

7. ELDER CARE CANTERBURY “WINTER WARMTH” PROJECT

General Manager responsible:	General Manager Community Services
Officer responsible:	Community and Recreation Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. At its meeting of 12 July the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board requested that an officer's report be prepared on the Eldercare Canterbury's "Winter Warmth" Project and the application for \$10,000 from each Community Board to cover emergency assistance for 200 people city wide.
2. This report will discuss and clarify the following:
 - (a) The reasons behind the "Winter Warmth Project", with particular reference to the needs of older people living in different wards.
 - (b) Options for Council funding, including the option of interest-free loans to individuals for home modification, etc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Every Community Board has been asked for the same amount of funding (\$10,000), the total being the sum of \$60,000. The monies are to fund emergency assistance for 200 older people experiencing chronic illness across the city.
4. This report aims to include perspectives from the major stakeholders and outlines the history and context of the project.
5. The "Winter Warmth Project" has actively worked from May 2005, though was meeting prior to this time (first mooted in February of this year). It arose from concerns expressed by the Community Stakeholders Group. This group is part of Eldercare Canterbury, an initiative of the Canterbury District Health Board, and was established in 1997 to integrate and improve health services for older people in the region.
6. The group is made up of representations from the medical profession, community providers, community care providers, residential care and key stakeholders from the older person's community. The focus of Eldercare Canterbury is two-fold. The first was to create positive change for older people's health by the use of projects, and the second was and is to establish and maintain strong working relationships between the providers themselves and then between the providers and the community.
7. Eldercare Canterbury also has several subgroups that meet and feed back to the main forum regarding the specific issue they advocate and promote on. They include the Transfer of Care (Discharge Planning) and a Working Together for Winter Group. A project already completed is the preparation and promotion of postcards for people over 65 years of age as a reminder to take flu vaccinations and to stay warm over winter.
8. The "Winter Warmth" Project was given \$5,000 Metropolitan Funding in September 2004 to pay for a project manager for a three month period this year. Bill Chudleigh was employed in this role and set up a steering group to oversee its activities.
9. The committee has three main goals:
 - (a) To identify and support 200 older people this winter who have immediate need identified due to their age, chronic illness and living alone, to achieve a warmer home environment.
 - (b) Over the next 12 months to have 300 older people achieve with support a warmer energy efficient home.
 - (c) As a group consolidate and enhance procedures and funding to ensure that the project is creditable and can plan for the future.

10. The lead agencies involved at this time include:
 - Age Concern
 - Community and Public Health
 - Community Energy Action
 - Nurse Maude Association
 - Presbyterian Support Services
 - Anglican Care
 - Salvation Army
 - Methodist Mission
 - The Canterbury PHOs
11. The “Winter Warmth” Project Committee clearly identified the immediate needs of older people facing a cold winter and established a Warm Home Standard to ensure that there was a benchmark to achieve when assessing a person’s need. This meant that in the home there was to be at least one living area ‘Cosy Zone” that maintained a minimum temperature of 18°C during the day and at least one bedroom “Cosy Zone” that maintained a minimum temperature of 12°C at night time. The standard also indicated that a person must have sufficient capacity to pay for fuel and/or power as well as be suitably dressed for indoor conditions. To guarantee the previous standards were maintained, a third standard focussed on the sufficient supports or personal ability of the individual to take care of his/her general health and safety.
12. The standard was developed and sanctioned by the Canterbury District Health Board, the Medical Officer of Health and the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The Canterbury Warm Home Warrant of Fitness is the tool that is used to ascertain whether a home complies or not. The lead agency Age Concern does these checks. Details of this are attached in the Appendix.
13. Once a home has had its warrant and the individuals, who are very often at crisis point, are supported with their immediate situation, they are referred to Community Energy Action which completes a Warm Home Energy Check and undertakes the resulting work.
14. At the time of writing this report Andrew Dickerson, Chief Executive Officer of Age Concern, reported that the agency is supporting 54 people with emergency assistance. Examples of support include payment of power accounts, food, clothing, bedding and support to GP. He indicated that everyone that was supported has some type of chronic health condition - the most common (in order) being respiratory conditions, heart conditions, arthritis, diabetes and circulatory problems. All these illnesses are compounded by the cold and lack of heating and insulation.
15. Bede Martin, Manager of Community Energy Action, emphasised the need to work in partnership with related agencies whether it be at a funding or strategic level. This agency is currently lobbying government for funding and is negotiating with organisations like Environment Canterbury to further resource capacity. To date they have undertaken 30 Warm Home Energy Checks which is about a third of the referrals made from Age Concern this winter.
16. Recent research by the Community Development Team assessing the needs of older people in the Hagley/Ferrymead Ward clearly illustrates that the three most prominent issues identified were health and safety concerns, the need for affordable quality housing and the existence of social isolation. These issues all link to the problems relating to keeping warm in winter and the resulting health inequities that arise.
17. Lesley Keast, Community Board member, reports that^{*}:
 - 670 people in the Spreydon/Heathcote Ward
 - 649 people in the Fendalton/Waimairi Ward
 - 543 people in the Hagley/Ferrymead Ward
 - 511 people in the Shirley/Papanui Ward
 - 604 people in the Riccarton/Wigram Ward
 - 658 people in the Burwood/Pegasus Ward

who are 70 years and over, live alone and experiencing chronic illness. There are an additional 12,180 people living in partnerships aged 70 years and over where at least one partner experiences chronic illness.

^{*} These figures were obtained from the Planning and Funding Unit at the Canterbury District Health Board.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

18. There are no legal considerations.
19. Financially the Christchurch City Council has already contributed \$5,000 to the Winter Warmth Project to finance a coordinator from the Metropolitan Community Development Fund.
20. There is a current request for \$10,000 from each Community Board - the total being \$60,000.
21. The above figures obtained from the Canterbury District Health Board clearly indicate that those older people who are identified needing significant support from the Winter Warmth Project are located fairly evenly across the city. It therefore is appropriate for this project to seek Council funding at a metropolitan level. This is a citywide issue that implies a citywide response.
22. The option of the Council making a funding contribution by way of an interest free loan to individuals also is not tenable for two reasons. This would mean that the Christchurch City Council was providing public money for private/individual benefit. After discussions with Age Concern and Community Energy Action, the group of people identified are not in a position to repay any sort of loan due to their poverty levels and crisis situation. Community Energy Action reported that even with significant subsidies there were a significant number of people, again in the same category, who could with assistance budget day to day but due to major financial constraints were not able to make financial arrangements in any long term capacity.
23. The Community Board has delegated authority to spend funds with an "absolute discretion over the implementation of the Discretionary funding allocation of up to \$60,000 (**subject to being consistent with any policies or standards adopted by the Council**). Given that application is being made to the six Community Boards this project is clearly a metropolitan wide initiative. It is recommended that it be referred to the Metropolitan Community Discretionary Fund in the new funding round closing on 31 August 2005. If this is unsuccessful then the Winter Warmth Project makes application to Council in 2006 under the Annual Major Grants Funding Scheme.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Decline the \$10,000 application.
2. Advise the Winter Warmth Project to seek Metropolitan Community Discretionary Funding in the new funding round closing on 31 August 2005.
3. Note that if this is unsuccessful then they be advised to apply in 2006 under the Annual Major Grants Funding Scheme.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATIONS

That a representative from the "Winter Warmth" project be asked to attend the Board's next meeting.