

1. COMMUNITY GARDENS GUIDELINES

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The purpose of this report is to establish guidelines for council recognition and support of community gardens, which contribute to environmental, social and economic wellbeing in the city.

BACKGROUND

In 1999 the Council began to explore ways in which it could better support community gardens, in recognition of their ability to process small amounts of kitchen waste locally as well as promoting home composting and providing social and economic benefits for local communities. A number of community gardens had however been in existence for a long time prior to that, some of them supported already by community boards and through social initiatives. Various methods to improve support for community gardens were trialled, with varying success. These included conducting a pilot waste minimisation trial, assisting in the formation of and providing funding to the Christchurch Community Gardens Association and the Council employing a Community Gardens Advocate. Two new trials are currently being developed by staff, including direct payment based on the amount of kitchen waste community gardens are able to divert from landfill and working with a local contractor to establish community gardens in conjunction with existing maintenance contracts. These trials will be reported to the Council in due course.

GUIDELINES

Because community gardens contribute to social, environmental and economic wellbeing, support from the Council can involve staff and elected members from a wide range of areas including: parks gardens and waterways, sustainable transport and utilities, community and leisure standing committees, waste, property, parks, streets, community development, social initiatives and sustainable Christchurch units. In response to a request from some staff and elected members working in these areas the "Growing Communities Together – Community Gardens Guidelines for Christchurch City Council" (Guidelines document), Attachment 1, has been developed to provide clarity about the relationship between the Christchurch City Council, Christchurch Community Boards, the Christchurch Community Gardens Association and individual Community Gardens. It provides guidelines for formal recognition of the services community gardens provide to the city and to local communities and support the Council may offer in return.

The guidelines document outlines the following:

- issues
- benefits of community gardens
- examples of community gardens in Christchurch
- suggested principles
- ways the Council could provide support for the community gardens.
- a suggested process for community garden development/registration

The guidelines document has been presented formally to Community Boards, revised to incorporate their feedback as appropriate and has been presented for discussion, amendment and endorsement by the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee. An overview of feedback from Community Boards is summarised in Attachment 2.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council endorse the 'Growing Communities Together – Community Guidelines for the Christchurch City Council' as amended.
 2. That consideration be given to the appointment of a Community Gardens Advocate.