

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE – 9 MARCH 2006**

### **GARDEN MAINTENANCE SCHEME**

#### **Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the eligibility criteria and operation of the Garden Maintenance Scheme

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the Local Committee Meeting of 12 January 2006 a request for information on the Garden Maintenance Scheme was raised as an item of local interest for inclusion and report on a future agenda.
- 2.2 The Garden Maintenance Scheme in its present format began in March 1997 following agreement by the Housing Committee of 26 February 1997 and currently provides a service to approximately 2300 council households annually.

#### **3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- 3.1 The service is only available to council households where the occupants are unable to tend their garden due to age or permanent physical disability. The age criterion requires that all occupants are over 60 years of age and the permanent physical disability criterion requires that the applicants provide reasonable proof that such disabilities apply to all persons less than 60 years of age living within the household.
- 3.2 In households where a younger able bodied person over 16 years old is in residence, the service will still be provided if that person is a registered carer for a member of the household who is either disabled and/or 60 years of age or older.

#### **4. OPERATION OF THE SCHEME**

- 4.1 The scheme is provided by external contractors under the direction and control of Outdoor Services and operates annually within the growing season of March to October. It provides a minimum of 8 grass cuts, including edging and removal of clippings, with repeat visits usually on a 3 to 4 weekly cycle.

- 4.2 The scheme also provides two evenly spaced visits within the season to trim any hedges that are present.
- 4.3 It is a condition of the scheme that eligible households accept the full service and allow the Council to reduce hedges to a height at which they can be trimmed by gardeners without the Health and Safety implications of using staging or ladders.
- 4.4 The service is provided free of charge to eligible households on income related benefits such as Income support or Housing benefit. A contribution (currently £30 per year) is required from other eligible households.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated directly within the contents of this report.

## **6. LEGAL AUTHORITY/ IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated directly within the contents of this report.

## **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The continued provision of this assistance promotes support for older and less able members of our communities and encourages diversity of tenure by age and disability within these communities.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Committee are recommended to note the contents of the report.

William Stafford  
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

CMCA/JC/LA  
8 February 2006

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Housing Committee minutes of 26 February 1997
2. Records, eligibility criteria and operation documentation of the Garden Maintenance Scheme 1997 to present.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576658 and ask for Jim Clark, Housing Improvement Programme Manager.

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