minimised.