

WARDS AFFECTED:
ASPLEY, BILBOROUGH
AND LEEN VALLEY

ITEM No

**WEST AREA COMMITTEE
14 JANUARY 2009**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SPORT, LEISURE AND PARKS

NOTTINGHAM IN BLOOM NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES

1 SUMMARY

Nottingham in Bloom's success on a regional and national level has inspired a great amount of community interest and it is planned to harness this with a renewed focus on a local level for 2009. Proposals outlined will ensure consistently high standards and floral impact across the City.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- (i) the Committee consults local residents with the aim of agreeing a programme of horticultural and environmental schemes under the Blooming Neighbourhoods campaign;
- (ii) notes and commits support for local neighbourhoods taking part in the Grass Roots campaign.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Nottingham in Bloom is a corporate initiative linking local communities, businesses and individuals through sustainable partnerships, working together to produce horticultural excellence and enhance the local landscape, the environment and the character of Nottingham.
- 3.2 A Nottingham in Bloom revenue development agreed for the financial year 2006-7 included £90,000 allocated to Area Committees (£10,000 for each area). Each year since, consultation has taken place with Area Committees about how this money is spent on a range of floral enhancements such as planters, hanging baskets and barrier baskets or on longer-term site developments such as traffic islands in neighbourhoods through the Spectacolour initiative. Since that time health and safety restraints have forced a drastic reduction in the number of lamp post mounted baskets and Spectacolour has had to be redesigned.

4 PROPOSALS

Blooming Neighbourhoods

4.1 The Spectacolour initiative will be renamed 'Blooming Neighbourhoods' and will be a community-led project across the City to proactively plan displays and environmental improvements, while also allowing for reactive planning for special projects, totalling up to £10,000 per area.

4.2 It is proposed that each Area Committee be provided with ten extra planters (each 1m x 1m) and 40 barrier troughs and, working with Street Scene, agree where these are to be sited. Street Scene is drawing up lists of suggested locations for the planters and baskets and these will be brought to Area Committees for discussion and agreement in March 2009. The Area Committee is also invited to choose a planting colour scheme for this initiative with the choices being red/white/blue, orange/purple/silver or pink/blue/white. The Committee will be asked to agree a required colour scheme and locations by 1 April 2009.

4.3 Nottingham in Bloom also offers the opportunity for local groups to help plant the baskets and planters for their own neighbourhood to encourage local ownership and pride in the area. In addition, the Area Committee has the opportunity to allocate any remaining money to purchase of extra barrier baskets or planters, or put it towards larger schemes, including the improvement of the local environment, traffic island makeovers or tackling grot spots.

Grass Roots campaign

4.4 Nottingham in Bloom has a nationally recognised reputation for inspiring and engaging community involvement, and it is intended to build on this further in working with local residents, groups and businesses in 2009 through the Grass Roots campaign. This will encourage and support communities to improve their own environments through horticultural, sustainability and cleanliness initiatives. It will also encourage more contact and sharing of experiences between communities. To support this, the Nottingham in Bloom team will work closely with Neighbourhood Management Teams and community representatives to identify and encourage participation by neighbourhoods and individuals.

4.5 Neighbourhoods will also be encouraged to gain external recognition of their efforts and achievement by entering the East Midlands in Bloom Neighbourhood Awards (see Appendix 1). It is proposed that this could be followed by a competition between Areas in 2010 for a Bloom Champion. It is hoped to give a 'starter pack' comprising plants and compost to each community signing up for the awards as follows:

- small community (up to 50 people) £100
- medium community (51 to 250 people) £150
- large community (251+ people) £200

City Bloom Competitions and events

- 4.6 Community participation and interest will be sustained throughout the year with a variety of competitions and events. The Nottingham in Bloom Garden Competition will be judged in July and includes categories for businesses, community groups, individuals, students and children. The Nottingham in Bloom Painting Competition, sponsored by Capital One, will be run in the spring, with winners representing the City in a regional competition. Two other high-profile events will be the Nottingham in Bloom Launch in the Old Market Square on Thursday 9 April 2009 and the Behind the Scenes of Nottingham in Bloom event at Woodthorpe Nursery on Saturday 9 May 2009.

5 TIMESCALE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSALS

Blooming Neighbourhoods floral enhancements will be in place from approximately June to October 2009. The Grass Roots campaign will be launched in February 2009, ready for the summer season.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The purchase of the additional planters and barrier troughs can be financed from this year's Spectacolour budget.
- 6.2 It is proposed that the West Area £10,000 Blooming Neighbourhoods budget for 2009 be allocated as follows:
- supplying plant material for the planters and barrier troughs, maintenance for the summer season, and appropriate branding;
 - the remainder for development works identified by Neighbourhood Management Teams and the Bloom Operational Group.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The West Area Committee attempts to involve all sections of the community in its work and this matter will contribute by encouraging community participation in selecting sites and colours for the floral enhancements and in encouraging neighbourhoods to get involved in the Grass Roots initiative.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None

10 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The initiatives outlined support all five of the Council's strategic priorities as follows:

- Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods – through direct action by the City Council and by supporting efforts of local individuals and groups;
- Supporting Nottingham People – to improve their local environment and to gain formal recognition for doing so;
- Serving Nottingham Better – improved floral enhancements throughout the neighbourhoods;
- Respect for Nottingham – encouraging neighbourhoods to work towards a cleaner city
- Choose Nottingham – making Nottingham a greener, cleaner and more attractive place to live, work and visit.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1988 IMPLICATIONS

The work of Nottingham in Bloom is supported by the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership for its value in improving community relations.

12 VALUE FOR MONEY

The Nottingham in Bloom Team will work with the Neighbourhood Management Team to ensure that resources are directed effectively towards the floral enhancements and environmental improvements in the area.

13 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

None

14 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

Royal Horticultural Society guidance to Neighbourhood Award entrants
Report to Community Wellbeing Select Committee - 17 November 2008

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Background information on East Midlands in Bloom Neighbourhood Awards

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Neighbourhood Awards are an initiative for small, resident-led communities just starting out on the greening-up of their own areas and are often a first step in community regeneration. While entries are not judged against each other, they are visited by Britain in Bloom experts who provide valuable feedback and helpful advice on how to develop and encourage ongoing improvements. Each entry is then presented with an Award of Improvement, Merit or Outstanding Achievement. There would be a presentation event in September 2009.

People entering the awards have reported safer communities, making friends with neighbours they never knew, turning around 'grot spots', transforming rundown areas and creating spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Nottingham had four entries in the Neighbourhood Awards this year, all from The Meadows. Other cities have far more, for example, 39 in Manchester. It is anticipated that a Nottingham in Bloom campaign could boost the total to perhaps 30 in the first year. Entries can include streets, community gardens, housing complexes, friends of parks, Tenants' and Residents' Associations and community centres.

This campaign would have the backing of the East Midlands in Bloom Committee who are keen to boost the number of entries into the regional awards. The Committee can offer an advisory visit and guidance for each entry, as well as supporting Nottingham in Bloom with a presentation at a meeting for interested parties. In addition, starter information is downloadable from the RHS website, including advice on applying for external funding. Judging takes place between 6 and 17 July 2009.