

18.1 Upgrading of Power Transmission Lines to Albany and Wellstead

File/Ward	:	(Kalgan, West and Hassell Wards)
Proposal/Issue	:	Community Impacts From Alignment of Proposed Power Transmission Lines to Albany
Subject Land/Locality	:	Various
Proponent	:	Western Power
Owner	:	Various
Reporting Officer(s)	:	Executive Director Development Services (R Fenn)
Disclosure of Interest	:	Nil
Previous Reference	:	Nil
Summary Recommendation	:	Council Advocate for Additional Power Capacity for Albany and the Great Southern Region
Bulletin Attachment	:	Nil
Locality Plan	:	

BACKGROUND

1. Councillor Bocjun has requested the preparation of an urgent agenda item to allow debate by Councillors on the role of Council in the current rounds of community consultation on the transmission of power to Albany and to the Southdown mine site at Wellstead.
2. The demand for power in Albany and the Great Southern has risen dramatically over the past decade. Councillors were recently briefed by a representative of Western Power on the extent of that increase. Where the Sandpatch Wind Farm originally supplied the equivalent of 70% of the City's power needs, that facility only now supplies approximately 45%. The Federal Street sub-station also was responsible for distributing power to Walpole in the west, to Cranbrook in the north and to Bremer Bay in the east, once the power was reticulated into the region.
3. Western Power has completed conceptual planning for distributing power to Albany into the future and representatives of that authority have undertaken a series of meeting and open forums with community groups to explore corridor options for new transmission lines.

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4. The City has been contacted by community representatives in the Redmond and Napier area, raising concerns over the preliminary routes identified for the transmission lines.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

5. Western Power is required under independent legislation to secure access rights for its transmission line, where it traverses private property, and the authority is subjected to the same environmental processes as private developers.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no Policy Implications relating to this item.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no Financial Implications relating to this item.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

8. This item directly relates to the following elements from the City of Albany 3D Corporate Plan:

“Community Vision:

A Thriving City: Albany’s community will enjoy economic growth and outstanding opportunities for our youth through ...

- *Excellent community infrastructure and services; and*
- *Innovative development complementing Albany’s unique character, natural environment and heritage.*

Mission Statement:

The City of Albany is committed to ...

- *Providing sound governance; and*
- *Promoting our Community’s vision for the future.*

Priority Projects:

Nil.”

COMMENT/DISCUSSION

9. The work currently being undertaken by Western Power can be viewed in terms of a number of specific objectives, refer to the attached plans for a visual representation of the officer’s comments.

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Objective 1:- ensure adequate power can be supplied for Albany's future growth

10. Officers working for Western Power have identified the need to provide additional power into Albany, to meet the City's energy needs for the future. That power is currently supplied by two high voltage lines from the Muja Power Station, near Collie, and reticulated to Albany via the Kojonup Sub-station. The two lines from Kojonup to Albany have limited capacity to support an additional power load.
11. A third line into Albany is required, and Western Power has identified a potential route for that line which runs parallel to the existing Kojonup to Albany infrastructure. Discussions have commenced with communities along the potential route and local opposition is being expressed to Western Power. Opposition is focussed on the impact of that line on existing land uses and the visual amenity of the locality.

Objective 2:- Reinforce the local power transmission network at the local level

12. Several years ago an electrical sub-station was built at Mt Barker to reinforce power supplies into Mt Barker and to Frankland. Prior to that action, the distribution of the power arriving at the southern end of the transmission network was carried out at the Federal Street sub-station (i.e. power was transmitted to Albany and then distributed to outlying areas along smaller distribution mains). Power supply into the region is not secure as any failure of that sub-station would remove the power delivery to businesses and houses.
13. As part of the infrastructure package for the Down Road Timber Processing Precinct, a new sub-station is to be built near Down Road, in close proximity to the high voltage line, and power for that industrial area will be fed off that sub-station rather than from Federal Street. An additional sub-station is then required in the Albany urban area to reinforce the power grid and provide an alternate source of power should a catastrophic event occur at Federal Street.

Objective 3:- Supply power to the proposed magnetite mine at Wellstead

14. Grange Resources is currently working on the finalisation of the environmental management plan to support the mining of the Southdown mineral deposit, as well as gaining the finances needed to build the required infrastructure at the mine site. It is feasible that the mine could be operational between the middle of 2009 and early 2010, provided power can be supplied to the mine site.
15. Construction of a third power line from Kojonup to Albany cannot be achieved before 2012. Preliminary planning has also been undertaken to construct a power line directly from Kojonup to Wellstead, via Borden, and that project would not be able to be constructed prior to 2014, based upon the personal comments of Western Power staff. Councillors have also been advised that it is feasible to supply "off peak" power to the mine site in 2009 from the Down Road sub-station provided a power line can be built between Albany and Wellstead.

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16. Western Power has identified three potential routes for a line between Albany and Wellstead and they are currently meeting with landowners and community groups to determine the practicality of those options.

Power Supply Solutions

17. There has been not clear indication provided by environmental agencies on the success of any of the above route options being endorsed and Western Power staff are currently working on providing up to three separate transmission line routes.
18. The provision of power to Albany and to the Wellstead mine can be achieved in the following manner:
 - a) construction of a third line from Kojonup to Albany to service Albany and the greater region and a transmission line from Kojonup to Wellstead to independently service the mine (i.e. no line between Albany and Wellstead). This option would delay the construction of the Wellstead mine by a minimum of three (3) years; or
 - b) construction of the Albany to Wellstead line to provide short term power to the mine site and then construct the Kojonup to Albany third line to reinforce supplies to both Albany and Wellstead. (i.e. no line between Kojonup and Wellstead, via Borden); or
 - c) construction of the Albany to Wellstead line to provide short term power to the mine site and then construct the Kojonup to Wellstead line to reinforce supplies to both Albany and Wellstead. (i.e. no third line required between Kojonup and Albany).
19. Regional power generation has also been mentioned as a potential option, to avoid the construction of new power transmission lines. Whilst City staff are not power supply and transmission experts, the verbal advice received from Verve Energy and Western Power is that the impacts of local power generation can be problematic. From the advice received:
 - A base load power station (i.e. coal, gas or biomass fired with a constant energy production output) can potentially be fed into the existing power grid, through one of the sub-stations, and power can be fed through the distribution lines to local consumers or via the reticulation main to other consumers on the South West Grid. The construction and firing of a local base load power station could be several years away and it could help to reduce the requirement for larger transmission lines into the region, if guarantees were provided that such a facility would be built; and
 - intermittent power sources (eg wind, solar, etc) are unlikely to diminish the need for an upgrade of the transmission lines into the region. These power sources distribute power only when their primary source of energy generation is available and the base load supplies will still need to be capable of being supplied into the region at all times (i.e. the transmission lines will still need to be capable of supporting the maximum load requirements).

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Council's Role

20. The generation, transmission and distribution of power throughout the Great Southern is the responsibility of Verve Energy (plus other private generating companies) and Western Power. Council does not have a role in designing, securing or developing power generation and distribution infrastructure and it is the responsibility of Western Power to undertake the appropriate consultation and approval processes to construct their infrastructure; Western Power and private power generators are ultimately required to gain approvals from the Office of Energy for any works they undertake.
21. Council can assume the role of an advocate on behalf of the community where the community is being disadvantaged by any planned action. Herein lies a dilemma for Councillors. All residents in Albany require access to a constant supply of power and the construction of infrastructure (transmission and distribution lines, sub-stations and power generation) is essential to achieving that primary objective. When sectors of the community are opposed to a route selection option, does Council wish to become advocates on behalf of that community sector? If Council's lobbying is successful and an alternate route offered and that disadvantages another community sector, does Council then advocate again on behalf of that group?
22. It is the view of City staff that Council should remain strategically focussed (i.e. lobbying for stable power supplies) and advise local communities that all concerns should be directed to the relevant agency and regulator to resolve route selection issues and local community opposition.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to advise the Redmond and the Napier communities that their concerns regarding the route selection for the high voltage Western Power transmission lines from Kojonup to Albany and from Albany to Wellstead should be directed to Western Power or the Office of Energy;

AND

THAT Council advise Western Power and Verve Energy that the City of Albany requires access to a stable supply of power into the future and the authority's planning for transmission lines and power generation respectively should be undertaken with maximum community input and minimal disruption to residents affected by power supply and distribution infrastructure.

Voting Requirement Simple Majority

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