

**Report of Area Improvement Manager, South East Leeds**

**Report to South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee**

**Date: Monday 3 September 2012**

**Subject: Garden Maintenance Service Evaluation 2011/12**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?  If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Morley Rothwell Ardsley & Robinhood	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

- 1 The Outer South Garden Maintenance Service delivered by Morley Elderly Action (MEA) has completed the second year of a three year project agreed by the Area Committee. This report provides an update and evaluation of the scheme in the year 2011/12.

**Recommendations**

- 2 Members are asked to:
  - (a) note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate;
  - (b) agree to Morley Elderly Action retaining the under-spend of £104.00 from 2011/12 to support an enhanced service in 2012/13.

# 1 Purpose of this report

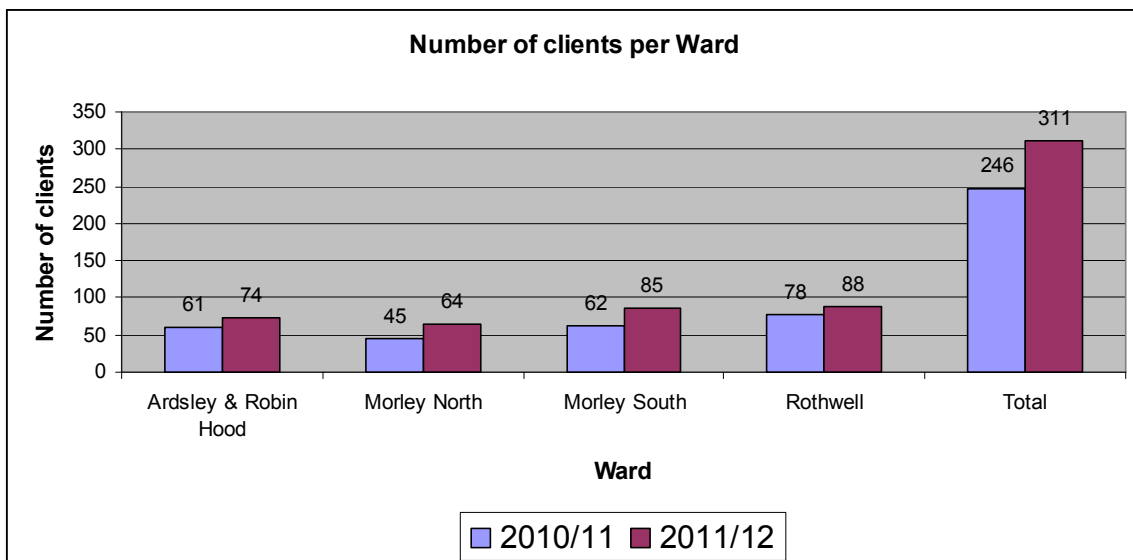
1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update and evaluation of the Garden Maintenance Scheme operated by MEA. Outer South Garden Maintenance Service delivered by MEA has completed the second year of a three year project agreed by the Area Committee.

# 2 Background information

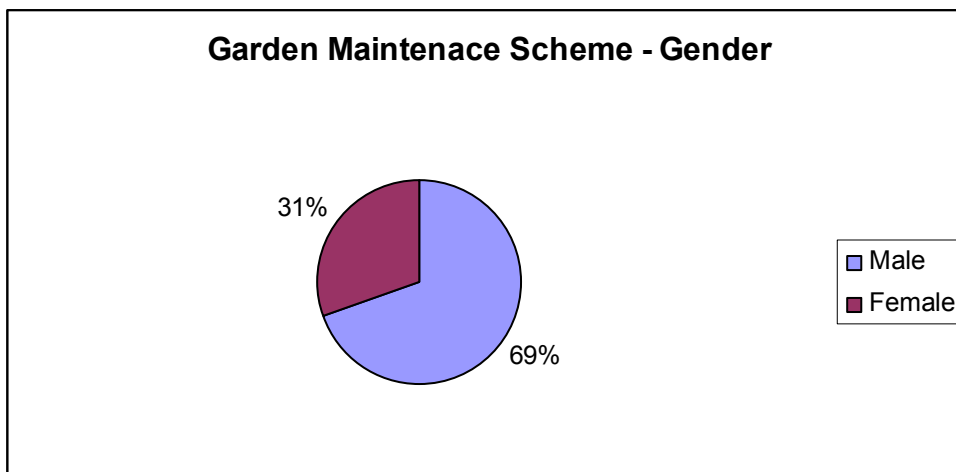
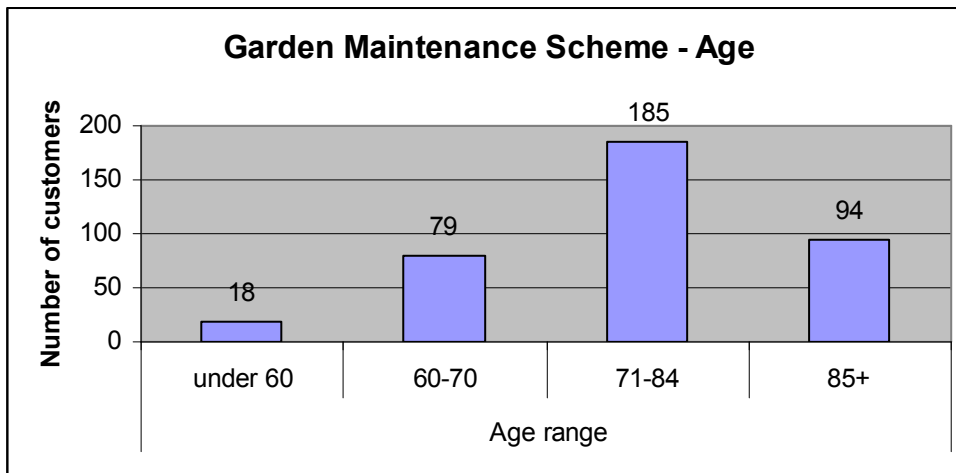
2.1 In 2009 Members approved £33,000 revenue funding per year towards a single scheme for the Outer South. The service for vulnerable members of the community provides subsidised gardeners for maintenance work such as grass cutting, strimming, hedge cutting, cutting back bushes and trees, and weeding. Garden tidies are undertaken at the beginning and end of the season.

2.2 At the end of the 2010 season there were 246 gardens registered in the scheme. Application forms were sent out and 199 had been returned to start the new season in 2011. The drop in numbers was attributable to several deaths, people moving into residential care and non-response. By the end of the 2011 season a gardening service had been provided to 311 gardens benefiting 376 people.

2.3 MEA have increased their client base in each of the four wards and a comparison is shown in the table below. MEA promote the service through newsletters (sent to over 1000 households 3 or 4 times per year) in the Morley, Ardsley area and notices are placed on boards in the Morley Town Hall, tearooms and reception. The service is included whenever MEA speak to any person or group about the range of services they provide. In Rothwell the scheme is promoted through the gardeners and through Rothwell Live at Home Scheme, who also operate in the Robin Hood & Lofthouse areas.



2.4 The following tables show the age range and gender of those benefiting from the service in 2011/12. Of the 376 clients 58% were either registered disabled or considered themselves to have a disability.



2.5 The targeted priority groups are:

- anyone aged over 60
- those with a disability
- anyone unable to cope because of old age.

2.6 Regular monitoring is undertaken by MEA to ensure high standards of quality and client satisfaction with the service. Weekly timesheets are completed and submitted by all gardeners. Random checks are in place to monitor standards which include at least two site visits per month and a short telephone questionnaire with clients who are selected at random.

2.7 Clients are asked to complete a feedback sheet and a selection of quotes below demonstrates the important role this service provides to support older people to continue to live independently at home and support their health and well being.

- “Really delighted with service and gardener”
- “We were very pleased last year as my husband had only been out of hospital a week or two and was not able to cut the lawn. I have arthritis in my hands and gripping the mower is difficult. Our gardener is so friendly and willing to do anything to help. We hope we can continue with his services.”
- “Thank you for providing this very useful service as I can’t keep up with it. I am grateful when the young person does such a good job.”
- “Without the help from the team I don’t know how we would have managed our garden.”
- “I am very happy with the service and the work that is done in my garden. I find it invaluable!”

2.8 Well being funding was allocated to support the salary of a part time administrator for the scheme, a management fee to MEA and to subsidise the standard hourly rate to give a client charge of £11 an hour. Actual spend for 2011/12 is outlined below:

#### Well being Contribution

Item	Year One 2010/11		Year Two 2011/12	
	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	Spent
Admin salary and on costs	£11,500.00	£11,500.00	£11,500.00	£11,500.00
Management Fee including overheads for IT, utilities.	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00
Subsidy (3000 x £4.50)	£13,500.00	£11,199.50	£13,500.00	£13,396.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£33,000.00</b>	<b>£30,699.50</b>	<b>£33,000.00</b>	<b>£32,896.00</b>

2.9 Members are asked to approve MEA’s request to roll forward the under spend of £104.00 from 2011/12 to 2012/13. As numbers grow it may be that an assessment of client need may have to be explored.

2.10 The service for 2011/12 started following approval at the March Area Committee of £35,404.50 made up of £33,000 plus £2,404.50 carried forward to support the second year. As per the proposal agreed in 2009 the admin costs and management fee have remained static and the client charge has been increased to £11 to support a raise in the gardeners’ fee to £15 an hour

2.11 During 2011/12 MEA were involved in two Neighbourhood Improvement Plans, one for the Springbank and Moorlands in Gildersome and one for the Asquith and Ingles in Morley. The gardening service was promoted in these areas and leaflets were distributed. As a result of the Morley NIPS, MEA took part in a Fun day at Asquith Primary School where the gardening scheme was promoted as part of MEA promotion.

2.12 The additional benefits of the garden maintenance scheme include:

- Provision of work stream to eight gardeners
- Providing a reassurance to customers that workers have been CRB checked and are reliable
- Provision of a service that ensures gardens look cared for and prevent trips and falls
- Provides a deterrent to opportunist rogue gardeners from overcharging the elderly
- Promoting feeling of well being and provides human contact for the lonely and isolated.

2.13 Over the year the project has serviced 311 gardens, made 3216 visits, providing 3393.5 hours of gardening.

### **3 Corporate Considerations**

#### **3.1 Consultation and Engagement**

3.2 This project was developed to address priorities in the Area Committee Business Plan. The production of this plan is informed by Local Councillors and local residents. The project has been developed in consultation with Elected Members and local communities.

#### **3.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

3.3.1 Community groups submitting a project proposal requesting funding from the Well being budget have an equal opportunities policy and as part of the application process, complete a section outlining which equality groups the project will work with and how equality and cohesion issues have been considered.

3.3.2 Internal and statutory partners are committed to equality and cohesion and all projects they are involved with will have considered these issues.

3.3.3 A light touch Equality Impact Assessments is carried out for all projects.

#### **3.4 Council policies and City Priorities**

3.4.1 The project outlined in this report contributes to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:

- Vision For Leeds
- Health and Well being City Priority Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Regeneration City Priority Plan

### **3.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 3.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.
- 3.5.2 Decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

### **3.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 This report provides an update on the Gardening Scheme and no risks have been identified.

## **4 Conclusions**

- 4.1 The report provides up to date information on this key area of work for the Area Committee.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are asked to:
  - (a) note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate;
  - (b) agree to Morley Elderly Action retaining the under spend figure from the Outer South Garden Maintenance Service 2011/12 to support an enhanced service delivery in 2012/13.

### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 5.1 Summary of Key Work Report July 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.