

## 5. SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN

<b>Officer responsible</b> Director, Information and Planning Directorate	<b>Author</b> Josie Schröder, Urban Designer DDI 941-8932
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The purpose of this report is to outline the steps which have been taken to pursue the Committee's recommendation in regard to ways in which sustainable urban design may be achieved in Christchurch. The presentation to the Committee on urban design included a number of potential options such as the use of incentives, promoting best practice, and having a more flexible approach recognising innovative design.

Subsequently a team comprising Council officers and members of the subdivision development profession was formed to research and assess the options above and further proposals that could encourage and achieve sustainable urban design. The emphasis at this stage was on non-regulatory methods but with a view to complementing and linking the methods with the statutory processes of the Christchurch City Plan.

Ten non-regulatory methods were explored in detail including:

- Design guides and checklists
- Acceptable solutions
- Design review panel
- Market-based incentives
- Sustainability rating index
- Parallel Resource Consents process
- Existing awards
- New awards
- Green star programme of incentives
- Council as landowner

Beginning with a SWOT analysis, discussion included: the methods' financial implications to Council, developers, property owners and other stakeholders; legal implications in regard to the Resource Management Act 1991 and the methods' statutory standing; enforcement; practicality of implementation; the ability to agree outcomes and; methods that are likely to best achieve the desired outcomes.

Two non-regulatory methods appeared to be the most appropriate given the criteria, one of which, the subdivision design guide, is already being pursued. Design guides and awards appeared the most workable methods, with the emphasis on targeting the largest user groups for the big wins and giving Council support through promotion of best practice. While this does not rule out some of the other methods, they may be better supported in a regulatory framework at the plot and building design phase of subdivision development, rather than land development stage.

Work has since begun on a strategy to both develop and promote existing awards aimed at attracting subdivision developers undertaking good urban design. A report was presented to the Environmental Awards Panel last month with regard to suggested changes to the Awards including their structure, promotion and management to strengthen their position in promoting among other areas, good urban design. The report was accepted and additional funding allocated to support it.

Additionally Brendan Smyth is nearing completion of a sustainable building guide. In conjunction with this guide and other material prepared by the Urban Design and Heritage Team, a focus group of residents who had recently bought or built a brand new house met to discuss the choices they had made as to the design and development of their house and section. This material provided some of the basis for understanding areas to target in the promotion of sustainable design and the level of understanding of sustainable design. It has also helped guide the Greenfield's Subdivision Survey, which is currently being developed for distribution in January 2004. The Urban Design and Heritage Team have been actively involved in the survey development, with a view towards both regulatory and non-regulatory means of influencing subdivision and plot design. A programme of seminars, discussion groups and exhibitions is also being planned to target both those members of the public preparing to buy land and build a house and the 'volume' house builders.

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** That the Committee support the pursuance of good practice awards and design guidance as a means of achieving sustainable urban design.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the staff recommendation be supported.