Growing Healthy Communities

Food Security Toolkit for Local Government

Executive Summary

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". Having adequate nutritious food is a basic human need. There needs to be strengthened collaboration and leadership from both central and local government in order to meet this need for everyone in New Zealand.

All people should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long healthy life, regardless of their income, education or ethnicity. The root causes of food insecurity are heavily influenced by the conditions in which we live, learn, work and play. This toolkit suggests opportunities for improving food security. However, it does not undermine the large influence that can be made by targeting these root causes, often referred to as the determinants of health.

This toolkit contains a collection of possible strategies, advocacy opportunities and policies targeting local government action to improve their community's food security. The toolkit is divided into four main sections that represent the four spheres of influence to improve food security: Collaboration, Community Capacity, Supportive Environments and Advocacy.

It is envisaged that this toolkit be used by council planners to assist in the development of relevant policies and strategies and to consider the concepts while developing plans. Community groups could also use the toolkit to advocate for changes that empower their communities to have better access to affordable, healthy, safe and sustainable food sources. It offers councils a range of solutions to support food security whilst staying within their set guidelines (such as the Local Government Act). The options in the toolkit have been tried and tested nationally or internationally. Identification of possible risks and how these could be minimised have been included in the strategy descriptions. Councils can use the tools within this guide to help ensure residents have access to healthy food, stimulate the local economy and to achieve positive social outcomes.

People in our communities are suffering today due to food insecurity. Use this toolkit to reduce this suffering tomorrow. Don't let this opportunity slide past. Some of the strategies are simple. From small things, big things can grow.

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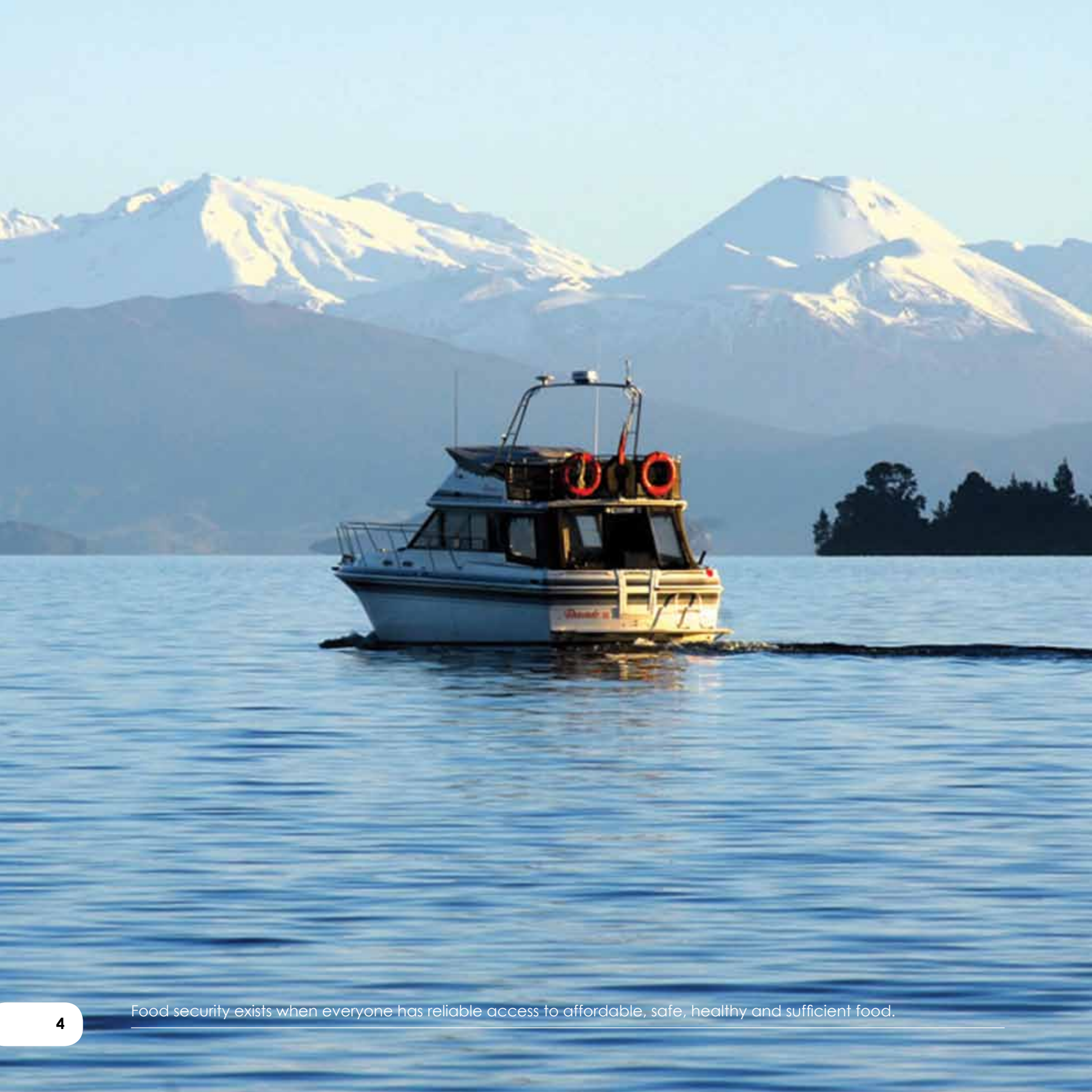


Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

Introduction

This resource is a guide for local government, council planners and interested community organisations to advocate for and develop policies, strategies and plans that will ultimately empower their communities to have better access to affordable, healthy, safe and sufficient food. Councils are invited to use the tools within this guide to help connect residents with healthy food, stimulate the local economy and achieve positive social outcomes. The sample policies in the appendix and the evidence provided could assist planners and policy developers.

In the past, Councils have often responded to the concept of food security and food policies as an issue for central government. However, a shift of thinking has occurred as communities have become advocates for a localised food movement. Councils have opportunities to support their communities into better health by helping to create a supportive environment where healthy and affordable food can be easily accessed.

Imagine a community where children can pick a few plums off a nearby tree while playing at a playground, or to pack away for morning tea whilst safely walking to school.

What is Food Security?

The World Health Organisation defines food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". This exists when there is a reliable supply and access for people to healthy foods that are culturally acceptable, nutritiously adequate, affordable and safe.

The definition of food security is also moving towards inclusion of sustainable production methods.

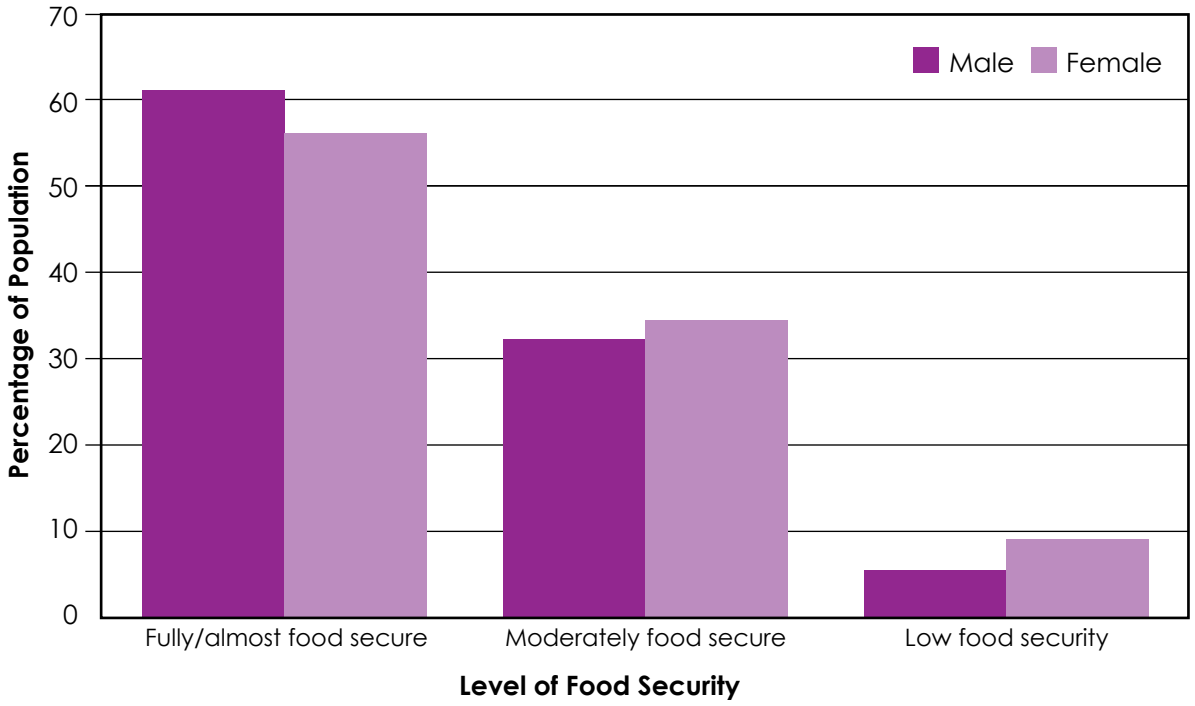
This toolkit is divided into four sections based on the diagram below. Successful work towards food security will capture all four spheres of influence: Collaboration, Community Capacity, Supportive Environments and Advocacy.

Food Security in New Zealand

The 2008 National Adult Nutrition Survey interviewed 4721 New Zealanders. Based on responses to a series of eight statements, 59.1% of households were classified as being fully/almost food secure, 33.7% were classified as being moderately food secure, and 7.3% were classified as having low food security. From 1997 to 2008/09 the proportion of households classified as having low food security increased for males (1.6% to 5.6%) and for females (3.8% to 8.8%) (see figure 1). Maori and the Pacific Island communities have higher rates of food insecurity.

In its report, reviewing social policy and food security, the New Zealand Network Against Food Poverty found that actual food costs were much higher than most low income households had available after meeting their basic expenses for housing, power and transport. The price of food is extremely significant for people with low incomes. It is one of the key features in determining what they purchase and eat and has a significant impact on their remaining disposable income. Food security is improved when fresh produce such as vegetables and fruit are affordable and when low fat or high fibre products are competitively priced against their alternatives. In a New Zealand study of low income households, 70% of mothers said they restricted their own meal size to feed their children. Similar studies overseas found that women who report hunger in their households have significantly lower energy and nutrient intakes than those who do not.

Figure 1: Food Security Categories, by sex (2008 National Adult Nutrition Survey)



People with low incomes tend to have a diet that is low in vegetables, fruits, lean red meat and dairy products, but too high in fat, salt and sugar. The evidence suggests this imbalance is not due to ignorance. Low income households are aware they eat insufficient healthy foods. **Educational efforts alone are unlikely to make much impact if a wide range of socioeconomic and environmental factors remain unchanged.**

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service conducted a population survey in 2012 across the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts to gain insight into the populations knowledge, attitudes, and practices of health related issues. Three questions were asked that related to food security.

The following table shows the percentage of people who stated they went without fruit and vegetables to help keep down costs in the past year.

Rotorua District	29.2
Taupo District	24.6
Tauranga City	28.0
Western BOP	27.2
Whakatane District	25.1
Opotiki District	21.3
Kawerau District	31.1
Total Population	**27.3%**

The next table represents the percentage of people who stated they were forced to buy cheaper food so they could pay for other things in the past year.

Rotorua District	45.8
Taupo District	46.8
Tauranga City	45.2
Western BOP	56.2
Whakatane District	51.7
Opotiki District	39.5
Kawerau District	50.9
Total Population	**47.6%**

The last table shows the percentage of people who stated they have used special food grants or food banks in the past year.

Rotorua District	4.0
Taupo District	3.1
Tauranga City	6.3
Western BOP	7.0
Whakatane District	4.6
Opotiki District	2.3
Kawerau District	4.9
Total Population	**5.2%**

These data confirm that food insecurity exists in our communities.

Role of Local Government

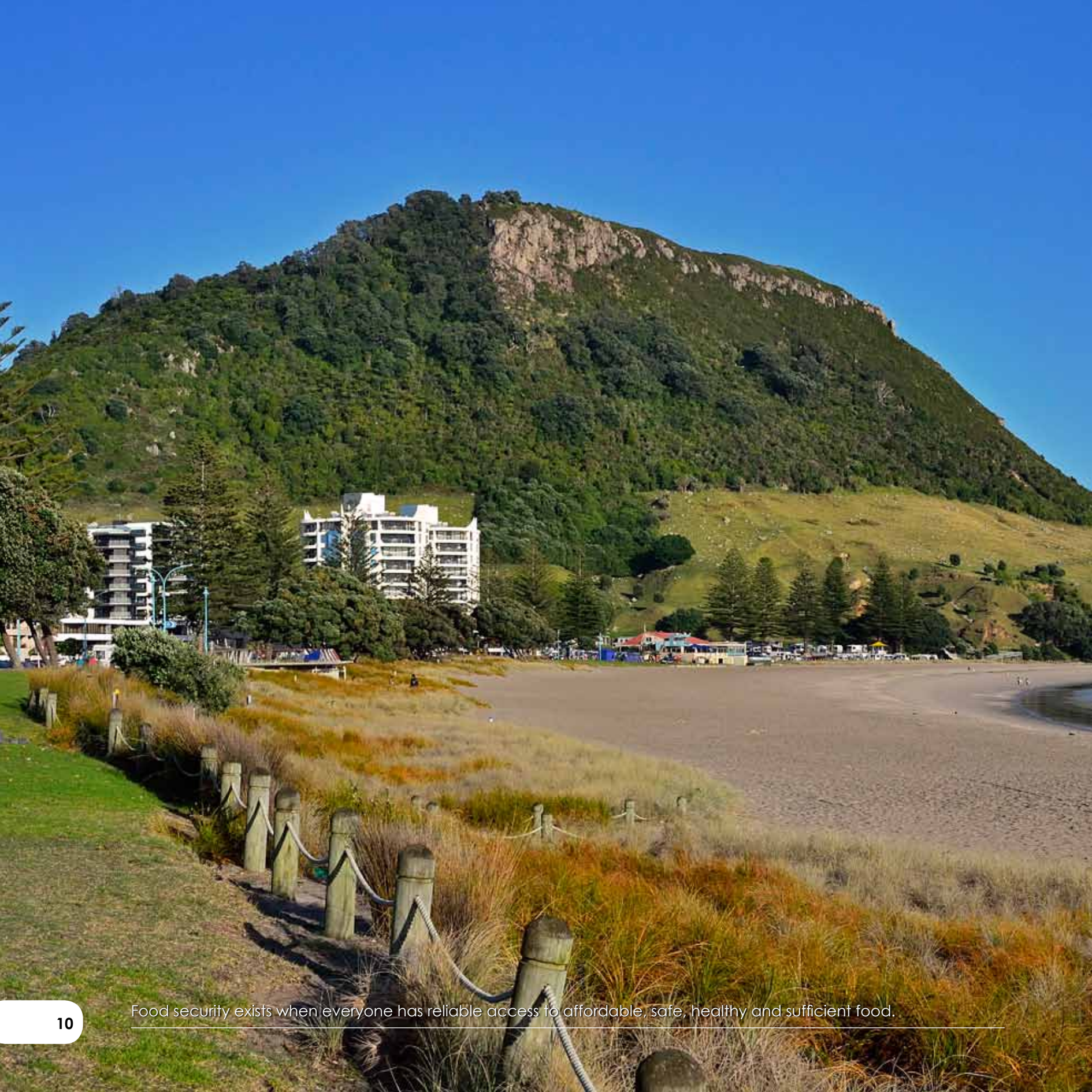
Achieving food security is by no means the sole responsibility of local government. In order to improve the community's access to affordable, healthy and safe food, a collaborative approach is required.

The Local Government Amendment Act 2012 confirms that councils play a broad role in meeting the needs of their communities for good quality local infrastructure, local services and performance of regulatory functions.

Some of the roles local government can take in addressing food security include:

- Providing local leadership and coordinating work to address the determinants of food security across the district.
- Monitoring and disseminating information on local trends.
- Ensuring land use planning, such as District Plans support local food production and supply.
- Planning and advocating for transport that is user-friendly, safe, accessible and affordable to be able to access food.
- Regulating and monitoring food safety standards.
- Promoting a whole of local government response to food security acknowledging the root causes and the need for integrated planning and action.
- Establishing and fostering strong partnerships and collaboration with public and private sectors.
- Advocating to, and building the capacity of, all levels of government and community organisations to respond to food security.
- Providing access to information, and financial and/or physical resources to community members and other key stakeholders.
- Facilitating informed public discussion and debate on food security.
- Developing policy and plans that contribute to improving food security.

This toolkit can be used in its entirety or sections could selectively be used in planning and community development. From small things, big things can grow.



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Collaboration

Councils could work in collaboration with other key stakeholders in order to gain a whole of community approach to improve access to affordable, healthy, safe and sufficient food. It is important that all levels of the food system are involved in improving food security.

A food system is defined as the network of activities and organisations involved in growing, processing, manufacturing, transporting, storing, distributing and consuming food.

The Food System

Working Together to Achieve Food Security

Strategies

1. Food Policy Council

In response to the increasing interest in the production of food worldwide, communities and residents have come together to forge responses aiming to strengthen local and regional food systems. One response has been the creation of Food Policy Councils. According to the USA's Community Food Security Coalition, the number of Food Policy Councils in the USA has nearly doubled between 2010 and 2012 to 193 Food Policy Councils.

Toronto Food Policy Council: Formed in 1991, this group consists of a Health Board member, two Toronto City Council members, three members of farm and rural communities, two Toronto Youth Food Policy Council members and up to 22 citizen members representing diverse food sectors. Two examples of their achievements are: 'Buy Ontario' food program to increase hospital purchases of local foods, an initiative that supports local food producers; the group developed a feasibility study of a healthy food delivery system 'Field to Table' for Toronto's low-income citizens, providing affordable, nourishing, regionally-sourced food to 15,000 people each month.

Food Policy Councils are local committees that can drive and shape the strategies suggested in this toolkit.

What is a Food Policy Council?

Food Policy Councils bring people together to make recommendations, programmes and strategies that support positive change in the local, regional and national food system. Food Policy Councils provide a neutral place where people from all areas of the food system and government can meet, learn about what each does, and consider how their actions impact each other and the whole food environment. Food Policy Councils can go under many different names, for example, Local Food Network or Food Board.

Food Policy Councils:

- work to educate the public, shape public policy, and create new programmes
- have a local focus in order to support local growers and businesses and to connect the community with their produce and services
- have a vision and objectives that often formulate a charter that key change agents sign to direct the group's tasks
- care about their community's wellbeing and want to make food more available, fresh and affordable.

Who is on a Food Policy Council?

Membership of a Food Policy Council should cover representation from all areas that shape the local food system; production, consumption, processing, distribution, and waste, recycling and sustainability. It is important to have involvement from local government to understand what powers they do and do not have. A councillor and council staff member could be designated to be present at Food Policy Council meetings. Local government representation at meetings results in more productive and deeper commitments to food security. Support of the Health Board's Public Health Unit can be beneficial to connect the group with the health system and its networks, along with providing public health intelligence on an array of topics and their underlying determinants.

What does a Food Policy Council do?

A Food Policy Council uses the skills of it's members and the community to develop projects which support the community to be more connected to their local food and improve access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food (ie. food security). A report of a Committee of the Victorian Parliament in Australia concluded that a focus on local food can provide the following benefits:

- Plays a part in re-connecting consumers with food producers.
- Provides new market opportunities for farmers and small-scale food manufacturers.
- Strengthens social capital within communities.
- Provides a focus for local economic development.

Project opportunities are endless and can be simple and small or complex and long-term. Some examples include:

- Leading research projects, such as mapping where local food places are and where access to healthy food is limited (identifying food deserts by using Geographic Information Systems - GIS).
- Marketing a 'Buy Local' campaign.
- Supporting a food re-distribution programme where excess food is delivered to food relief centres.
- Making recommendations to local government to improve access to healthy food, community gardens and urban edible planting.
- Developing a rural food strategy to improve access to food for those living in rural areas.
- Developing an affordability strategy with food retailers.
- Maintaining a database of local markets, free produce and community gardens.
- Developing a local food website with all project information, meeting agendas and minutes accessible to the public.
- Advocating for legislative and policy changes.

Steps to starting a Food Policy Council

1. **Basic Information Gathering:** Identify the main laws and policies that impact on the local food system and establish whether these regulations are from local or central government. Build an understanding of where people source their food currently and the extent to which it could be sourced more locally; identify opportunities and gaps in the food system.
2. **Invite Members:** Create criteria for food system representation on the group. Think about who can and does influence the local food system. Invite people along to an inaugural meeting.
3. **Action Meetings:** Hold action-focused meetings that have positive outcomes for the community and food supply. Start with one project idea that draws on the knowledge and experience of the members. Advocate for changes that support local growers, distributers, retailers and the community and/or influence public policy and system changes.

Local Government (LG) potential roles in a Food Policy Council

1. LG could establish a Food Policy Council in your area (either per local Council district or collaborating with neighbouring districts).
2. LG could agree to have representation from both staff and elected Council members on the Food Policy Council.
3. LG could support the Food Policy Council (by hosting the meetings, providing a secretary for minutes etc).
4. LG could agree to actively support initiatives prioritised by the Food Policy Council.
5. LG could agree to engage the community before making decisions that affect the future food environment.
6. LG could provide or support access to GIS services.

2. Supporting Other Initiatives

Ingenuity and philanthropy can be used to enhance community mobilisation, advocacy and behaviour change. The goal of promoting food security has given rise to diverse and innovative Community Food Actions (CFAs). Some CFAs, such as food cooperatives, are directly concerned with improving the affordability of food.

Others try to build local community capacity to produce or prepare their own food, such as community gardens and kitchens. Others are concerned with higher level policies related to poverty reduction and/or support for local food economies. CFAs sometimes reflect divergent perspectives on the root cause of the problem of food insecurity and therefore where the solutions lie. Most reflect a commitment to working collaboratively with communities to find solutions that will make a difference.

A New Zealand example of a CFA is Kaibosh, a Wellington based food-rescue and re-distribution service that is partly funded and supported by the Wellington City Council. For more information on Kaibosh, see www.kaibosh.org.nz.

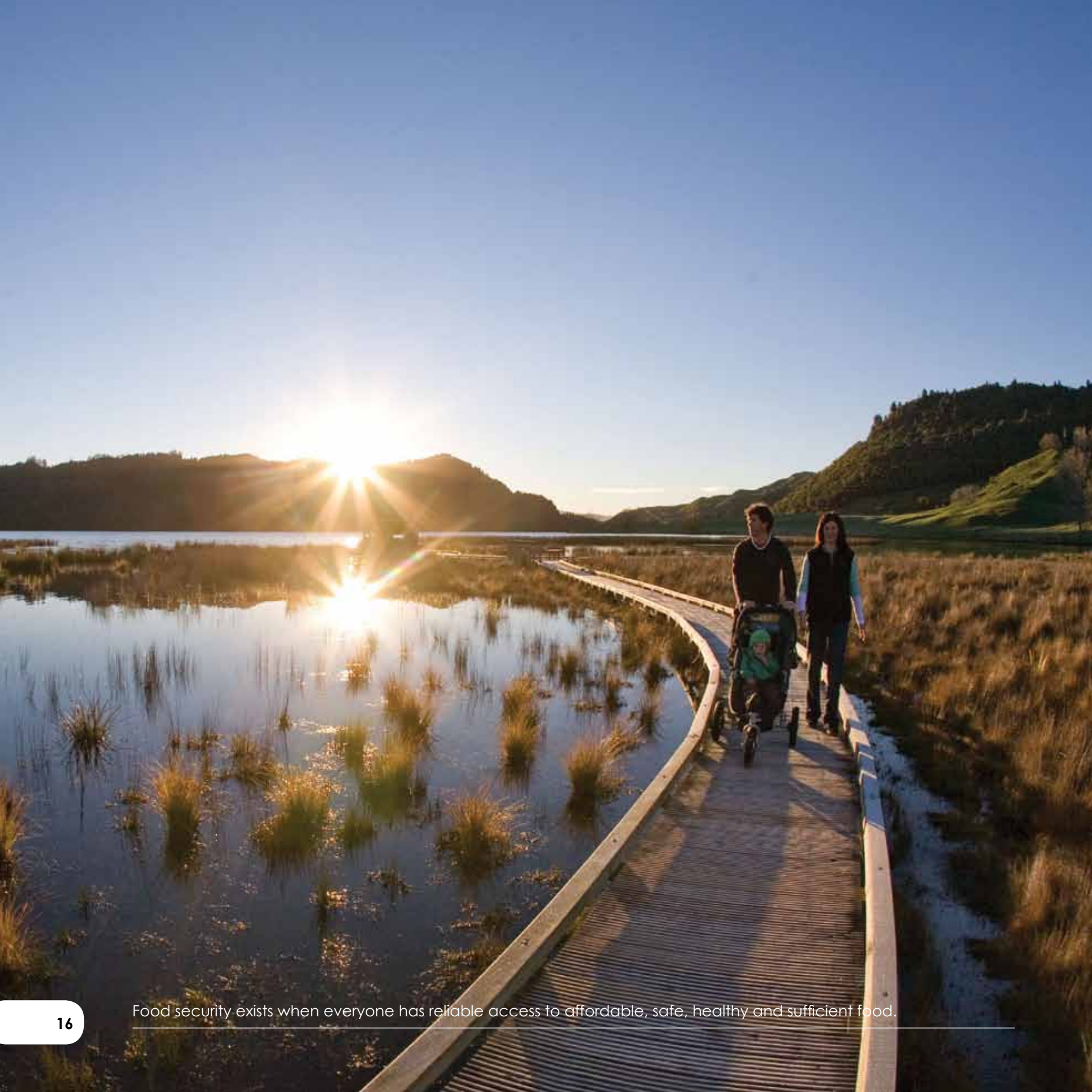
Strategies that aim to reduce healthy food pricing can support access for those on low incomes. This can be via cheaper foods sold at markets located in low socio-economic areas or by other projects targeting retailers.

Communities worldwide are starting up 'green gyms' where volunteers get together to work on environmental conservation through gardening and landscaping. This initiative inspires people at any level of fitness to improve their health and the environment at the same time. For more information on green gyms, see www.tcv.org.uk/greengym.

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service has facilitated a Waikato District Health Board project called 'Kai@ the Right Price' in Rotorua, Mangakino and Opotiki. Local stores who sell fruit and vegetables, prepare affordable fruit and vegetable packs that are sold directly to the community. Community members benefit from the convenience and reliability of receiving good quality fruit and vegetables for a good price. For more information on Kai@ the Right Price, see www.ttophs.govt.nz/kai.

Local Government (LG) and Food Policy Council (FPC) potential roles in supporting other initiatives:

1. LG could fund local initiatives and share information on other sources of funding.
2. LG and FPC could provide assistance with navigating relevant Council processes and opportunities.
3. LG could provide local initiatives with a letter of support to use with their funding applications.
4. LG or FPC could maintain a central database of relevant initiatives and make it available to the public.
5. LG could support the publicity of relevant initiatives with mayoral media appearances and promotion of events and services on the Council website and other communication mediums.
6. FPCs could invite representatives from relevant initiatives to be on their FPC.



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Community Capacity

Earlier in this toolkit it has been identified that some individuals and population groups are more vulnerable to food insecurity. Food relief and cost saving strategies should target these groups, such as Maori and Pacific Peoples and those with a low income. Population based strategies that build community resilience will help to ensure the community is empowered to respond to, and overcome, future food security challenges.

Improving Access to Healthy Food

Easily accessible and affordable healthy food is vital for a healthy community.

Emerging external factors at a global and national level will continue to impact on affordability and availability of food. This includes rising transport costs, declining profitability of farming and agriculture, extreme weather events and economic downturns. These impacts will be greater on those for whom the risk of food insecurity is already high.

Low income households are the hardest hit by price fluctuations. Living in neighbourhoods without public transport or the ability to walk to grocery stores means reliance on cars for food purchases. The rising cost of food and petrol impacts most on people with low incomes. Access to a car and food are related because the cheaper, healthier food outlets are often in regional shopping centres. Not having access to a car can restrict the ability to obtain food.

Local government can have an impact on their residents' access to healthy affordable food by providing and supporting infrastructure and public services such as public transport and cycle tracks, community gardens, markets, urban edible planting and green space allocation.

Access to adequate and nutritious food is a fundamental human right and was included in Article 25 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

Strategies

1. Community Food Gardens

Community gardens provide residents with the opportunity for recreational activity while growing nutritious food, meeting neighbours, building community spirit, learning about the growing cycle, and beautifying open spaces.

Community gardens can be set up on Council owned land, privately owned land, schools, workplaces, marae or donated land.

Community gardens can have better social wellbeing outcomes than personal gardens due to the nature of shared skill building, pooling of resources, land allocation, community connectedness and greater year-round fruit and vegetable harvesting. Gardens are fantastic places to meet other people. Community gardens can also give residents the skills to have a backyard garden, which further supports the financial and social wellbeing of the population. Skill building opportunities can increase a person's employability or confidence to obtain qualifications. Unused land can be transformed into a beautiful, sustainable and productive land space.

The Ministry of Justice's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) National Guidelines for Local Government state that one of the seven qualities that characterise well-designed safer places is to "have a good sense of ownership and showing a space is well cared for".

A perceived downside of a community garden is the risk of produce theft or vandalisng of the space. Merivale Community Garden coordinator, Deb McCarthy has not experienced garden vandalism or theft from their communal style gardens in Tauranga. Community gardens can improve a community's sense of pride for their local space and be an integral component of a wider plan to reduce crime in a neighbourhood.

Community gardens are an asset to any community. The gardens can also help reduce household waste by using composting systems.

Many local Councils have a community gardens policy to show their commitment to land allocation, support, management and maintenance of gardens. A community gardens policy clearly shows the Council's stance on community gardens and recognition of the importance for residents to grow their own food, even in urban settings.

Community gardens are small scale, neighbourhood gardening ventures, where the primary purpose is growing vegetables and fruit.

A policy can outline to the community garden management group what a Council's expectations are of them and possible risks that they can plan to manage. Council can assist the management group to find a suitable space for the garden site and assist in identification of any potential problems for the receiving environment, such as the presence of sewerage pipes, safety in accessing the site, neighbourhood support and odour. The fact sheet in appendix 5 outlines the variations between different types of community gardens. This could be a useful guide as part of the community garden land proposal process.

A sample community gardens policy has been included in appendix 1, page 41.

Key features of a community gardens policy:

- Define the Council's assessment and submission criteria for proposals for community gardens.
- Define the Council's role as an enabler, supporter, funder or provider.
- State the Council's commitment to in allocate public land for community gardens.
- State terms of land use (tenure by licence, lease, fixed term, termination conditions etc.).
- List relevant delegations and legislation- Reserves Act 1977, Local Government Act 2002.

Council could also provide the community garden management group with a fact sheet on the benefits and downsides of different garden set up styles (eg. allotment, rental plot, communal, vocational, therapy), a sample fact sheet is available in appendix 5.

Local Government (LG) and Food Policy Council (FPC) potential roles in community gardens:

1. LG could adopt a community gardens policy (sample policy in appendix 1, page 41)
2. LG and FPC could advocate for new, and promote existing, community gardens in Council communication mediums (eg. website, newsletters)
3. Regional Council could ensure public transport links with community gardens.
4. LG could incorporate safe walking and cycling paths to and around community gardens in Council plans.
5. LG could support community garden management groups with finding a suitable site and assistance with funding and other applications
6. FPCs and LG could support the community management group by providing a garden set up guide and other relevant information.
7. FPCs could develop and submit their position of support for community gardens and advocate for a Council community gardens policy.
8. FPC and LG to use networks to collaborate health and social service providers with community gardens who wish to offer their space as a therapy tool.

2. Green Spaces

Having access to green spaces increases physical activity and improves mental health and wellbeing. Having greater access to green spaces is associated with a decrease in health complaints, blood pressure and cholesterol, improved mental health and reduced stress levels, perceived better general health and the ability to face problems.

Urban design has a large influence on the health and wellbeing of the community. The New Zealand population is ageing. The way we design our communities must change to anticipate and meet the needs of tomorrow's community. Good urban design can result in well-functioning compact cities, which can have sustainable and positive effects on health and well-being eg. cycling and walking. Good design will preserve green spaces alongside residential intensification and urban growth. This will protect gardening and physical activity opportunities that green spaces can provide. Local Government needs to ensure that green spaces are preserved whilst urbanisation and growth occurs.

> **"Good design is a key requirement for a development to produce economic and social benefits. This includes considering social wellbeing when planning subdivisions, towns, cities and public spaces and ensure developments reflect the people who live there."**
>
> *(SmartGrowth Western Bay of Plenty Update, 2012)*

Local Government has the ability to support opportunities for people to grow their own fruit and vegetables in community gardens and roof top gardens.

LG and FPC potential roles in protecting green spaces:

1. Set a target for walkable access between living spaces and green spaces in any urban growth strategy (eg. 100m or 5 mins walk) or include guidelines in District Plans.
2. Ensure accessible green space is included as a mandatory criterion of any apartment building application.
3. LG could encourage rooftop gardens in multi-level developments.
4. FPC could develop and submit their position of support for green spaces to local government.
5. FPC could become familiar with current district or city plan rules are relation to green spaces.

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3. Farmers' Markets

Farmers markets are a great opportunity for local growers to sell their produce, while simultaneously offering access and possibly affordability of produce to the community. Farmers' markets are characterised by three main aspects: they sell only food, the food is produced locally and the vendor is involved with the growing or production process of the food being sold. Farmers' markets have been referred to as 'business incubators' and are a great way to stimulate local economy and support new business ventures and entrepreneurship.

LG and FPC potential roles in farmers' markets:

1. LG could provide contacts and support for farmers' market coordinators to meet compliance requirements eg. traffic management and food safety.
2. LG could offer council owned land or venues to host farmers' markets.
3. Regional Council could offer public transport links with farmers' markets.
4. LG and FPC could promote farmers' markets through their communication mediums
5. FPC could invite representatives from relevant initiatives to be members on their FPC.

4. Urban Edible Planting

Urban edible planting refers to planting fruit trees and vegetables in spaces where the community can access it free. These may be planted by residents, local government staff, or contractors on public (Council owned or managed) or donated private land. There are many national and international examples where residents have utilised their street space to plant fruit bearing trees, or fill otherwise derelict areas with vegetables. Edible planting can improve the aesthetics of an area as well as providing free food as a public service.

Urban edible planting or community orchards can contribute significantly to the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables direct to the community. This supports the sustainability of the environment, connection of community members, counteracting green-space decline with urbanisation and makes the town a desirable, great place to live.

The process of obtaining Council approval for urban planting on council owned land (eg. within a residential area) should be simple, common practice and positive. Councils could develop an urban edible planting policy along with accompanying application and permission processes (sample in appendix 2).

Some New Zealand Councils have 'planting days' for their parks, which traditionally involve planting non-fruit trees for the health of the environment or to offset the Council's carbon emissions. Switching to planting fruit trees improves both the environment and the health of its people.

Local government can also commit to planting fruit trees and vegetables where they would usually plant flowers and non-fruiting trees. This used to be common practice in the past. Parks and reserves managers can include managing fruit trees and vegetable plants, without increasing their departmental workload. Commonly used spaces such as parks and playgrounds, carpark gardens and beside residential footpaths are good places to plant fruit trees and vegetable plants.

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It is important to promote and inform the community on where they can access free fruit and vegetables on Council land. Signs can be erected at the planting site to indicate what time of the year the produce is ripe or ready to collect. Signage should offer pictures for children and residents with low literacy to take part. Some places in New Zealand have a dedicated google map where community members can share where free food plants can be accessed and when they should be in season to be collected (often called food foraging). Similar information could be posted on the Council's website.

Fruit trees provide shelter, food and help beautify spaces. Playgrounds are a great place to offer children a free and healthy snack while playing.

There is a perception that if fruit is left unpicked and falls on the ground it can be messy. Findings from some Councils show that if the community is aware of where and when they can pick the fruit, there is little mess left around the tree. Councils can trial a few fruit trees in prominent places to start with to measure success of supplying fruit to the community. Another potential issue is around attracting pests, tree pruning, fencing and netting can discourage pests.

An urban edible planting policy can assist both the Council and the community to understand the process for planting fruit trees and edible plants on Council owned land. This policy can highlight the need to consider the receiving environment, and the management of the plants in the future.

A sample urban edible planting policy has been included in appendix 2.

Key features of an urban edible planting policy:

- Outline the Council's level of support towards urban edible planting by residents and community groups.
- Outline the Council's involvement in urban edible planting eg. funder and manager for parks and reserves, enabler for residential areas.
- State the Council's position on edible and non-edible urban planting.
- Encourage community participation (signage) and management.
- Outline application process.
- State terms of land use.
- List relevant delegations and legislation.

LG and FPC potential roles with Urban Edible Planting:

1. LG could have an urban edible planting policy and proposal process.
2. LG could fund and provide signage for display on and around plants and trees.
3. LG could actively promote and advertise plant locations to the community.
4. LG could include urban edible planting in plans and other relevant policies.
5. Regional Council could ensure good public transport links with food plants.
6. FPC could develop and submit their position of support for urban edible planting.

5. Community Kitchens

Community kitchens are a means of providing a welcoming place for easier access to healthier affordable food, cooking skills and social connections. Community kitchens can offer programmes where small groups of people meet regularly to buy food in bulk at lower cost per person, learn to cook and prepare meals together.

Benefits of community kitchens can include:

- The better use of limited finances by bulk buying.
- Reduced food waste.
- More food variety.
- Increased fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Increased food safety practices.
- More nutrient value per dollar spent.
- Reduced reliance on food banks and grants.
- Increased cooking skills and use of staple foods.
- Increased label reading, meal planning, combined bulk food purchasing and nutritional knowledge.
- Reduced isolation.
- Improved mental health including self esteem.
- Community empowerment.
- Targeting of disadvantaged population groups.

Limitations of community kitchens can include:

- Transport difficulties to access a central kitchen.
- Attaining subsidies for those in extreme poverty.
- Costs of setting up kitchen.

A study on community kitchens showed that participants need to utilise the kitchen for at least 5% of meals to make any effect on food security. Those who used the kitchen for 25% of meals had the greatest effect on their food security (Engler-Stringer and Berenbaum, 2007).

Community kitchens could be run out of community centres. However, most community centre kitchens are too small and are not suitable for teaching cooking skills to groups. Councils can support community kitchens by building large kitchens in new community centres or upgrading existing kitchens to have more space for teaching groups, larger bench space and multiple ovens and hobs.

LG and FPC potential roles with community kitchens:

1. LG could advocate to Regional Council to improve or create public transport links to community kitchens.
2. LG could subsidise community kitchens to support those with greatest need.
3. LG could financially support the set-up of a kitchen (seed funding) or improvements of an existing space to accommodate a community kitchen.
4. LG could consider building a community kitchen (or upgrading a community centre kitchen).
5. LG could promote established community kitchens.
6. FPC could advocate for community kitchens and offer support to those interested in coordinating one.

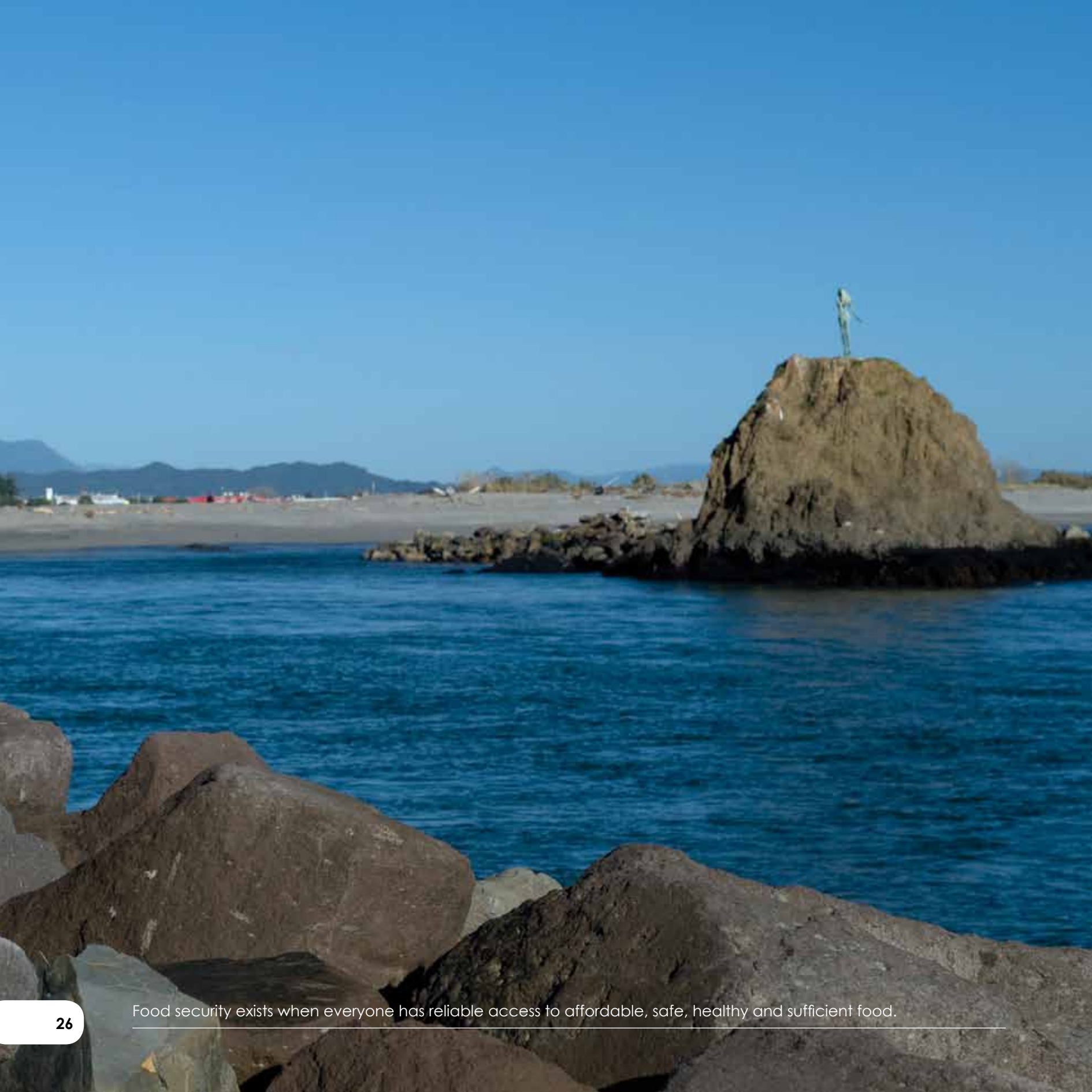
Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

6. Community Skill Building

Free or subsidised workshops that teach community members how to cook or grow food improves the skills and knowledge of the community. Backyard gardens and cooking skills have been shown to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and improve overall nutrition and food choices. Workshops that have been run by other Councils include topics such as; planting backyard gardens, potted gardens, composting, preserving food, seed saving, building 'no dig' garden beds, healthy food cooking demonstrations, food choice and shopping skills.

LG and FPC potential roles with community skill building:

1. LG could host, financially support or promote existing community initiatives.
2. LG could partner with learning institutions and community groups to develop and host workshops.
3. FPC could advocate for workshop development.



Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

Supportive Environments

Working across a range of Local Government activities can assist in creating supportive environments at a population level. This integrated approach addresses the determinants or root causes of food insecurity and supports individuals to make healthy food choices. It also supports the ability of local government to effectively respond to the future impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on community food security. Integrating food security into local government policy and planning is vital to ensure food security is firmly on the local government agenda and seen as a legitimate area for action. This process ensures that food security is dealt with systematically and proactively over the long term rather than opportunistically and reactively over the short term. Integration helps to get food security accepted as an issue of relevance to all local government activity across business development, infrastructure, land use planning, environmental sustainability and public services. Once food security is embedded in major policy and planning documents it becomes subject to reporting, action planning and assessment, helping to protect its status as an important area of investment.

The local government policy or plan doesn't need to explicitly state the term 'food security'. It can be mentioned as a commitment to increasing access to nutritious affordable food, promoting home grown and local food production, support for implementing healthy eating programs and policies, or ensuring unrestricted access to healthy food.

A food policy can include by-laws and guidelines for 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' food stores.
In New Zealand Councils are just starting to grapple with the issue of the abundance of fast food outlets (FFO) and the effect that fast foods can have on displacing healthy food in a diet. In some countries local government has significant legal powers to regulate FFOs. Reference to such an approach is included in the 'looking forward' section on page 37.

Improving the Food Environment

The food environment can be influenced by the marketing of a store and food brands, food prices, quality, seasonal variations of food and the convenient location of healthy food close to home, work or school.

Having easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables increases their consumption, particularly in lower socio-economic suburbs where personal transport is often more of a challenge.

Strategies

1. Food Environment Research

It is important that Council and community groups have a clear understanding of where the highest needs are for food security work. Research into the physical, social and cultural food environment can be a good starting point for both the Food Policy Council and the Council.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping can be used to highlight where access to food is poor across a district. Maps can point out 'food deserts' i.e. where access to healthy food is scarce (see info box).

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

A **food desert** is an area with little or no access to large grocery stores that offer a variety of fresh and affordable foods needed to maintain a healthy diet. These deserts may contain fast food restaurants, convenience stores or no food stores.

'Access', in this context, may be interpreted in three ways:

1. Physical access to shops: Healthy options are unavailable or restricted in some way ie. if the shops are distant, the shopper is elderly or infirm, the area has many hills, public transport links are poor, or the consumer has no car.
2. Financial access: ie. if the consumer lacks the money to buy healthy foods or to pay the bus fare to get to shops selling fresh foods.
3. Knowledge or behaviours around nutrition choices and food preparation can be major barriers limiting access to fresh produce and other healthy food choices. Consumers may lack cooking knowledge or think that eating a healthy diet is not important.

Although it is difficult to make causal links between malnutrition in food deserts and health issues, the American Journal of Preventive Medicine states that the highest rates of obesity (32-40%) are in areas with no large supermarkets, while the lowest rates (21%) are among people living near supermarkets.

Local Government (LG) and Food Policy Councils (FPC) potential roles in research on the food environment:

1. LG could advocate for food environment research in their district.
2. LG could utilise contacts for GIS services (eg. BOPLASS).
3. LG could include food environment research in its planning.
4. FPC could conduct research.

2. Proximity and Density of Healthy Food Stores

To modify the obesogenic (obesity promoting) environment, local government can support healthy food purchasing opportunities; to make the "healthy choice the easy choice". The goal is to create a supportive environment with convenient access to attractive healthy food. Furthermore, local government can facilitate improved access to healthy food in areas of deprivation.

Supermarkets tend to offer healthier food at lower prices than other food outlets, and people living in neighbourhoods with supermarkets have been found to consume more fruits and vegetables.

Council can adopt a Food Security Policy that supports healthy food sales (sample policy in appendix 3).

Components of a Food Security Policy:

- Increase the number and frequency of fresh food markets, through land use permission and removal of any fees and charges.
- Encourage healthy food stores and fresh food markets particularly in low-socioeconomic areas.
- Actively promote fresh food markets on the council website and other communication mediums.

LG and FPC potential roles in promoting healthy food stores.

1. LG could include strategies that improve access to healthy food in their planning processes.
2. LG could develop a food security policy or policy statement.
3. FPC could develop and submit their goals and vision for a local food security policy to local government.

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

Advocacy

Not all barriers to food security are in the direct scope and influence of local government. Some require action from central government and other key stakeholders. All levels of government have a role to play in addressing barriers to food security. Advocacy is an important component to promote whole of system change.

Commitment to Creating a Food Secure District

Local government, community organisations and Food Policy Councils can make commitments to improving access to affordable, healthy, safe and nutritious food by establishing a food security policy or by being a signatory of a regional food charter, (sample policy and charter in appendix 3 and 4).

Strategies

1. Food Security Policy

Local government can adopt a food security policy to demonstrate their commitment to their district's health and wellbeing. A sample food security policy is available in appendix 3.

This diagram demonstrates the four spheres of influence local government can have in addressing food security. Each sphere could be included in a food security policy.

Local government can highlight their commitment to improving food security through supporting strategies listed previously in this toolkit. A food security policy would be an overarching policy that shows local government's support for this community issue.

Local Government (LG) and Food Policy Council (FPC) potential roles with a food security policy:

1. LG could adopt a Food Security Policy.
2. FPC could advocate for a regional strategy, policy and plans that collaboratively address food security.

2. Food Charter

A charter outlines values, principles and priorities.

A few pioneering cities and towns around the world have realised that food can be one of the most powerful drivers of positive social, economic and environmental change. These cities are promoting healthy and sustainable food as a key part of their efforts to improve people's lives whilst also protecting the planet.

Some cities and towns have adopted a food charter to enable partnerships of public, private and community organisations. A food charter can describe how groups can work together to use food as a vehicle for positive change. The charter can provide a focal point around which these partnerships can grow over time. Food Policy Councils often drive the development of a charter to gain commitment and support from other sectors towards their vision. A sample charter is available in appendix 4.

LG and FPC potential roles in a Food Charter:

1. LG could be a signatory on a food charter.
2. FPC could advocate for and possibly develop a locally driven food charter.

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

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Looking Forward

Modern day life is faster paced than it used to be, and much of today's food is consumed outside of the home. Food is necessary to live and is central to health. Food companies have significant influence over what people eat, contributing to a stark irony:

One billion people on the planet are hungry while two billion are obese or overweight.

The outcome of too many (density) and too convenient (proximity) fast-food and takeaway outlets is over consumption of unhealthy foods leading to obesity and a multitude of health related complications.

The 2011/12 New Zealand Health Survey found 28% of adults are obese and the figures are increasing for children. An overweight and unhealthy population is a large burden on towns and communities, not just the health system. Adults who are overweight and obese are more likely be unemployed and have reduced rates of participation in society. Strategies that prevent children becoming obese are a good move towards creating a healthy future for our district and community.

One approach is to use bylaws to limit the number and location of fast food outlets (FFOs). According to the Local Government Act, the grounds for creating a bylaw is the ability to prove negative effects on public health. Although research can clearly suggest a strong correlation between FFOs and negative effects on public health, regulating types of retail stores within a designated retail zone has not been tested in New Zealand. Thus, this topic is visionary and should not over shadow the previous, tested and successful strategies detailed in this toolkit.

Proximity and Density of Fast Food Outlets

Studies have indicated a link between consumption of food and drink from FFOs and greater likelihood of obesity. The mix of shops in deprived areas tends to be weighted towards FFOs, making it harder to access healthy food, particularly fresh produce. Partly as a consequence of this and the potential for food deserts to be created (areas of poor access to healthy food stores), low income groups are more likely to have inadequate diets and poor nutrition than higher income groups.

Research suggests that low income neighbourhoods have disproportionately higher concentrations of FFOs. In New Zealand, people from high deprivation areas purchase more takeaways than people from lower deprivation areas. One of the reasons for this could be the higher density of FFOs in areas of higher deprivation.

These findings highlight the importance of considering all aspects of the food environment (healthy and unhealthy) when developing environmental strategies to address the obesity epidemic. Internationally cities and towns are standing up for the health of their residents through various policy approaches. Local government can restrict the number of FFOs per population by creating a cap of FFOs per capita, similar to the way local governments can cap gambling and alcohol outlets.

Young people are our future leaders. It is imperative that they grow up in healthy environments with good role modelling so they can reach their true potential and live long healthy lives. Having FFOs near schools and other places children frequent increases their likelihood of becoming overweight and developing poor eating habits. Policy interventions limiting the proximity of FFOs to schools could help reduce adolescent obesity.

Teenagers whose schools are within 160 metres of a FFO are more likely to be obese than those whose schools are further away. Local government can support the health and wellbeing of the community by restricting of the number and location of FFOs, particularly in sensitive land use zones such as schools and hospitals.

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

In New Zealand 20.4% of young people eat takeaway foods more than once per week. This confirms that young people are not eating takeaways as an occasional 'treat' but as part of their day-to-day diet. FFOs advertising 'value' menu items encourages higher levels of consumption, exchanging today's low prices with tomorrow's risk of heart disease or diabetes. Local government could consider restrictions on the advertising of fast foods and FFOs .

The fast food industry contributes to a host of environmental and economic problems. Fast food chains often make it difficult for existing local businesses to thrive. By halting the growth of FFOs in towns, local government can protect local businesses and their employees.

Local government can research levels of community knowledge and viewpoints around FFOs and advocate for system change and support by central government.

Components to be included in future Food Policy:

- Regulate a set minimum distance (eg. 200m) between schools and new FFOs.
- Create 'healthy food zones' around schools, childcare centres or other facilities.
- Limit the number of FFOs in any neighbourhood.
- Restrict new FFO proximity to one another (eg. 1 km)
- Apply restrictions to location/hours of operation of FFOs.
- Restrict new FFOs with a drive-through service (reduce traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety).
- Apply restrictions to the street-side marketing of FFOs.

Food security exists when everyone has reliable access to affordable, safe, healthy and sufficient food.

Appendix

The following policies are templates that can be adapted to meet council needs. Words marked in [brackets] can be exchanged with the relevant word indicated. The policies are available on the CD located in the back cover, or on www.ttophs.govt.nz.

1. Sample Community Gardens Policy

1.0 Background

Local government is an integral part of the community. In discharging its role of enabling local decision making and action by, and on behalf of, communities, local government needs to provide adequate opportunities to assist the community to achieve its desired outcomes.

Community gardens provide an opportunity for recreation, localised food production, skill development, social interaction and sustainable land use.

2.0 Purpose of Policy

1. To promote the value of community gardens as a public amenity.
2. To make public open space available for community gardens throughout the district.
3. To establish local government's role as an [enabler, supporter, provider, funder] of new and existing community gardens.
4. To outline criteria for assessing proposals to run community gardens on local government owned or administered land.

3.0 Definitions

Community garden: Small scale, low investment, neighbourhood communal gardening ventures, where the primary purpose is growing vegetables or fruit for personal use. Community gardens may have an explicit gardening philosophy (ie. organic), they may be treated as one communal garden or they may allow participants with individual plots to manage each plot as they see fit.

Management Group: charitable trust, charitable entity, incorporated society or community garden management group.

Tenure: The length of time for which a lease or licence is held.

Public Open Space: [Council] owned or administered land available to the public for their recreational, cultural, conservational and leisure purposes.

4.0 Policy Statement

4.1 Purpose of Community Gardens

From [Council's] point of view, the following are the main objectives which will be taken into account when considering a community garden proposal.

1. Assist families to grow their own produce.
2. Provide opportunities for outdoor community education about gardening and waste management.
3. Provide opportunities to foster social wellbeing through community interaction.

4. Establish opportunities for local residents to feel proud of their community and environment.
5. Provide options for those members of the community with insufficient private open space to have their own fruit and vegetable gardens.
6. Operation is by the community for the production of produce for the community.

4.2 Establishment of Community Gardens

4.2.1 Community gardens must be established by a management group. [Council] will not lease or licence land for a community garden to an individual.

4.2.2 Where a community group can establish a management group to run a community garden and where a suitable site can be found, [Council] will make public land available for community gardens, subject to the criteria and process outlined in this policy.

4.2.3 Prior to a community garden being established,

- A management group must submit a written proposal as per proposal guide and subject to item 5.0.
- [Council Staff] will assess the proposal on a case-by-case basis in accordance with item 5.0
- [Council] must approve the proposal, unless it is already delegated in the 'relevant delegations' item 8.0.
- Public notification or consultation required under the Reserves Act 1977, the Local Government Act 2002 or any other relevant legislation has been completed.
- The licence or lease has been signed by [Council] delegated representative and the management group.

4.3 Funding

It is the responsibility of the management group to secure funding for its community garden start up and maintenance costs. The management group is entitled to apply for any relevant funding opportunities [Council] may offer.

The management group should ensure that produce is not sold for profit. The key purpose is to grow produce for personal use of the volunteers and community. Produce can only be sold to fund gardening activities.

4.4 Fees

Local government recognises the social return on investment that community gardens produce. Therefore lease and licence fees will be waived if the proposal meets the criteria outlined in item 5.0.

4.5 General Conditions of Occupation

4.5.1 Tenure will be for a period of up to [five] years. Extensions beyond this period will require approval via the process outlined in items 5.0 and 6.0 of this policy.

4.5.2 Maintenance of the community garden and any improvements made to the site will be the responsibility of the management group and will be maintained to the satisfaction of [parks manager].

4.5.3 Upon the garden's disestablishment and the conclusion of the lease period, the management group will return the land to its original state or to the satisfaction of [parks manager].

4.6 Public Open Space Values

4.6.1 [Council] will seek to maintain the public use and open space values of any land used for a community garden.

4.6.2 Community gardens will be located to minimise potential conflict with other uses and users.

4.7 Public Access

As a general principle, where possible, public access will be encouraged. The management group should encourage community volunteers and an open membership. However management reserve the right to limit membership size based on the size of the site.

4.8 Council Responsibilities

[Council] will make public open space available for community gardens to be established on, subject to the terms of a licence-to-occupy.

[Council] will act as an [enabler and supporter] of community garden initiatives.

[Council] will undertake the following roles:

- Encourage partnerships with other community organisations and relevant committees.
- Promote and raise awareness of community gardening on the [Council] website and local media.
- Maintain a contact database for all community gardens and notify representatives when there are planned works that may affect the community garden operation.
- Maintain and encourage the public access and public open space values.
- Support the management group to identify an appropriate public open space and assistance when compiling a proposal (considering the receiving environment as per 5.3).
- Assess proposals to establish community gardens according to items 5.0 and 6.0.

4.9 Community Garden Management Group Responsibilities

A group wishing to establish a community garden on public open space is responsible for any day-to-day management of the garden, including the following:

- Agree with [Council] on the layout, access and other conditions of the licence-to-occupy for a community garden.
- Undertake consultation with neighbours to determine how the community garden and the neighbourhood can benefit and support each other.
- Comply with requirements of the licence-to-occupy including financial obligations and compliance with [Council] regulations including the District Plan [other relevant policies to be named], all policies and bylaws.
- Comply with legislation including, but not limited to, Hazardous Substances and Health and Safety.
- Manage and operate the community garden according to a user agreement with members.
- If a plot style garden is applicable, ensure that plots are allocated to members of the local community through a fair and transparent application process.
- Ensure gardens are maintained to a minimum standard and are fully utilised year round, not just on seasonal basis.

- Ensure produce is not sold for a profit. Any sales may cover gardening expenses. Priority for produce distribution should be given to the members and the local community. Surplus produce can be donated to local charitable organisations.
- Provide education and learning opportunities for garden users and the wider community.
- Ensure the site is returned to its original condition on disestablishment of the community garden or termination of the lease.
- Explore opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders in the community.
- Maintain contact with [Council] during lease period.

5.0 Requirements for Community Gardens Proposal

[A proposal guide on the establishment of community gardens on public open space will be accessible via the Council website or building]. Proposals will be assessed according to the following items:

5.1 Purpose and Need Identification

- Purpose of the proposed garden.
- Benefit of the garden to the local area and community including who will benefit from the produce.
- Opportunities for links and synergies with community organisations such as schools, church groups or volunteers.
- Discussion of innovative techniques proposed for the community gardens that demonstrate environmental sustainability (organic, composting etc.).
- Discussion on how members and volunteers will be recruited and how local community members will benefit (eg. food security, recreation, green space access, water conservation etc.).
- A map or aerial photograph showing the proposed extent of the community garden and any proposed locations for structures and storage.
- An analysis of how the community gardens will complement the values of the surrounding public open space including effects on reserve users and neighbours and how adverse effects will be mitigated.

5.2 Management Group

Information on how the management group will be structured and operated including:

- Proposed legal and organisational structure.
- Requirements from [Council].
- Objectives of the management group and information to demonstrate that the group is viable.
- Identification of a liaison person.
- Skills and competencies of the management group.
- Processes for decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, training and induction of new members.
- Budget, sources of funding and timeline for startup and maintenance.
- Hours of operation.
- A management plan that covering:
  - Organisational meetings and requirements.
  - Proposed gardening techniques.
  - Mowing and maintenance.
  - Weed and pest control principles.
  - Management of vandalism, security and safety.
  - Composting.
  - Health and safety, public liability.
  - Details of any proposed structures or buildings.

- Signage.
- Management and containment of noise and odour.
- Storage.

5.3 Consideration of the Receiving Environment

The receiving environment covers the physical, natural, social, cultural and policy environments that influence the proposed garden site. The following factors to consider are:

- Whether the natural and physical characteristics of the proposal are conducive to successful community gardening. These include aspect, topography, soils and soil toxicity, the presence of other vegetation, exposure/shelter and flooding potential.
- How health and safety issues, such as poor access or lighting, steep or eroded banks, unfenced watercourses or previously contaminated sites or landfills, will be addressed.
- Whether the location allows good access to the site for community groups or individuals.
- Whether the location has good access to site infrastructure such as water, drainage and transport.
- The presence or proximity of significant natural, cultural or heritage sites, which may be protected through the District Plan or the Historic Places Register.
- The site's compliance with any regulations or development controls, including the site's zoning, classification and management plans prepared under the Reserves Act 1977, where applicable.
- Whether the proposed community garden would enhance the social amenities and economic wellbeing of the neighbourhood, and whether or not it will be supported and used by nearby residents.
- How the proposal fits with relevant legislation, [Council] policies, strategies and plans.
- Whether the space is suitable for other uses.
- Potential conflict with adjoining land uses.
- Consideration of the views of affected parties including neighbours.

6.0 Assessment of Proposals for Community Gardens

Proposals will be assessed by [an assessment panel] to ensure consistency with the policy.

A community garden proposal must be submitted by a management group who will assume responsibility for the on-going management of the community garden.

Proposals will be assessed [eg. 2] times per year [state assessment months].

It is expected that the management group will submit a proposal based on section 5.0 [and the proposal template which can be accessed on the Councils website or building].

7.0 Lease or Licence Arrangement

7.1 Terms of the lease or licence

A licence-to-occupy (LTO) or lease will be agreed between [Council] and the management group. The agreement will outline all conditions of the use of the public open space for the community garden as outlined in the proposal. The agreement will include the

following conditions:

- The term of the LTO or lease [eg. 5 years].
- Opportunities for renewing the LTO and a maximum number of renewals (if applicable).
- If there is a maximum tenure.
- An obligation of the management group to return the land to its original condition, or an agreed condition with [Council], at the termination of the lease or LTO.

7.2 Termination of agreement

A lease or LTO can be terminated by [Council] at any time if the conditions of the agreement are not met or if the land on which the community garden is required for a strategic or operational purpose identified by [Council]. In this instance [Council] will give the management group sufficient notice [specify period] and support relocation to another suitable public open space.

8.0 Relevant Delegations

The implementation of this policy is delegated to the [Chief Executive and his/her delegate].

The assessment of proposals to establish community gardens will be undertaken by [a panel of staff appointed by the Chief Executive and one elected member]

9.0 References

Local Government Act 2002
Reserves Act 1977
[relevant policies]

2. Sample Urban Edible Planting Policy

1.0 Background

Local government is an integral part of the community. In discharging its role of enabling local decision making and action by, and on behalf of, communities [Council] needs to provide adequate opportunities to assist the community to achieve its desired outcomes.

Planting fruit and vegetables in public spaces that would usually house flowering plants and non-fruiting trees, or are otherwise delinquent or bare spaces, can provide an opportunity for localised food production, town beautification, and sustainable land use.

2.0 Purpose of Policy

1. To recognise the value of urban edible planting as providing a service to residents and visitors.
2. To encourage contracted or [Council] staff to plant fruit and vegetable plants in current gardened spaces or allow the public to plant produce throughout the district.
3. To establish [Council] role as an [enabler, supporter, provider, funder] of new and existing planting.
4. Outline criteria for assessing proposals from residents wishing to plant fruit trees or vegetable plants on [Council] owned or administered land.

3.0 Definitions:

Urban Edible Planting: Planting of fruit and vegetable plants in the town's district for the community and residents to access.

4.0 Policy Statement

4.1 Purpose of Urban Edible Planting

1. Assist local families and residents to have free and available access to seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables.
2. Provide opportunities for outdoor community education about gardening, fruit and vegetables and waste management.
3. Provide opportunities to foster social wellbeing through community interaction.
4. Town beautification which creates opportunities for local people to be proud of their town as well as providing a visitor attraction.
5. Provide options for those members of the community with insufficient private open space to have their own fruit and vegetables gardens.
6. Edible planting is done within current [Council] gardening capacity by including edible plants in planting and maintenance schedule.
7. Edible planting proposals can be received from community members to plant in [Council] owned spaces.

4.2 Funding

Adopting an urban edible planting policy will be cost neutral for Council. Fruit trees and vines shall be included in purchasing patterns along with non-fruit bearing trees and similarily vegetables will be purchased and planted as well as flowering plants.

4.3 Fees

[Council] recognises the social return on investment that improving access to fruit and vegetables produce. Therefore any fees will be waived if a residents' planting proposal meets the criteria outlined.

4.4 Public Open Space Values

4.4.1 [Council] will maintain public use and open space values of any land used for urban edible planting.

4.4.2 [Council] will ensure that edible plants within public open space are accessible for the community. Edible plants will be located to minimise potential conflict with other uses and users e.g. tree roots not to uplift concrete or damage plumbing.

4.5 Public Access

As a general principle public access will be encouraged. Signage and gathering/picking instructions should accompany planting sites in order to promote community uptake of the produce.

4.6 Local Government Responsibilities

[Council] will support, when reasonable, residents when they wish to improve residential areas with edible planting.

[Council] will act as both an [enabler and supporter] and an [implementer and maintainer] of urban edible planting initiatives. [Council] will undertake the following roles:

- Planting fruit and vegetables instead of flowers and non-fruiting trees where appropriate.
- Promote and raise awareness of edible plant locations on the [Council] website and local media.
- Encourage public access to the produce and public open space values.
- Support residents to identify an appropriate public open space and provide assistance when compiling a proposal if necessary (considering the receiving environment).
- Assess proposals for planting according to item 5.0.

5.0 Submitting a Proposal for Urban Edible Planting

5.1 Proposals should include details on the following:

- What the person is wishing to plant (specify plant species) and where (reference on a map is preferred).
- Access to the produce for community groups or individuals.
- The presence or proximity of significant natural, cultural or heritage sites which may be protected through the District Plan or the Historic Places Register.
- Whether the proposed planting will be supported and used by nearby residents.
- Whether the planting will be self-sustained or managed.
- The suitability of the space (consider tree roots).
- Potential conflict with adjoining land uses.

5.2 Assessment of a Proposal for Urban Edible Planting

- Proposals will be assessed by [Council staff position title].
- The proposal must be submitted by a group or individual who will assume responsibility for the on-going management of the planting.
- Proposals will be assessed [eg. 2] times per year [state assessment months] or when they are received and processed within [x] weeks.

6.0 Relevant Delegations

The implementation of this policy is delegated to the [Chief Executive and his/her delegate].

7.0 References

Local Government Act 2002
Reserves Act 1977
[relevant policies]

3. Sample Food Security Policy

Policy Vision

To create, sustain and protect the [Districts] social, economic, cultural and physical environments to promote access to safe, culturally appropriate and nutritionally adequate food for all.

Policy Assumptions

The Policy aims to address the negative impacts of food insecurity and is underpinned by key assumptions:

1. There is a solid evidence base identifying the current prevalence and causes of food insecurity in this community. The strategies in the policy have been designed to address barriers to food access.

2. A lack of affordable and available food:
   - Has a greater impact on food insecure populations and creates greater health and social inequities.
   - Increases the risk of food insecurity.

What is Food Security?

- Food security is defined as physical and economic access, by all people, at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. This exists when everyone can access a reliable supply of healthy food which is culturally acceptable, nutritiously adequate, affordable and safe.

- Sustainable production methods are becoming an integral component of food security discussions.

Guiding Principles

- The right to adequate and nutritious food is a fundamental human right and was included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948.
- Local government recognises that barriers to food security are entrenched in the determinants of health such as access to housing, employment, income, education, social inclusion and transport.
- Local government recognises the causes of food insecurity are complex and therefore require an integrated, evidence-based, whole community and intergovernmental response.
- While this policy is targeted at the whole population, local government acknowledges that there are some population groups that are at higher risk of experiencing food insecurity. Therefore when developing strategies some groups will be prioritised (eg. according to age, residential location, ethnicity and socio-economic status).
- The social, economic, cultural and physical environments in which individuals live can enable or hinder them from making healthy choices. Individual choice is significantly diminished by the pressures of these other factors.

Policy Aspirations

[Council] is working towards:

- Equitable access to resources to support health such as employment, housing, education, income, transport, social inclusion opportunities, health care and food.
- Social, economic, cultural and physical environments that support healthy choices being the easiest choice.
- A range of options to access food including food outlets, community markets and food cooperatives.
- Opportunities and capacity for local food production including community and private gardens and urban edible planting.
- An integrated, reliable, safe and affordable transport network, including cycling, walking, public and community transport and private car use, that links people to a variety of food options and enables them to carry out daily activities.
- A well informed community who are empowered to make healthy food choices, have knowledge of options to access food, including culturally appropriate food, and have adequate food preparation skills.

The policy aspirations are ambitious but are the ultimate objectives of this policy. While changes may not be seen in the short term, impact measures have been devised which measure progress against each key commitment area. Progress will not be made solely through the work of [Council], but will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders.

Four Spheres of Influence:

1. Collaboration

Council could work in collaboration with other stakeholders to gain a whole community approach to improve access to affordable, healthy, safe and nutritious food.

Food Policy Council

Food Policy Councils use the skills and knowledge of their members and the community to support projects which improve access to affordable, safe, healthy and nutritious food (ie. food security).

- [Council] agrees to support the formation of a Food Policy Council.
- [Council] agrees to have representation by both staff and an elected Council member on the Food Policy Council.
- [Council] will support the Food Policy Council by [hosting the meetings, providing a secretary for minute taking etc.].
- [Council] agrees to actively support relevant initiatives prioritised by the Food Policy Council.
- [Council] agrees to consult the community before making decisions that affect the future food environment.

Supporting Other Initiatives

Adopting the goal of promoting food security gives rise to diverse and innovative community food actions.

- [Council] agrees to support relevant community food action initiatives that aim to increase access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food.

2. Community Capacity

Community gardens, providing and protecting green space, urban edible planting, farmers markets, community kitchens and community skill development all improve access to healthy food;.

- [Council] agrees to adopt a community gardens policy.
- [Council] agrees to adopt a urban edible planting policy.
- [Council] agrees to support local initiatives which improve the skills and knowledge of the community to access and use healthy food, including community kitchens and skill building workshops.

3. Advocacy

Not all barriers to food security are in the direct scope and influence of local government. Some require change that can only led by central government and other key stakeholders. All levels of government have a role in addressing barriers to food security.

- [Council] agrees to advocate on behalf of their community on issues that affect the district's food security.
- [Council] will prioritise food security initiatives for any relevant seed funding and grants.

4. Supportive Environments

Taking an integrated approach will assist in creating supportive environments, that address the causes of food security. This integrated approach is also required to strengthen [Council's] ability to effectively respond to impacts of environmental and climate change on food security.

Improved access to quality & open green spaces for all residents.

Numerous studies point to the direct benefits of green spaces to both physical activity and mental health and wellbeing. Green spaces have been associated with a decrease in health complaints, blood pressure and cholesterol, improved mental health and reduced stress levels, perceived better general health and the ability to face problems.

- [Council] agrees to provide accessible to green spaces for all residents.
- [Council] goal: Open green spaces must be within [eg. 5 mins] walk of every family home.

Increased access to affordable and healthy food in low socioeconomic areas.

Low income and deprivation are barriers to food security and lower income households are the hardest hit by price fluctuations.

Living in neighbourhoods with minimal public transport, or the ability to walk to grocery stores, means reliance on cars for food purchases. The escalating cost of food and petrol impact more on people with low incomes.

[Council] supports efforts that:

- Increase the number and frequency of fresh food markets, through land use permission and removal of any fees and charges.
- Encourage new healthy food stores and fresh food markets to be situated in deprived areas.
- Actively promote fresh food markets to the community on the [Council] website and other communication mediums.
- Increase the number of healthy food outlets within walking distance of every household.
- Encourage or restrict supermarket advertising to promote only healthy food specials.

4. Sample Food Charter

A Food Charter for [Region]

Good food is vital to the quality of peoples' lives in [District]. By promoting healthy and sustainable food as part of a thriving food economy, the [District] Food Charter aims to improve health and wellbeing for all and to create a more connected, resilient and sustainable place to live, work, learn, grow and play.

Signatories to the Charter – which include public, private and community partners – are committed to promoting the pleasure and importance of good food to help create a vibrant and diverse food culture.

We will work together to increase the demand and access to affordable, fresh, seasonal, local food throughout [District] in order to improve food security and achieve:

A thriving local economy by;

- Encouraging a greater number and diversity of food enterprises and jobs, making the most of [District's] rich land and sea resources.
- Sourcing healthy and sustainable food from local producers and suppliers, keeping value within the local economy.

Health and wellbeing for all by;

- Advocating that all people in our district have access to affordable, healthy, safe and nutritious food.
- Raising awareness of the importance of a nutritious, balanced diet and improving the availability of affordable healthy food.
- Providing a wide range of community food growing and other food-related activities to improve physical and mental health for people of all ages.
- Allowing for nutritious and personally acceptable foods in all places including; home, workplace, school, retail settings, community centres, entertainment complexes and public spaces.
- Advocating for healthy food to be most dominant in our district.
- Protecting our children from an obesity-promoting environment .

Resilient, close-knit communities by;

- Promoting and celebrating the food and culinary traditions of all cultures through public events, education and vibrant markets.
- Supporting local food initiatives that bring communities together and help them to improve their neighbourhoods.

Lifelong learning & skills by;

- Giving everyone the opportunity to learn about good food – how to grow it, how to cook it, how to eat it and how to enjoy it.
- Inspiring and enabling organisations such as schools, hospitals, businesses and other caterers to transform their food culture.

A reduced eco-footprint by;

- Supporting food production that protects wildlife and nature, reducing food miles, packaging and waste, and increasing composting and recycling.
- Maximising the use of green spaces in and around [District] to produce food for local people.

Research

- Research what our people want in our district's food environment.
- Locate and define any food deserts (areas of low fresh food access) across our district.

Signatures: _____

Signatures: _____

5. FACT SHEET:
Types of community gardens

There are different types of community gardens. Community garden management groups should assess what their goals, and the needs of the community, are before choosing which type of community garden to develop.

Communal garden

In a communal garden everyone works together and gardens the whole space.

Typically, the food that the garden produces is taken home by those who have volunteered to help in the garden, or offered to neighbours. Other communal gardens are used as a charity garden, where food is offered to charities or people in need. Some gardens sell food to cover gardening expenses.

Potential benefits of a communal style garden;

- Encourages relationships where people work together.
- Provides opportunities to learn from others.
- Large amounts of work can be completed when volunteers work together on the whole garden.
- There are no plot rental fees for community members.
- Volunteers can be flexible and help when it suits them.
- There is no limit on the number of gardeners.
- A large variety of food can be grown, due to a larger garden size.
- Participants do not have to have the skills to work a whole garden to be a volunteer.
- Volunteers can work on a specific part of the garden such as building seed harvesting spaces, raised planter boxes and workbenches, or managing the composting area. Participants do not even have to be a gardener to volunteer at a communal garden.

Potential downsides of a communal style garden;

- If volunteers lack commitment, a few people end up doing the majority of the work. In this case, lead gardeners can burn out. This has a high impact on a communal garden and can often lead to its end. This risk must be managed right at the beginning of the planning stage by gaining commitment from key volunteers. Setting up a volunteer roster can help minimise this risk.
- Volunteers may feel restricted by what is being planted as the management team usually holds the creative control. Having regular volunteer meetings and a suggestions box can minimise this risk.
- Communal gardens require a funding stream to cover ongoing expenses such as water rates, lease fees and garden maintenance.

Plot rental garden

A plot rental garden is divided into plots with each plot rented to different gardeners. Each gardener pays a fee and has a certain plot to care for. All the produce that comes out of the plot is theirs to do with what they wish.

Potential benefits of a plot rental garden;

- Each gardener has responsibility for their allocated plot.
- Plot holders have a good reason to keep what they are doing in good condition, and take good care of their plot. This is because they are investing in that garden just as if it were their home garden.
- Plot gardens have a stable income stream to cover expenses such as water rates, land lease fees, common ground gardening maintenance and lawn mowing.
- Plot rental gardens can also have a communal gardening area for social connection, learning and teaching as well as food provision for volunteers and charity. Having a communal garden area could minimise many of the potential downsides listed below.

Potential downsides of a plot rental garden;

- Plots may restrict gardeners to a particular style or type of gardening. Individuals or families may want different sized plots. To minimise this risk, offer plots of different sizes.
- If a plot renter neglects their garden it can become overgrown and messy and affect other plots. Plot rental gardens should have rules about keeping plots tidy.
- Plot rental gardens can lack the social connection that communal gardens offer. Community garden management could promote common garden days and times to plot holders to connect with each other.
- Plot-rental gardens are typically not used as teaching gardens and so skill levels of gardeners may not be challenged with teaching opportunities. Community garden management could have a communal 'teaching garden' for plot holders to learn from and then practice these new skills on their own plots.
- Community members with minimal gardening experience may not feel comfortable taking on a whole plot by themselves. Community garden management could offer use of a communal or teaching garden before a person makes a commitment to a whole or half plot.
- Plot style gardens restrict the garden values that some plot holders may wish to have, eg. organic gardens, due to contamination from neighbouring plots. Community garden management could have sections for those who wish to garden organically.
- There is more management involved in a plot rental garden. Someone has to keep track of the rental money and make sure that everyone is being a good neighbour to other plot owners. Management needs to determine and coordinate who has the responsibility of taking care of the common areas, and other maintenance concerns.
- This type of garden may also restrict those with limited finances who may not be able to afford the plot rental fee.

Non-fee plot allotment garden

This type of garden is similar to the rental-allotment garden but allotments are based on a first in first served allocation of plots, with no rental fee. These gardens have alternative sources of funding and rely on the community as a communal garden does. Plot holders are responsible for the planting and management of their own plots. Food grown is utilised by the plot holder as they wish.

Potential benefits of a non-fee plot allotment garden;

- This style of allotment garden still has the benefits of a fee-rental allotment garden, with each gardener having ownership and pride over their plot.
- Supports community members who cannot afford an ongoing rental fee.

Potential downsides of a non-fee plot allotment garden;

- Downsides of a non-fee allotment garden are very similar to the rental fee style garden, as listed above.
- Fundraising may be a struggle for the community garden management group.
- Plot users are usually concerned with maintaining their own plots rather than the communal areas such as the composting area and garden shed. A volunteer structure or roster to manage this may be included as a condition of receiving a 'free-plot'.

Therapy garden

A therapeutic garden is an outdoor garden space that has been specifically designed to meet the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of people. Spending time outside in a garden has been shown to positively affect a person's emotions and improve their sense of well-being. Access to nature balances circadian rhythms, lowers blood pressure, reduces stress, increases absorption of Vitamin D, and improves overall health and well-being. Therapeutic gardening can be a 'positive distraction'.

Therapeutic gardens can focus on a particular disease treatment, senior citizens, people with disabilities or or a sub-group of the population such as children with behavioural issues. Social service providers, mentors or therapists may teach children or adults how to garden and may offer some nutrition education, when relevant.

Particular importance and care is spent on the design and layout of a therapy garden. The people using and caring for the gardens along with therapists may be involved in this process. The design team is often led by a landscape designer who has knowledge about therapeutic gardens.

The majority of elements in a therapeutic garden should be plant related, such as perennials that attract native birds, shrubs that attract butterflies and water features for gold fish. Plants need to be non-toxic and non-injurious. Issues related to sustainability of the garden, such as using native plants and rain water harvesting, should also be considered in the overall design. Other considerations include providing ample shade, movable furniture, water features, smooth and level walking surfaces, and year round interest. Consideration should also be given to the maintenance, upkeep and safety of the therapeutic garden. Tending to and growing fruit and vegetable plants is a rewarding experience and can be a vital component in successful garden therapy.

Food grown may be given back to the children and their families, other garden users or donated to charities and neighbours of the garden. Communal gardens can act as a space for garden therapy, although they may not be entirely fit for purpose for all types of therapies.

Potential benefits of a therapy garden;

- Provide a space for physical, emotional, spiritual and social healing and treatment of people that may have a range of conditions and circumstances.
- Offer a space for alternative treatments and provide relief from clinical settings.

Potential downsides of a therapy garden;

- If designed only for the specific need of therapeutic treatments, the garden may lack community involvement and volunteer opportunities. The garden management could organise community volunteer days to include the local community in the running of the garden.
- Design and set up costs can be quite high due to the hiring of a landscape designer and the particular design elements that may be required to provide a tranquil space.
- Particular care needs to be taken in the maintenance and upkeep of the therapy garden to maintain its tranquillity and function. This maintenance could be costly; therapy gardens need a continuous and reliable funding source.

Vocational garden

A vocational garden uses a communal style garden as a place for vocational training. This could help young people gain some skills, adults re-entering the workforce, skills and social support for people on parole, and provide a volunteer and skill building opportunity for people on a disability, sickness or unemployment benefit. Food grown in the vocational garden can be distributed back to garden volunteers or sold to cover gardening expenses.

Potential benefits of a vocational garden;

- Provide a bridge between unemployment and employment.
- Offer a volunteer opportunity for community members who receive an income benefit which can lead to improved quality of life, social connectedness, confidence and skill building.

Potential downsides of a vocational garden;

- This type of garden can be used by many different groups from different backgrounds. Management of group bookings is required to ensure garden users feel safe with whoever is using the garden at the same time.
- Vocational gardens require a sound administration structure to manage bookings.
- Vocational gardens require a funding stream.

Māra Kai

Māra Kai is a community food garden that is often set up on a marae and is typically maintained by hapū members. Setting up a māra kai is an act of reclaiming Māori culture, self-reliance, and rangatiratanga. The food grown can be used by the Marae for catering or is taken home by whānau.

Potential benefits of a marae garden;

- Food grown can be used for catering to financially support the Marae.
- Māra kai offers an opportunity for whānau of all ages to get together to work in the garden, growing and harvesting food.

- Māra kai provides an opportunity to connect with the land.
- Māra kai provides an opportunity to nurture physical, social, whānau and spiritual health.
- Hapū volunteers feel a sense of pride in working in the Māra kai as they are supporting the health and well-being of the whenua, hapu and whānau.

Potential downsides of a marae garden;

- Marae gardens can be left to be maintained by a small number of people or one key person, who may feel overwhelmed or burdened. It is important to let hapū members know that the garden is for everyone to maintain and ask people to share the responsibility.

School Garden

Many schools in New Zealand have gardens that act as both a teaching tool and a food source. School students get to learn hands-on how to grow food. The food is often used for cooking classes or taken home by students or teachers.

Potential benefits of a school garden;

- Children have the opportunity to learn how to garden from a young age.
- Children can learn the skills to support their families to start a backyard garden at home.
- Children learn where their food comes from, a basic yet fundamental part of nutrition education.
- A school garden normalises healthy eating and growing your own food.
- Children are exposed to environmental sustainability such as composting and worm farms. This offers a platform for lifelong conservation behaviour.

Potential downsides of a school garden;

- A maintenance plan is required over school holidays.
- Schools may have limited funding for setting up the garden. Many community members and groups would be willing to help lend their skills and time to set up a school garden.

Workplace gardens

Some workplaces offer gardens for their staff and provide an opportunity to tend the gardens during work breaks (stress relief and physical activity).

Potential benefits of a workplace garden;

- Having a garden at the workplace gives employees the skills to start a garden at home.
- A garden usually has a composting component and may be utilised by employees for their food scraps.
- Gives employees an outlet to use during breaks
- Provides a healthy food source for staff.

Potential downsides of a workplace garden;

- A maintenance plan is required over holiday periods.
- Workplace gardens are limited to workplaces that have land space available for a garden. Office buildings can have indoor potted vegetable and herb plants, or use outdoor areas for pot plants.

Useful Resources:

General Information

Toi Te Ora- Public Health Service **Food Security Position Statement** - http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/vdb/document/718

Stevenson, S, 2011. **Edible Impact: Food Security Policy Literature Review**, Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service, Bay of Plenty District Health Board.

Health Sponsorship Council, 2012, **Shopping behaviours of New Zealand households. In Fact.** http://archive.hsc.org.nz/sites/default/files/publications/In%20Fact-Shopping%20behaviours-fnl-120301.pdf

Food Safety Authority, 2007, Food Standards Agency. **Low income and diet survey**, London.

Ministry of Health, 2012. **The Health of New Zealand Adults 2011/12: Key findings of the New Zealand Health Survey**. Wellington: Ministry of Health. http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/health-new-zealand-adults-2011-12#hsc

University of Otago and Ministry of Health, 2011. **A focus on Nutrition: Key findings of the 2008/09 New Zealand Adult Nutrition Survey**, Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Local Government and Public Health

NICE- Local Government and Public Health Planning Guide http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/news-item/173/index.html

A Dose of Localism- The role of Councils in Public Health http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/news-item/172/index.html

Vic Health: Food For All: Resources for Local Government http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Healthy-Eating/Healthy-Eating-Programs/Food-For-All---Resources-for-Local-Governments.aspx

SmartGrowth Western Bay of Plenty: 2012 Report- Maximising the social benefits of land use planning to build communities and support economic growth in the western bay of plenty http://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/research/building-the-community.aspx

Collaboration

Food Policy Council

Good Laws, Good Food: Putting Local Food Policy To Work for our Communities (Havard Food Law and Policy Clinic) http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical/lsc/documents/FINAL_LOCAL_TOOLKIT2.pdf
Georgia Food Policy Council: https://aysps.gsu.edu/ghpc/georgia-food-policy-council

Food First: Institute for Food & Development Policy: www.foodfirst.org/en/food+policy+council

Supporting Other Initiatives

Kaibosh Food Rescue, Wellington: http://www.kaibosh.org.nz/

Kai@The Right Price: http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/kai

Local Food Network, Wellington: http://localfoodstories.org.nz/

Evaluating outcomes of community food action: http://www.cdpac.ca/content.php?doc=261

Victorian Government, 2010, **Inquiry into sustainable development of agribusiness in outer suburban Melbourne**: Government Printer for the State of Victoria.

Green Gym: http://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym

Community Capacity

Obesity in Australia under review: VicHealth Response June 2008
http://www.aph.gov.au/House/committee/haa/obesity/subs/sub059.pdf

Community Gardens

Ecomatters: **Community Garden Set Up Guide**
http://ecomatters.org.nz/community/community-garden-set-up-guide

Auckland Council: **Community Garden Proposal Guide**
http://ecomatters.org.nz/community/community-garden-proposal

Urban Edible Planting

Ecomatters: **Do Ya Bit: Urban Food Guide**
http://ecomatters.org.nz/do-ya-bit/do-ya-bit-urban-food

British urban edible planting movement: http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/

Community Kitchens

Fresh Choice Kitchens - Canada http://www.communitykitchens.ca/main/

Supportive Environments

Good Planning for Good Food- How the planning system in England can Support healthy and sustainable food
http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=192

The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning.
http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=download&o=53895

Morland K, Wing S, Diez Roux A, 2002. **The contextual effect of the local food environment on residents' diets: the atherosclerosis risk in communities study**. American Journal of Public Health;92(11):1761-1767.

Burns C & A. Inglis, 2006, **The relationship between the availability of healthy and fast food and neighbourhood level socio-economic deprivation: A case study from Melbourne**, Australia. Obesity Review.

Advocacy

Food Security Policy

Hobson Bay City Council, **Food Security Policy**: Improving Access to Healthy Food, http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Council/Policies_strategies_plans/Social_Policies_and_Plans/Improving_Access_to_Healthy_Food_Food_Security

Food Charter:

Plymouth Food Charter:
http://www.foodplymouth.org/downloads/foodcharter.pdf

Looking forward

Gagnon & Freudenberg 2012, **Slowing Down Fast Food**, City of New York School of Public Health & Corporate Accountability International.

Curie et al, 2010, **The effect of fast food restaurants on obesity and weight gain**, American Econ J. 2(3): 32-63

Pearce J, Blakely T, Witten K, Bartie P, 2007, **Neighbourhood deprivation and access to fast-food retailing: a national study**. Am J Prev Med. May;32(5):375-82.

The PLoS Medicine Editors, 2012, **Big Food: The Food Industry Is Ripe for Scrutiny**. PLoS Med 9(6): e1001246. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001246

Toi Te Ora
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