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## Report of the Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing Department

### Outer South Area Committee

Date: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007

### Subject: Care and Repair Garden Maintenance Service

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Rothwell  
Ardsley & Robin Hood**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council  
Function

Delegated Executive  
Function available  
for Call In

Delegated Executive  
Function not available for  
Call In Details set out in the  
report

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## Executive Summary

The Outer South Area Committee agreed to commission the Care and Repair Garden Maintenance Service in 2006. This report details the progress the scheme has made including, number of referrals, percentage of satisfied customers and plans for 2007.

### 1.0 Introduction

The garden maintenance service started in July 2006, covering the Rothwell, Robin Hood, Woodlesford and Lofthouse areas of Leeds. It is targeted at those aged 60 and over and disabled people. The service is carried out by the full-time gardener employed by Care & Repair, Emily Spencer (who started work in June 2006), assisted by a volunteer who worked on the service one day a week. The service offers basic garden maintenance, including hedge and lawn cutting, weeding and general tidying. A charge of £10 per hour is made.

### 2.0 Funding

Funding for the service has been provided by the Outer South Area Committee and Greenfingers Leeds (through Leeds Social Services), and by charges made to customers. The details of the funding streams are included in the original business plan, prepared in January 2006.

### **3.0 Referrals**

- 3.1 Between July and the end of November 2006 a total of 193 visits have been carried out to 56 customers. 50 of these live in the Rothwell area and 6 in Lofthouse. The service was advertised in the following ways:
  - 3.1.1 A leaflet was produced.
  - 3.1.2 Two articles have appeared in the Rothwell Record magazine.
  - 3.1.3 All local organisations, forums and local authority departments were approached and given information.
  - 3.1.4 Rothwell Live at Home Scheme advertised the service to its members.
  - 3.1.5 Rothwell in Bloom were consulted and given information.
  - 3.1.6 Councillors in both wards were given information.
  - 3.1.7 All current and former clients of Care and Repair who live in the area were given information.
  - 3.1.8 The Chairperson of Care & Repair lives in Lofthouse and has distributed leaflets locally.
- 3.2 Of these 56 customers, 52 have stated that they will need the service on a regular basis next year.
- 3.3 The original business plan stated that 50 gardens would be treated in year 1. This target has been achieved (56 customers received the service), despite the fact that the service has only been running since July.

### **4.0 Customer Feedback**

All customers have been sent satisfaction surveys recently to complete, and so far 36 have replied. The results are as follows:

- 4.1 All 36 said they were happy with the service.
  - 4.2 27 respondents said that the quality of the service was "very good", and the remaining 9 said "good".
  - 4.3 33 of the respondents said that the approach of Care and Repair staff was "very helpful", and the remaining 3 said "helpful".
  - 4.4 All 36 said they would use the service again.
- A selection of comments included on the satisfaction surveys is attached.

### **5.0 Plans for 2007**

- 5.1 One important aim for 2007 is to increase the take-up rate from the Lofthouse area.
- 5.2 A publicity drive will be carried out in February and March to advertise the service, involving local councillors.
- 5.3 A vehicle is going to be purchased to use for the service, as opposed to hiring one.
- 5.4 The target number for 2007 is to increase the number of customers to 75 who will receive regular gardening.
- 5.5 Attempts will be made to secure some small commercial contracts, charged at a higher rate in order to increase the income for the service

## **6.0 Conclusions**

The service has been very successful in its first 6 months, and we are confident that we can build on it and extend it next year. The feedback from customers has been extremely positive and the service is obviously much appreciated by local residents. The gardener is an extremely good worker and is fully committed to developing the service. She has taken all of her annual leave and 3 weeks unpaid leave during the winter months, and has lots of ideas to develop the service in future.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

Members of the Outer South Area Committee are requested to:

- (a) Note the contents of the report and consider any actions.