

POLICY NAME

Community Gardens Policy

POLICY NUMBER

OPD 003

DATE ADOPTED

31 August 2015

COUNCIL MINUTE NUMBER

PRC 63

ECM NUMBER

7243644

POLICY TYPE

Council

REVIEW DATE

As needed

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Organisational Performance & Development

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Community Gardens Guidelines 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline Council's approach to the establishment and support of community gardens on both public and private land; and
- clarify the roles of Council and community groups, particularly in the case of those who apply for community gardens on Council owned or managed land.

Policy Statement

Penrith City Council supports the development of community gardening within the Penrith Local Government Area and believes that appropriately designed and managed community gardens can provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to the Penrith community.

For the purposes of this Policy, community gardens are defined as:

Not-for-profit, community managed spaces that provide an opportunity for food production and other gardening activities, in an inclusive community based setting, for the benefit of members in the local community.

To be successful community gardens require substantial community involvement in planning, decision-making, garden management, day-to-day activities and maintenance.

Scope

This policy applies to all community garden developments on:

- a) Council owned and/or managed land;
- b) Private land; and
- c) Land owned by other public authorities.

Council's role will vary according to land ownership. Refer to Council's Community Gardens Guidelines for further information.

POLICY:

Roles and responsibilities

Council has adopted a community development approach to facilitating community gardens. This approach encourages garden groups to self-govern for the delivery of successful and sustainable gardens.

Council's role is to facilitate and promote community gardens that are sustainably managed by the community. Council will not take a lead in establishing gardens or provide funding for the establishment of gardens.

Penrith City Council in its role and responsibilities will:

- Facilitate community gardens through provision of advice for interested and committed groups.
- Assist interested and committed groups in identifying suitable public land for the development of community gardens.
- Provide advice to community groups in setting up their management committee and submitting their application for a community garden to Council.
- Provide advice and assistance to community groups in their application for grants, funding and other resources.
- Provide in-kind support when resources are available such as mulch, water options and reuse of materials for construction of gardens.
- Promote established community gardens on private and Council owned and managed land through Council's website, networks, publications and events.

Council is not in a position to provide the following services or resources:

- Insurance;
- Administrative support (eg. photocopying);
- Holding of monies on behalf of community garden groups;
- Provision of large infrastructure (eg. sheds, rainwater tanks, sun shelters);
- Ongoing provision of plants, seeds, soil or mulch;
- Provision of tools or other equipment;
- Repair or replacement of damaged, lost or stolen infrastructure and equipment;
- Development or hosting of any internet based platforms for group communications and promotion eg. website, blogs, wikis;
- Financial support; and
- Provision of fencing for the establishment of a community garden.

Establishment of Community Gardens on Council Owned or Managed Land

Establishing a community garden can be a complex process requiring consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and consideration of a range of issues.

There are a variety of different models for community gardens. Council supports communal gardens where at least part of the garden is managed collectively.

In order for Council to consider supporting the establishment of a new community garden on Council owned or managed land, applicants will need to follow the procedure for starting a new community garden outlined in Figure 1.

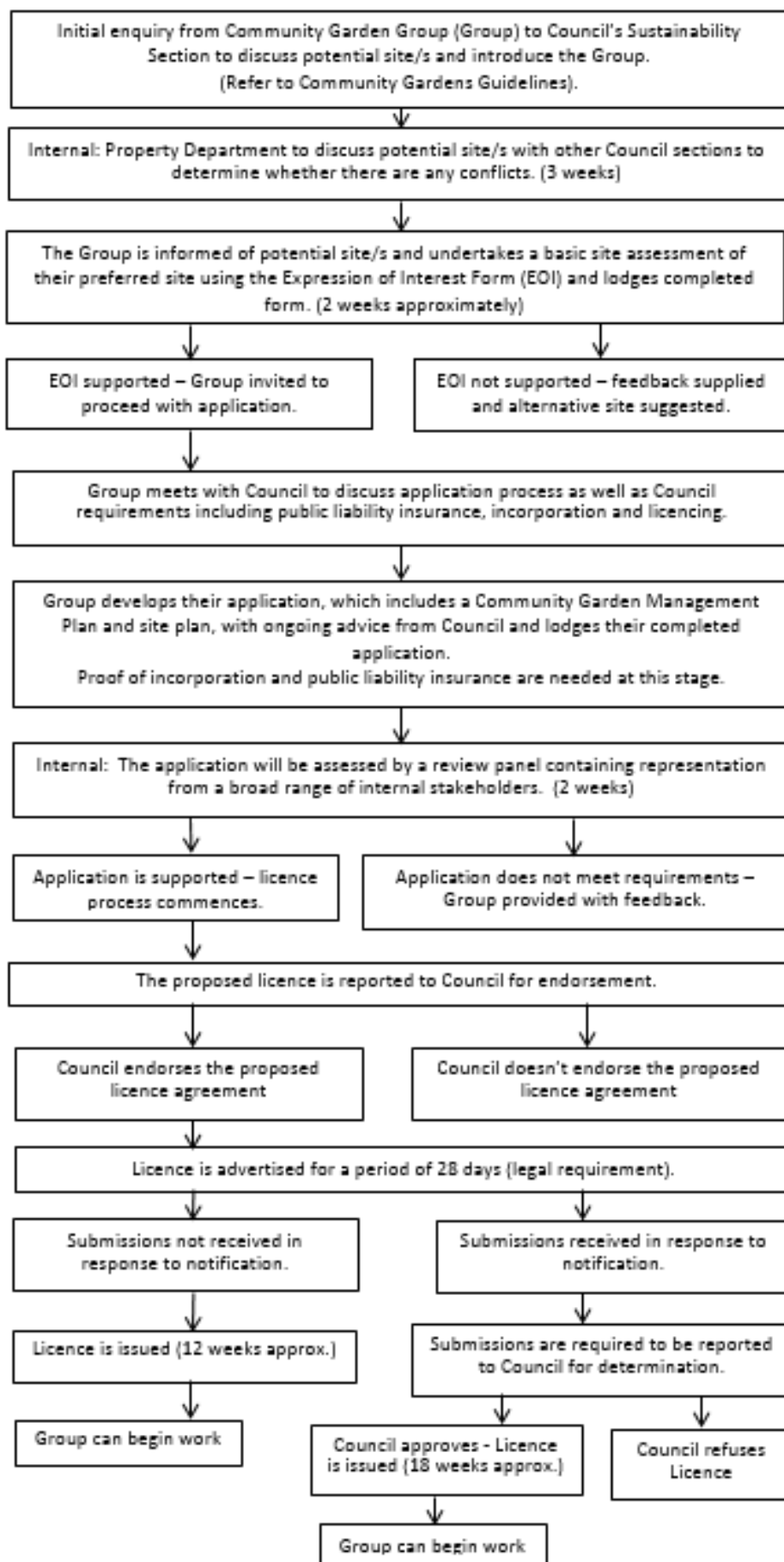


Figure 1. Process for starting a new garden on Council owned or managed land

Considerations

There are a number of considerations that should be taken into account when planning a community garden which include:

- Capacity of the community garden group to self-organise, start and manage a community garden over the long term.
- Availability of land suitable for community gardening.
- Attitudes of neighbours to a proposed community garden.
- Suitability of land for community gardening with regard to solar access, accessibility, safety, location, size, soil contamination, fencing and storage facilities.

These considerations are explained in greater detail in the Community Gardens Guidelines.

Verge or Footpath Gardening

In general, Council will not support the conversion of grass nature strip areas into garden beds. The main concerns about nature strip gardens relate to:

- interference with underground services
- impacts on pedestrian and traffic movements and lines of sight
- Impacts on bin placement
- soil contamination
- public liability
- dealing with abandoned gardens.

Review

The Community Gardens Policy is to be reviewed on an as needed basis.

Related Documents and Legislation

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*
- *Crown Lands Act 1989*
- *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*
- Penrith Community Gardens Guidelines 2015