

# REPORT OF LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 10 November 1998)

## 1. APPLEMORE PLAY GROUP (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO 55).

Following the last meeting of the Applemore Recreation Centre Consultative Committee on 25 August, and the Leisure Services Committee on 1 September, Officers had been requested to report further on the options to ensure the continuation of play group provision at Applemore, at no financial cost to the Council.

The play group was established in the 1980's, serves 70 children, is fully subscribed and was recently recognised by Ofsted as providing a very good quality service.

The previous report to the Committee had indicated that the play group's operating loss to the Council was £13,500. Since then, a number of areas have been investigated to attempt to reduce the costs and increase income, in order to eliminate the costs to the Council. In receiving the officers' report on 10 November, the Committee was broadly in agreement with the proposals, though concern was expressed that the increased charges might discourage some people from making use of the facilities. Accordingly, members requested that the situation be monitored and reports made to the Committee as appropriate. It was also confirmed that the Dibden Allotments Charity may offer assistance to individuals in cases of genuine hardship. Members noted that there would be no staff losses as a result of the implementation of the proposals, which were agreed by the Committee and are outlined below:-

- (i) Increased charges;
- (ii) Maximised voucher income;
- (iii) Move to Old Profiles Room (use of alternative rooms thereby reducing the hire charges);
- (iv) Reductions in staff ratios to the Social Services standard of 1:6; and
- (v) To seek external funding (the officers were requested to investigate possible sponsorship or grants).

All of the above measures have resulted in reducing the deficit from £13,500 to £567, and officers were asked to monitor the situation and work towards a break-even by 2002/03.

**2. SEASONAL REVIEW OF CHARGES (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO 56).**

The Committee considered charging proposals for each of the Recreation Centres as well as Dibden Golf Centre, Eling Toll Bridge, Beach Huts and Keyhaven River.

The Consultative Committees were broadly in agreement with the charges, though at Lymington the Consultative Committee had expressed disappointment at the fact that the increases were above the rate of inflation.

However, the Committee agreed to the changes in fees and charges and resolved that in future all fees and charges would be agreed on an annual basis in August/September.

**3. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO WEST TOTTON AREA (REPORTS G AND H) (MINUTE NOS 58 AND 59).**

At its meeting in March 1998, the Committee had agreed to the allocation of £124,993 for the construction of a bowling green facility in West Totton. Due to unforeseen increased costs, the Town Council has since requested an extra £14,000 to complete the scheme, to be met from developers' contributions. This was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee has also agreed to an allocation from developers' contributions of the sum of £35,000 at the request of the Totton and Eling Town Council, towards alterations to the West Totton Community Centre.

**4. RINGWOOD RECREATION CENTRE SWIMMING POOL - TILING (REPORT K) (MINUTE NO 60).**

Shortly before the 10 November 1998 Committee meeting, a problem occurred at the Ringwood Recreation Centre Swimming Pool, where the tiling of the pool had deteriorated to the extent that a patch of tiles in the main pool had become detached. Funds were included in the Council's Expenditure Plan in 2002/03 to completely re-tile the main and learner pools at the Centre though this has had to be brought forward, and combined with other planned work.

Officers had considered various options, but advised that the recommended course of action was the immediate refurbishment of the pool, and it was proposed to undertake this to capitalise on a planned Christmas closure, commencing on 7 December. This date had the least financial impact in terms of loss of income, and also coincided with the closure of Littledown Centre (a major competitor).

Five firms were invited to tender, with two being returned and the lowest from Variety Floors was accepted for £26,500 which was well within the budget sum. The contract period assumes that the slab beneath the existing tiles is in good condition but this will not be able to be determined until the tiles have been removed and no allowance has been made for remedial works to the slab. The revenue implications of the closure, assuming the pool re-opens on schedule (7 February 1999) have been estimated at a loss of £33,000,

and officers were requested to report to the next Committee meeting on ways in which this sum might be found.

The opportunity has also been taken to bring forward other planned work at the Centre, including refurbishment of the ozone and sand filter and also work on the high level ducts. With a number of different contracts and contractors working on-site, co-ordination of the overall programme is essential, and this has been carefully programmed to ensure that it can be carried out safely and within the overall programme.

Progress on the re-tiling to date has been good and officers will continue to monitor the progress of the project carefully.

**5. FORDINGBRIDGE MUSEUM (MINUTE NO 61).**

At the Council Meeting on 2 November 1998 it was agreed to refer this matter back to the Leisure Services Committee to consider further the question of funding for the proposed Fordingbridge Museum.

The Committee noted that Hampshire County Council was no longer able to fund the scheme fully, and it was therefore agreed that the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to include the sum of £20,000 in the Council's expenditure plans as a possible contribution towards the proposed Scheme.

**Councillor J J Dawson  
CHAIRMAN**

(ctteemtg/cttee/ls101198/report)