

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

To the Inner South Area Committee

Date: Tuesday 24th June 2008

Subject: Gardening Service

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Beeston & Holbeck City & Hunslet Middleton Park</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides options and recommendations for the Area Committee to determine the support and development of gardening services for elderly people and people with disabilities.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to assist the Area Committee in determining the way forward for supporting existing gardening services and for developing a new service where needed.

2.0 BACKGROUND

At the April Area Committee meeting Members agreed in principle to provide well being funding to existing services in Middleton Park Ward to help support their current levels of service and/or to expand the service they provide; and to seek to develop a service covering Beeston and Holbeck and City and Hunslet Wards.

3.0 EXISTING SERVICES IN MIDDLETON PARK WARD

3.1 **Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid (BIEWA):** As noted at the last Committee meeting, BIEWA covers the Belle Isle area and operates by engaging freelance gardeners who directly provide a basic maintenance service to elderly residents. The charges to

residents cover the direct costs of the gardeners but do not cover BIEWA's central management and administrative costs.

3.2 Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid has submitted these options for well being funding (attached at Appendix 1).

- **Option 1 – Well being funding of £2,000** is requested to cover BIEWA's central management and administrative costs.
- **Option 2 – Well being funding of £2,300** is requested to cover BIEWA's central management and administrative costs as in Option 1 and in addition £300 to meet half the costs of clearing overgrown gardens which cannot be accepted onto the scheme until they are brought up to a reasonable condition. This option would mean that 6 – 10 more gardens would be brought into the scheme.
- **Option 3 – Well being funding of £3,450** is requested to pay half the cost of clearing overgrown gardens (as outlined in Option 2) and would in addition provide a subsidy of £35 towards the costs of the remaining three visits in the current year for each garden. This should bring in an estimated additional 20 gardens into the scheme.

3.3 The Committee is **recommended** to determine which of these options they would wish to approve. Both the first and second options would assist the sustainability of the gardening service in Belle Isle, with the second option supporting some slight expansion of the scheme, the third option should see an expansion but would not directly assist the sustainability of the scheme.

3.4 Middleton Elderly Aid (MEA): **well being funding of £2,470** is requested to increase the number of gardens they can maintain in the current year. The proposal is to fund 2 labourers to work alongside their existing gardeners (so they would form two teams each consisting of 1 gardener and 1 labourer) and in addition to fund a third gardener to do additional gardens. This funding would be for the peak season July to September. The service would basic maintenance, cutting back hedges and shrubs, lawns, weeding, taking away garden waste etc and would include 3 visits over the summer period.

3.5 The Committee is **recommended** to determine if they would wish to approve this proposal which would mean a minimum of 15 additional gardens would receive three maintenance visits during July to September.

4.0 DEVELOPING SERVICES IN THE REST OF INNER SOUTH

4.1 At the April meeting, the Area Committee approved the Area Management Team developing a separate service to cover Beeston & Holbeck and City & Hunslet Wards. As we cannot not realistically start up a new service to work on gardens this year, the only realistic option is to join an existing service. The two existing services in Middleton Park Ward – provided by BIEWA and MEA – are both focused on their particular areas and are not in a position to develop beyond their existing boundaries.

4.2 The only other existing gardening service that we are aware of (and that could expand quickly) is that operated by Care and Repair on behalf of Aire Valley Homes Leeds (AVHL). This is a new service that AVHL has just started for elderly tenants and tenants with disabilities; Care and Repair is delivering this service on behalf of AVHL.

- 4.3 Discussions have taken place with Care and Repair to see if the Area Committee could 'piggy back' on this new service by extending it to elderly and disabled residents in Beeston & Holbeck and City & Hunslet Wards and who are **not** AVHL tenants. Care and Repair did submit a project proposal to us however they have recently withdrawn this proposal just before this report had been finalized for circulation to the Area Committee. So currently, unfortunately, we have no proposal to submit to the Area Committee for Beeston & Holbeck and City & Hunslet Wards.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to decide on the recommendations outlined in sections 3.3 and 3.5 above.
- 5.2 The Area Committee is asked if they would wish the Area Management Team to continue to pursue options for coverage for Beeston and Holbeck and City and Hunslet Wards.

Area Committee Well-being Fund – Project Proposal

Expand sections as required

Project Name: Gardening Project (Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid – three options)

Organisation	Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid
Contact Name	Ian Campbell-McLean
Address	Low Grange House 8 Low Grange Crescent Belle Isle Leeds LS10 3EA
Telephone Number	2778208
Email Address	info@belleisle.org.uk

Project Summary (including a brief description of the main activities and why this project is needed and its links to key priorities):

Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid (BIEWA) operates a garden scheme which aims to provide 'basic' garden maintenance services for older people who cannot maintain the gardens themselves. The scheme offers a fixed price service based on the actual services required by the clients.

The scope of work includes:

- Grass Cutting £12
- Hedge Trimming £15
- Border Strimming £ 5
- Garden Waste Removal FOC

eg Grass Cutting, Strimming and Removal = £17

5 x Garden visits will be made per year (Apr-Oct) at approx 6 weekly intervals.

The project is needed because many older people find it difficult to manage physically demanding tasks. Gardening being one of the first to be stopped. Often family and friends are willing to support older people in this way. Many, however, do not have this support and consequently the garden gets neglected, looks very untidy and makes the area look untidy. Provision of the garden scheme makes a major contribution to general tidiness of the area and peace of mind for the elderly residents.

BIEWA will negotiate rates and charges with gardeners prior to the start of a new season.

There are presently 123 clients on the garden scheme. The scheme has the potential to provide service to more clients and there is no waiting list. A new client will join the scheme and receive the service when the schedule is due.

We have 3 gardeners engaged to do this work. They all have other work and are willing to increase the amount work done for BIEWA.

Two options for sustaining and developing the service are proposed.

Option one: This option ensures that the scheme is sustainable by meeting

some central overhead costs (detailed below)

Option two: This option ensures that the scheme is sustainable by meeting some central overhead costs (as option 1) and in addition costs to enable badly overgrown gardens to be cleared (costs are detailed below).

The main barrier to expanding the scheme are the condition of gardens which are badly overgrown and are therefore not suitable for inclusion in the scheme as badly overgrown gardens cannot be maintained at the agreed charges. This option would enable BIEWA to offer a garden clearance for badly overgrown gardens prior to their inclusion on the scheme. A badly overgrown garden (not maintained for over 12 months) would be cleared by the gardeners at an agreed cost and charged at 50% of the actual cost on the understanding that the client joins the garden scheme or makes other arrangements for garden maintenance after the work is done.

Option three: this includes the additional costs for paying half the cost of clearing overgrown gardens (which features as part of Option two) and would in addition provide a subsidy of £35 towards the costs of the remaining three visits in the current year for each garden. This should bring in an estimated additional 20 – 25 gardens into the scheme.

Project Delivery - How the project will be delivered (inc how any partners are involved in the project, timescale etc):

The scheme will start in April and finish in October
Clients will get 5 garden visits in this period

BIEWA manage the gardening service on behalf of its clients.

We will:

- Negotiate a fair price for the work to be done.
- Contract to experienced gardeners to do the work
- Monitor the service provided and quality of work
- Collect payments from vulnerable clients
- Make payment to gardeners
- Provide the gardeners with weekly work schedules
- Resolve complaints and service issues on behalf of clients

Many older people find it difficult to manage physically demanding tasks. Gardening being one of the first to be stopped. Often family and friends are willing to support older people in this way.

Many, however, do not have this support and consequently the garden gets neglected, looks very untidy and makes the area look untidy. Provision of the garden scheme makes a major contribution to general tidiness of the area and peace of mind for the elderly residents.

Please demonstrate how your project links with key priorities/action with Area Delivery Plans:

This project links to the Environment theme of the ADP, particularly to the strategic outcome of 'Cleaner, greener and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours'.

Outcomes (a summary the main outcome, outputs and benefits the project will achieve):

Clients will benefit from better quality of life by having a tidier useable garden.

Currently we have 123 clients on the garden scheme, our experience shows that this number will increase to approx 150 throughout the season.

We estimate that the resulting number of gardening visits will be approx 600 throughout the year.

Project Cost (an indication of how much the project will cost, how much Well-being funding is sought and the breakdown between capital and revenue):

Garden service costs	£	Paid by
130 x £27 x 4.5 = (avg <i>clients</i> x <i>charge</i> x <i>visits</i>)	£16,000	clients payments
Scheme Management	£ 1,000	BIEWA
Service support Collecting monies Resolving problems Assessing gardening needs for new clients	£ 1,000	BIEWA

Option 1: We are requesting £2,000 revenue well being funding to cover the Management and Service support elements of the over all cost

Option 2 We are requesting £2,300 revenue well being funding to cover the Management and Service support elements of the over all cost *and* half of the costs of garden clearance. (Garden clearance would cost £600 in total with clients paying half of the costs and half being met by well being funding.)

Which geographic areas will benefit (ie particular neighbourhoods, wards etc) and which Area Committee this project is relevant to:

Belle Isle and part of Middleton (Middleton Park Ward; Inner South Area Committee)

Other key information not covered by the above:

Area Committee Well-being Fund – Project Proposal

Expand sections as required

Project Name: Additional gardens

Organisation	Middleton Elderly Aid
Contact Name	Debra Haigh
Address	18 Middleton Park Road
	Leeds
	LS10 3ST
Telephone Number	272 1050
Email Address	

Project Summary (including a brief description of the main activities and why this project is needed and its links to key priorities):

Middleton Elderly Aid (MEA) provides a garden scheme which aims to provide 'basic' garden maintenance services for older people who cannot maintain the gardens themselves covering most of the Middleton area of Middleton Park Ward. The service is based on an hourly charge to residents (£13 per hour for those on housing benefit or pension credit top ups.) The project is needed so they can increase their capacity to provide gardening maintenance to more households – they have more demand for a gardening service than can be met within current capacity. A minimum of an additional 15 gardens would receive three visits in the peak season of July to September.

Project Delivery - How the project will be delivered (inc how any partners are involved in the project, timescale etc):

The project will be delivered by having two labourers work alongside the existing gardeners. Currently the two gardeners work as a team; under this proposal there would be two teams each consisting of 1 gardener and 1 labourer. The labourers would be paid to sweep, collect and bag up garden waste, raking, weeding and general basic garden duties. The labourers would not be expected to use any electrical tools. In addition a third gardener would be paid to carry out maintenance on further gardens.

MEA manage the gardening service on behalf of its clients including negotiating hourly rates, ensuring that experienced gardeners take the lead in doing the work, collecting payment, monitoring the service provided including quality of work, organising the work, paying the gardeners, insurance of equipment.

Please demonstrate how your project links with key priorities/action with Area Delivery Plans:

This project links to the Environment theme of the ADP, particularly to the strategic outcome of 'Cleaner, greener and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours'.

Outcomes (a summary the main outcome, outputs and benefits the project will achieve):

A minimum of 15 extra households would receive three garden maintenance visits over the peak July to September season.

Project Cost (an indication of how much the project will cost, how much Well-being funding is sought and the breakdown between capital and revenue):

The costs are:

2 labourers X 15 hours per week X 13 weeks X £5 p.h. = £1,950

1 additional gardener X 5 hours per week X 13 weeks X £8 p.h. = £520

Total costs = £2,470

Which geographic areas will benefit (ie particular neighbourhoods, wards etc) and which Area Committee this project is relevant to:

Most of Middleton area of Middleton Park Ward (Inner South area Committee)

Other key information not covered by the above: