

19. COMMUNITY GARDENS SUBCOMMITTEE

Officer responsible Community Advocate	Author Community Secretary
Corporate Plan Output:	

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the progress of its Community Gardens Subcommittee and to seek endorsement of its recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The Community Gardens Subcommittee evolved from a report “Growing Communities - Organic Resources for Social Needs” presented to the Board’s 22 November 1999 meeting. The purpose of the Subcommittee was to investigate the establishment of community gardens and composting schemes within the Burwood/Pegasus area. The aim of these gardens is to provide a sustainable means of disposal for kitchen waste, encourage the sharing of knowledge in composting and gardening techniques and to create places of engagement for local communities. The Subcommittee is comprised of Chrissie Williams, Glenda Burt, Caroline Kellaway, Carole Evans, Don Rowlands, Andrew Livingstone (PEEEPS), George Watson (Mature Employment Services), Eric Park (Waste Management Unit), Michael McNabb (Community Development Adviser) and Kaye Edens (Community Technical Adviser).

ECO VILLAGE

Initial discussions have been undertaken between the Subcommittee and Property Unit over the feasibility of establishing the Owles Terrace site as an Eco Village. The Subcommittee felt that it would be important to investigate ways and means that business interests could meet the Property Unit’s financial objectives and timeframes for sale of the site. Further investigations would also have to be undertaken to establish a model for an Eco Village, which would include a wide contingency of factors such as energy efficiency standards, waste minimisation standards, site feasibility and design plans. The Subcommittee felt that to move on from this initial concept idea it would be important to establish a separate Working Party. It is proposed that the Working Party include Chrissie Williams, Carole Evans, Don Rowlands, Caroline Kellaway, Glenda Burt, Sally Buck, Anna Crighton, Eric Park (Waste Management Unit) and Pam Ellis (Property Unit).

PILOT PROJECTS

The Subcommittee has also initiated a number of pilot projects based around the ingenious concept of portable gardens. Portable gardens are the brainchild of the Mature Employment Service that observed many people could not establish a garden due to a lack of space or physical constraints. The philosophy behind the portable gardens is ‘bring gardening to the people’. They range in size from a single to a double bed and are raised above the ground to allow people to garden without undue stress on their bodies. This is seen as especially helpful to elderly or physically disabled people who may not otherwise be able to enjoy the pleasures of tending a garden. Mature Employment construct the portable gardens from materials deposited at the metro transfer stations, which further supports the Three R’s concept of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

The Subcommittee has initiated two pilot schemes based around the portable gardens. The first pilot is focussed on the Concord Place Council Housing Units where discussions have been initiated through Glenda Burt and Caroline Kellaway. Residents' in the units have been especially enthusiastic with a total of 18 portable gardens being ordered so far. Funding of \$1,000 for the gardens has been allocated from the Strengthening Communities Action Plan Team, however there is a further \$500 required to cover the cost of extra gardens and compost to start the scheme. The gardens will remain the property of the Board and Glenda and Caroline have agreed to liaise with residents should they wish to discontinue use of their portable garden. The garden can then be transported to another person.

The second pilot is being established at the St Andrews Community House in North New Brighton, which is very interested in a portable garden around the size of a double bed. Don Rowlands is currently negotiating the establishment of this garden.

In addition, investigations are being undertaken with the New Brighton Community Creche to initiate a composting and gardening scheme for the children and parents in the Creche community. The additional costs to set this scheme up would be compost bin \$10, two portable gardens \$240, small hand tools \$30 and compost \$30.

CONCLUSIONS

The community composting and gardens concept has the dual objectives of waste reduction and creating community spirit. The Subcommittee believes that there is great potential to develop the concept from simple portable gardens right through to the possible establishment of an Eco Village. In the future the Subcommittee is interested in widening the scope of the portable gardens concept and also looking towards other community composting and garden schemes. Investigations are being initiated to identify spaces of public land in the community, such as road reserves and small pockets of unused Parks' land, that could be established for schemes in the future.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board recommend to the Projects and Property Committee:
 1. Its endorsement of investigations into the establishment of an Eco Village at Owles Terrace.
 2. The establishment of an Eco Village Working Party, consisting of Chrissie Williams, Carole Evans, Don Rowlands, Glenda Burt, Sally Buck, Anna Crighton, Eric Park and Pam Ellis, to investigate the feasibility of creating an Eco Village at Owles Terrace.

2. That the Board support:
 1. The Concord Place community garden and composting pilot scheme and that it take responsibility for maintaining and retaining the pilot.
 2. The allocation of \$500 from its 1999/2000 Discretionary Funds towards the costs of establishing the Concord Place composting and portable gardens pilot scheme.
 3. The allocation of \$310 towards a composting and portable community garden pilot scheme at St Andrews House.
 4. The allocation of \$310 to support the establishment of a community composting and garden pilot scheme at New Brighton Community Creche.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the aforementioned recommendations be adopted.