

## **REPORT OF LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

(Meeting held on 11 January, 2000)

### **1. PROPOSED CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF PRACTICE (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 65)**

The Committee has endorsed a Child Protection Code of Practice which has been written as a safeguard for both employees of New Forest District Council (particularly within Leisure Services) and sports coaches, sports and play leaders and volunteers working on the Council's behalf.

This Code of Practice is intended as part of a corporate approach to recognise that whilst principally affecting Leisure Services employees and volunteers, the report has implications for the whole Council.

The Code has been the subject of full consultation with Hampshire Social Services Department and Hampshire Constabulary, who have each endorsed its content.

The Code of Practice will be included in the Employee Handbook. Copies will also be given to volunteers working on behalf of the Council as well as partner organisations who will be asked to sign a receipt of acknowledgement and comply with its requirements.

### **2. MARCHWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY USE AGREEMENT (REPORT E) (MINUTES NO. 66)**

The Committee has considered a report on proposed changes to the Community Use Agreement for this school.

Marchwood Junior School was opened in 1985 and a Sub Committee formed to oversee decisions on the use of the school premises outside of school hours. The Agreement originally established a framework between the School, Marchwood Parish Council and New Forest District Council. At that time the School was one of the few facilities in the immediate area and was used for Community activities and other events.

The Parish Council had now indicated that it wishes to opt out of the Agreement to concentrate efforts towards promotion of the Village Hall and other projects. The implications for the Agreement are minimal but it has been necessary to review the situation taking into account the proposed change of partners.

The Committee has agreed that the current Community Service Agreement be revised to cite the District Council and the School as the parties to the Agreement. Provision has also been made for two representatives of community users at the school to be invited to serve on the Community Use Sub Committee along with the District Council member representative.

**3. CONCESSIONARY MEMBERSHIP – IMPLICATIONS OF WORKING FAMILIES TAX CREDIT (WFTC) (REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 67)**

The Committee has considered the implications of recent changes to the benefits system on the concessionary scheme currently operated at the District Council Recreation Centres. A review of the eligibility criteria has been undertaken in order to assess how the main changes relating to the WFTC, which replaces family credit, can be incorporated.

The current concessions scheme targets those on a low income as well as those who are registered disabled or have been advised to undertake exercise on medical grounds. The main issue arising from the WFTC is a move away from benefit which targets specifically those on lower income towards a tax credit administered through the taxation system which will apply to working families, including those with a higher income level.

Currently the Centre schemes are administered directly at the Recreation Centres and every effort is made to make the process as easy an unobtrusive as possible. The new WFTC would mean that proof of income levels would be required and the process would be inappropriate to be conducted at a busy public reception desk. The Council would also need to determine a threshold for the income levels to trigger eligibility.

There are two nationally available benefits which target those on lower income, namely housing benefit and council tax benefit both of which are linked to income levels. The Committee have agreed that by recognising these rather than the WFTC, the Council will be able to maintain its position of supporting those on low income to access the recreation centres either as members or casual customers.

The Committee have also agreed that the scheme will be monitored for take up levels and that a further report will be made back to them if necessary, with proposed changes to ensure the continued success of the concessionary membership scheme.

**4. HYTHE SALTMARSH – TRIAL USE OF DREDGED SEDIMENTS (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO. 68)**

The Committee have considered a proposal to use dredged material to recharge eroding mud flats and inter-tidal saltmarshes on a trial basis at the foreshore fronting Hythe village.

In 1996 Associated British Ports (ABP) dredged the main channel in Southampton Water to allow the passage of deeper draft container ships into the port. A condition of ABP's consent to dredge was a requirement to carry out a trial recharge of eroding mud flats using fine sediments arising from the dredging.

The site chosen for the trial was part of an area of saltmarsh and mudflats near Hythe, owned by the Council and leased to the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. In February 1999, when permission to carry out the trial was sought from the Council as landowner, the Council consulted the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and due to their concerns about the scientific basis of the trial and possible links to environmental compensation measures associated with the proposed Dibden Bay Container Port, the Trust were not willing to recommend granting permission.

By June 1999, the scientific concerns had been resolved.

The Committee have agreed to the trial recharge taking place in 2000 (or a later year as may be agreed by officers) in accordance with clauses 20 and 21 of the Conditions of Consent for the 1996 channel deepening, and subject to any further conditions that may need to be applied after consultations with English Nature. The Committee noted that if the trial were to take place in 2000 it would probably be too late for the results to be used in support of any environmental mitigation measures associated with ABP's proposals for Dibden Bay.

The Committee have asked for a further report back on the outcome of the trial.

**Councillor J A G Hutchins**  
**CHAIRMAN**