

#### 4. RESULTS OF REVIEW OF RIVERSIDE PLANTING SITES



**Officer responsible**  
Greenspace Manager

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the results of the review of riverside planting at two sites chosen by the Board in May 2004 and to ask the Board to make a recommendation to the 16 December 2004 Council meeting.

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early in 2004, all community boards chose two sites in their area for an external consultant's review of riverside planting, now that planting programmes along the city's streams and rivers have been on-going for ten years. The purpose of the planting is to stabilise the river banks, reduce long-term maintenance costs, provide a habitat for wildlife and to increase the diversity of the city's plantings. Native species are therefore usually chosen for riparian (streamside) plantings. Largely because of dense, continuous planting and sometimes inappropriate plant choice, some adverse effects are occurring. The purpose of the review is to identify what remedial steps can be taken now to address these shortcomings and to put in place measures to ensure that future plantings will be carried out in such a way as to lessen the likelihood of future adverse effects on people's enjoyment of streamsides, while retaining the benefits outlined above. Many river and stream banks are seen from roads and walkways so it is important that residents feel safe, can see views, and can gain access to the water's edge.

A report is going to the 16 December 2004 Council meeting to gain approval for staff to proceed with policies and guidelines to give better direction and to set standards for future riparian planting. All community boards, apart from the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board, have heard their local report and have given their recommendations. Following the recent election, the Board does not yet have its delegations confirmed. The Board is therefore asked to make a recommendation to the Council for the 16 December meeting.

##### BACKGROUND/ISSUES

Following a deputation from the Merivale Precinct Society to the Parks Gardens and Waterways Committee in February 2004, expressing concerns about the effects of native planting along the banks of the Avon River adjacent to Little Hagley Park, the Board chose this and another site for review by an independent landscape architect. The matters raised for consideration in the review included:

*Access to the water's edge*

*Safety for pedestrians using the area*

*Preservation of attractive views*

*Appropriate siting of seats*

*Appropriate maintenance practices*

*Density, shading or intrusion upon other significant vegetation*

**Site 1: Avonside Drive (Fitzgerald Avenue to Stanmore Road Bridge)**

**Site 2: Avon River (South Side from Helmores Lane Bridge to Carlton Mill Bridge)**

##### REVIEW

The review was carried out by Jenny Moore, landscape architect ANZILA. Jenny carried out a site analysis, including river character, vegetation character and site character. She then proceeded to explore opportunities to mitigate, through design and maintenance, any detracting outcomes of the planting. The report includes photographs of the planting and a copy is **attached**.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Site 1: Avonside Drive (Fitzgerald Avenue to Stanmore Road Bridge)

#### 3.0

Opportunities for mitigation through design and maintenance:

- Assess where the key view points to the river must be retained and ensure that future planting respects the need for visual access to the river
- Consider low growing species for river bank stabilisation
- Prune and limb up trees where they are beginning to block out views to the river
- Develop a management plan, which, considers maintenance needs for this particular stretch of river and replacement planting of existing mature trees
- When drawing up restoration planting plans for specific stretches of river in Christchurch it is important to evaluate the existing surrounding landscape character and to consider the needs of the community

### Site 2: Avon River (South Side from Helmores Lane Bridge to Carlton Mill Bridge)

The conclusions are stated in **3.0 Opportunities for mitigation through design and maintenance.**

#### 3.1

The presence of native vegetation along the river bank should not be seen as a negative situation. From Harper Avenue, the existence of the river is only discernible at a few points, where the road crosses it and where the river and road come together. The native vegetation provides a visual indication that the river exists, especially when it is hidden below steep banks.

#### 3.2

Design plays an important part in riverbank restoration and there are many factors that need to be considered, such as:

- Size and location of plants
- Growth rate and form of plants for the site
- Maintenance and management of plants to respond to plant growth e.g. thinning, pruning, shaping, replacements
- Response to river profile, providing access to the water's edge
- Maintain vistas and frame views
- Site character and that of surrounding areas

#### Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information be received.
  2. That the Board recommend to the Council:
    - (a) That remedial work be carried out on sites 1 and 2 as recommended in the report.
    - (b) That riverside planting on sites 1 and 2 be maintained in such a way that the detractors outlined in the report are not repeated in the future.
    - (c) That the report conclusions be shared with all designers who have an input into riverside planting projects in Christchurch, in order to design more appropriate future plantings.

#### Chairperson's

- Recommendation:** For discussion.