

## REPORT OF THE REVIEW PANELS FOR 2004/05

### 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The 2004/05 municipal year has been marked by a number of changes which are designed to make the Review Panels more effective.

### 2. DEVELOPING A WAY FORWARD

- 2.1 The Corporate and Finance Review Panel initiated a fundamental review of the way in which the Panels were operating. Led by Councillors Robinson and Ward, the review looked at best practice elsewhere to establish the key characteristics that lead to effective and productive review processes. In addition to visiting other authorities, undertaking desk top research and drawing on experience from the Audit Commission, extensive internal consultations were used to develop a model that would fit the needs of this District. The final recommendations were considered by the Cabinet, with the Council consequently deciding to introduce a new Corporate Overview Panel in August 2004. Drawing its membership mainly from the Chairmen and opposition spokesmen of each of the other Panels, this Panel will provide a valuable co-ordinating forum that will make sure important issues are not missed and also that there is a degree of consistency in approach to corporate issues. The new Panel has particular responsibility for monitoring performance against the Corporate Plan "Heart of the Forest". One of the first steps in this process was to get each Panel to identify all of the corporate aims which were directly within their area of responsibility, and also create a secondary list of the aims where they felt they would like to be involved if any work was being done. This has created much greater clarity in responsibility for the review of key areas of work within the Council, and will promote joint working between Panels on some topics.

### 3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 All of the Review Panels have become more closely involved with the performance management framework for the Council. It is impractical for entire Panels to develop detailed knowledge of the activities of all services that report to them, particularly for the Corporate Review Panel, which has responsibility for 9 service areas. Each Panel has therefore appointed a number of Lead Scrutiny Members. The Lead Scrutiny Members are responsible for the following tasks:
- Gaining an understanding of the work of the service area.
  - Holding regular meetings with their Service Head to make sure they keep in touch with any changes in performance or in the work that must be produced.
  - Reporting to the Panel on an ad hoc basis if they see a problem with the service.

- In June of each year, reporting to the Panel on how well they think the service has performed against the service plan, and giving some initial thoughts on what should be in the next year's service plan
  - In November of each year reporting to the Panel on what they think should be the key issues for the service plan in the next year, and pointing out any significant differences in what is happening compared with what is expected from the current service plan.
- 3.2 The Panels will be reviewing the Service Plans on an annual basis. This year there have been some teething problems but it is expected that, as familiarity with the process grows, Lead Scrutiny Members will be able to make more meaningful evaluations of what is happening in services, and report their views to the Panels directly.
- 3.3 Another key element of the Performance Management Framework is the development of SMART targets against which performance is measured. The Panels have advised the Portfolio Holders on the key targets which they feel best reflect this Council's main priorities for the forthcoming year.

#### **4. EXPENDITURE PLANS**

- 4.1 One area where the Panels are still working to develop a constructive role is in the development of the expenditure plan proposals. In general terms, the Panels are being consulted on proposals which are already well developed following consultations with Portfolio Holders and Review Panel Chairmen. In general experience has been that the Panels are not making significant comments. Some expenditure proposals have been brought forward as a result of substantive reviews, such as for the Garden Waste Collection Scheme and the Community Wardens Project, but work remains to be done on integrating these types of proposals into the early stages of the expenditure plan process.

#### **5. TRAINING**

- 5.1 All of the Panels received training, in the autumn of 2004, on how to be more effective in their roles. This included a seminar for all members at which the main speaker was the Principal Clerk of the Select Committees of the House of Commons. The seminar was followed by separate training sessions for each Panel, led by Marianne Abley of the Audit Commission. Each session was tailored to meet the individual needs of the Panel but a key recurring theme was the need to identify specific topic areas that they considered worthy of further investigation, where they felt that, through research and consultation, they could develop proposals that could make a real difference to what this Council, and its partner organisations, did in the future. It is now recognised that in order for the Panels to be effective, they must have a clear objective in mind before they start working on a topic area, and all projects should be properly planned in advance to work out who should be doing it, how, by when, and what outcome is expected. Over the last few months, each of the Panels has initiated a fundamental review of its work programme to refocus their efforts onto a limited number of key topics. Each Panel has adopted a different approach to generating a long list of potential topics and refining that down to a work programme. The Housing Health and Social Inclusion Panel, in particular, has generated all potential work ideas itself, and

then held a facilitated workshop to develop their short list of topics. The Crime and Disorder Review Panel, at the other end of the scale, has decided to use an external facilitator to help them develop a work programme that is soundly based within the more complex framework of the various strategy documents that affect their areas of responsibility.

## **6. A NEW FOCUS**

6.1 As a consequence, the Panels are moving away from agendas that are dominated by items which they should note, or on which they can have little influence. They are re-focussing their activities towards performance management, and also the review of key topics where they feel that meaningful policy recommendations can be made.

## **7. CALL INS**

7.1 The current year saw a continuation of the trend of there being a limited number of executive decisions called in by the Panels.

# **CORPORATE AND FINANCE REVIEW PANEL / CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL 2004/05**

## **1. MAJOR REVIEWS**

### **1.1 Review of Overview and Scrutiny Function**

This major review, which is described in more detail in the general overview section, has been used to refocus the Council's review panels towards the more cost effective use of member and officer time, and also to provide a greater relationship between their work and corporate aims and priorities.

### **1.2 Performance Management**

The Panel is developing its role in co-ordinating the work being done by all the Panels in support of the Council's performance management framework. Again this review, and its outcomes, is covered in the general overview section.

Some of the key initiatives the Panel has introduced to help assess performance, in a more structured and consistent way across all services, include:

- The use of a traffic light system in the Performance Plan, which helps identify areas of good performance as well as areas that potentially have the greatest opportunity for improvement.
- The provision of key information to enable members and officers to focus on the priorities of the Council and performance against targets.
- The introduction of interim/exception reports on performance every 4 months with efforts being made to link this to the budget process, so that judgments on performance inform the allocation of resources.
- Encouraging a reduction in the number of key targets for 2005/06. The list needed to be more focussed and more challenging.

## **2. OTHER ITEMS WHERE AN ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED OR INFORMATION GATHERED**

2.1 The Complaints Annual Report for 2003 - which gave details of corporate complaints made to the Council and investigated on behalf of the Chief Executive during that year.

2.2 The Corporate Equality Plan - which was a reflection of the Council's commitment to achieving equality in access to employment and services.

2.3 Commercial Services Directorate and the NFDC/TVBC Partnership Contact Centres - public access to Council services, including the contact centre approach.

2.4 The Panel highlighted some of these issues as examples of ways in which the scrutiny methods currently used by the Panel could be improved. It was acknowledged that the Panel had simply asked for information as a means of finding out more about a particular service, rather than introducing any significant element of challenge in examining the service and identifying any end product. The Panel concluded that, whilst presentations were very valuable, they could have been organised at a separate session, perhaps with an invite to all members, so as to “free up” the Panel to make more profitable use of its time. This served as good example in showing how important it was for the Panel to plan and scope its work carefully and in the most appropriate and effective way.

2.5 **Tetra Masts**

The Council asked the Panel to advise them on a policy to inform decisions on applications to place terrestrial trunked radio (TETRA) masts on Council owned land and premises, bearing in mind the concerns being expressed by residents about the related health risks. After considering a report by officers which included the concerns of the public, the scientific evidence, the planning issues, together with conclusions recently made after a study by Hampshire County Council and reference to a report by the National Radiological Protection Board, it was recommended to Cabinet that such applications should be appraised on a precautionary basis, with the presumption that they would not be approved if the public were likely to perceive a threat to their health or well-being.

2.6 **Gershon Procurement**

The Panel evaluated the implications of the Gershon report on local government procurement and service provision, which was published in November 2004. This suggested that efficiencies needed to be identified from all local authority activities including the HRA, General Fund and Capital. This was to be achieved through reforms that:-

- Maintain the same level of service provision while reducing the resources needed or deploying fewer staff;
- Result in additional output such as enhanced quality of service, for the same resources;
- Remodel service provision to enable better outcomes.
- For this District Council, this meant efficiency savings of £690,000 in 2005/06, and by 2007/08 efficiency gains equivalent to 7.5% of the 2004/05 baseline (£2.07 million).
- The Panel agreed that consideration of these requirements could be dealt with by Lead Scrutiny Members as part of the service planning process.

### 3. **WORK PROGRAMME**

3.1 The Panel decided to hold a workshop session in order to review the Work Programme and its mode of operation. The conclusions drawn at this session were as follows:-

- There needed to be better agenda control, less clutter and fewer items (no more than two per meeting as a maximum);

- Each item should be fully scoped. One of the questions to be asked for each project or agenda item should be “what difference will it make”;
  - It was agreed that enhanced use of the Lead Scrutiny Members and exception reporting would free the Panel to look at major topics;
- 3.2 The Panel have also agreed to extend an invitation to other members of the Council who might wish to become involved in the Panel’s work and act as extra Lead Scrutiny Members. This would contribute greatly to ensuring proper consideration of the 9 Service Plans which come under the purview of the Panel, whilst allowing COP greater freedom to engage in major projects. Having taken measures to ensure better control of its future agendas, the Panel were able to identify 2 main topics that will be worked on over the next few months:-
- (i) Procurement;
  - (ii) Capital Projects.
- These two projects have yet to be scoped and it has been suggested that the task of scoping them be offered to any member (not necessarily a COP member).
- 3.3 The Panel recognise that there is a great deal of expertise and knowledge outside of the Panel’s membership that can be exploited, allowing more involvement of non executive members than has been the case in the past.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

- 4.1 Since the first meeting of the new Corporate Overview Panel in August 2004, the Panel has taken stock of its role and workload as referred to in the main report.
- 4.2 Whilst it is early days following the changes made following the Scrutiny Review, I am well pleased with the progress that the Panel has made. I expected that the changes introduced following the Scrutiny Review would take a period of time to enable the Panels role to be fully identified, but I am certain that we are well on the way to becoming more effective during the next 12 months.
- 4.3 My thanks to all the members of the Panel for the hard work they have put in over the past 12 months, particularly the work in monitoring, as Lead Members, the 9 service Areas that this Panel is responsible for. Finally a word of thanks to the officers of the Council for the support they have given, particularly Andy Rogers.

# CRIME AND DISORDER REVIEW PANEL 2004/05

## 1. MAJOR REVIEWS

### 1.1 **Highway Speed Enforcement and Road Safety.**

The Panel investigated several related issues, which contributed towards road safety in the District. Of primary importance was speeding traffic and the Panel evaluated the effectiveness of schemes where local people recorded traffic speeds. While community based schemes were effective elsewhere, the Hampshire Chief Constable did not support such measures, and without police support, for example in sending warning letters to motorists who were recorded as speeding, there was no possibility of introducing such a scheme in the New Forest.

The Panel received a presentation from Sgt Skinner of the Roads Policy Unit on why and how the efforts of the police were directed towards areas where there was the greatest problem with highway safety.

The Panel also discussed highway safety issues with Cllr Wyeth, as the Chairman of the New Forest Road Safety Council, and Mr Sage, the County Council officer responsible. There was some concern at the effectiveness of the work the Road Safety Council was able to carry out. The Panel was pleased to hear that the Police Inspector responsible for community safety issues would, in future, be taking a more pro-active role on the Road Safety Council, and consequently increase the co-ordination between them and the police.

The Panel decided to leave road safety issues to the Community Safety Partnership.

### 1.2 **Victim Support**

A small team of Councillors has been investigating how the Victim Support Service in this District has been operating. The investigation is still at an early stage and further work needs to be done before the Councillors report back to the Panel.

### 1.3 **Domestic Violence**

A small team of Councillors is investigating how domestic violence is dealt with, and how various agencies interact to provide a service. To aid this process, Cllr Francis, supported by Cllrs Hibbert and Penwarden, has taken on the role of Chairman of the Domestic Violence Forum. The investigation is still in its early stages and the team will report back to the Panel in due course on their findings.

### 1.4 **Community Wardens**

Through a small member officer working group the Panel continued their evaluation, started in the previous year, of the role and effectiveness of Community Warden Schemes. Working closely with the Portfolio Holder, the Working Group gathered information on the characteristics that make such schemes most effective, and developed a detailed business case on a preferred model for this District. There was extensive consultation with the public and potential partners to establish what the local population would want from such a scheme. The project was overtaken by events, with the County Council deciding to make this District one of the trial areas for their developing

Community Safety Officer Scheme. Consequently the Cabinet decided not to proceed with the Panel's recommended scheme at this stage, but to evaluate the County Council's scheme before taking any further decisions. The research by the working group will provide a framework for establishing how well the County Council's scheme will meet this District's needs and aspirations.

## **2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1 Performance Indicators**

The Panel initiated a review of the numerous performance indicators that applied, particularly to the community safety function, to see if there was any scope for rationalisation, to develop a list of indicators that would be of value to the Panel. After an initial meeting, work on this topic was not progressed.

### **2.2 Crime and Community Safety Operation Group**

At the request of the Portfolio Holder, the Panel reviewed its representation on this outside body to try to improve liaison arrangements and information flow between the two organisations. The Panel's representation was slightly adjusted, and arrangements made to improve the feedback from a Councillor who was not currently a member of the Panel.

## **3. TOPICS WHERE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED**

### **3.1 Sports Diversionary Projects – possible measurement of effectiveness**

### **3.2 Community Safety Strategy and Community Safety Action Plans**

### **3.3 Anti-social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts**

### **3.4 Youth provision in Ringwood, and potential consequences of withdrawing County funding for the youth club**

### **3.5 Youth service and education funding in the New Forest District compared to the rest of Hampshire**

### **3.6 Arson – the extent of the problem and ways of combating it**

### **3.7 Drug and alcohol abuse – the extent of the problem in this District**

# ECONOMY AND PLANNING REVIEW PANEL 2004/05

## 1. MAJOR REVIEWS

### 1.1 **Parking Standards and Higher Density Residential Development**

The Panel reviewed the Council's policies on parking standards relating to the density of residential development. They used witnesses and a detailed presentation from officers on the parking standards and density policies, including photographs of examples of parking provision in this country and abroad. The Panel also reviewed the criteria for "existing areas of special character". In the meantime, the Panel agreed that the issue of congestion on A class roads caused by parking should be broadened to include any road where significant congestion would be experienced and that officers should consider this when revising the Council's parking standards. The other factor that had to be taken into account was house building targets in urban sites and the successful integration of new developments.

It was agreed that future officers' reports to Planning Development Control Committee, particularly in respect of environmentally significant developments, would be required to clearly address two questions:-

- (i) To what extent has the applicant properly analysed the existing character of the area?
- (ii) How does the proposed development affect the character of the surrounding area?

In order to support this, additional guidance would be prepared on how the design of new housing could address the need for higher density whilst respecting and strengthening local character and identity. The programme for this guidance would be included in the Local Development Scheme.

### 1.2 **Economic Development Service**

The Panel considered whether the failure to fill the post of Business Development Officer in the Economic Development Service was affecting the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy, which was a jointly adopted statement between the Council and the Business Partnership. The service Plan had been prepared on the basis that the Business Development Officer would be appointed during the year, and the Panel concluded that, without the post, the intentions of the Plan could not be fulfilled.

In the light of the above, the Panel advised the Cabinet that it was their view that the Business Development Officer post should be filled as soon as possible. The Panel sought ways in which the Business Development Officer post could be funded and agreed that the Initiatives Fund could be reduced in order to achieve the necessary revenue reduction. The Cabinet subsequently agreed.

## **2. OTHER ITEMS WHERE AN ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED OR INFORMATION GATHERED**

### **2.1 Nuisance High Hedges – New Legislation**

The Panel discussed the introduction of legislation to control nuisance high hedges, the likely process to be followed and the issues for service delivery by this Council. It was agreed that the emphasis should be on an extensive range of officer delegations, and there should be no Member involvement in decisions.

### **2.2 Ringwood Furlong Car Parking Order – Amendments**

The Panel advised the Cabinet on their views on the proposals to amend parking arrangements in Ringwood.

### **2.3 Review of Town Parking Clock and Charging Scheme**

The Panel reviewed the operation of the parking clock and charging scheme, which was introduced in January 2003. Members noted that, although comments had been requested concerning the introduction of charges and the clock scheme, there had been a limited response and there was no clear pattern that highlighted any particular areas of concern.

### **2.4 Draft South-East Plan**

The Panel made recommendations to Cabinet on the implications of the South-East Plan, which was to replace the old County Structure Plan.

### **2.5 New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration – Proposed Modifications**

The Panel, jointly with Members of the Planning Development Control Committee, made detailed comments and recommendation to the Cabinet on the proposed modifications to the Deposited New Forest District Local Plan in response to the Inspector's recommendations.

### **2.6 National Park**

The Panel received regular updates on the situation with the New Forest National Park.

## **3. CALL- IN – STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING**

- 3.1 The Panel considered a call-in of a Portfolio Holder decision concerning the process to be followed for street naming and numbering. After a detailed discussion, the Panel was of the view that the new protocol was appropriate and made recommendations to Cabinet accordingly.

## **4. WORK PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 The Panel has used a workshop session to develop a more focussed work programme, based on potential ideas originated by Panel members.

# ENVIRONMENT REVIEW PANEL 2004/05

## 1. MAJOR REVIEWS

### 1.1 **Garden Waste Collection Scheme**

At the request of the Environment Portfolio Holder, the Panel, through its Refuse Collection and Recycling Working Party helped develop proposals for a garden waste collection scheme. The Panel was satisfied that such a scheme could be environmentally sustainable, provided waste that was currently home composted was not diverted into the waste collection scheme. Recommendations were submitted to Cabinet, which included an analysis of the likely cost of the scheme, which was funded by both this Council, and by GOSE. The promotion of waste minimisation and home composting (including easy access to cheap home composting bins) formed key elements of the launch of the garden waste collection scheme, bearing in mind the Panel's findings. The first phase of a 3-year phased introduction for the scheme commenced in March this year. The Panel will be evaluating the performance of the scheme against the business plan, and also investigating the contribution that the scheme will make to meeting this Council's government-set targets for recycling performance.

### 1.2 **Waste Management Strategy.**

The CAP assessment had highlighted the need for this Council to have its own Waste Management Strategy and not rely on the strategies for Project Integra. The Panel played an active role in developing the Waste Management Strategy, giving it detailed evaluation and discussion through the Refuse Collection and Recycling Working Party. A number of suggested amendments were put forward, including actions that should be taken.

### 1.3 **Fly Tipping**

Fly tipping has become a serious problem affecting both this Council's land and private landowners. Fly tipping was raised with this Council by the National Farmers' Union at their annual liaison meeting and subsequently adopted by the Panel for more substantive research. A joint member officer working party has been established, with representatives from other organisations, including the NFU, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, invited to attend. The Working Party is developing ideas to reduce the amount of fly tipping, and also to improve the responsiveness of this Council and the Environment Agency, who both have powers of enforcement. An initial report has been submitted to the Panel, and further work, that needs to be done, has been identified.

1.4 **Recycling Performance**

Through the Refuse Collection and Recycling Working Party, the Panel is continuing to explore options to help this Council meet the Government's targets for recycling performance, but in an environmentally sustainable way. During the year the Citizen's Panel and Young Person's Panel were canvassed for their views on various recycling and waste related issues. The Panel made recommendations of the questions to be asked by the Panel and also received the findings of this research. A number of ideas, such as the kerbside collection of glass, are being evaluated, in the light of trials being held elsewhere in Hampshire.

**2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

2.1 **Civil Engineering Service – Draft Summary Report and Improvement Plan**

The Panel looked at the outcomes of the Best Value Review of the Civil Engineering Service. The Panel commented to Cabinet, supporting the proposals that actions should be taken only as budgetary provision allowed.

2.2 **Performance Indicators.**

The Panel had a provisional look at its performance indicators and considered appointing a small working group of members to develop a focussed set of indicators for use by the Panel. Members did not however come forward to volunteer for this work and it did not progress.

**3. OTHER ITEMS WHERE AN ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED OR INFORMATION GATHERED**

3.1 **Collection of Stray Dogs and Police Responsibility**

3.2 **Food Safety Service Plan 2004/05**

3.3 **WEE Directive**

3.4 **Land Drainage Strategy Review**

3.5 **Air Quality Review and Assessment**

The Panel has maintained a watching brief over developments on the Air Quality Review and Assessment of the District which has led to the requirement to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) around Junction Road Totton, and the High Street, Lyndhurst. Based on officer recommendations, the Panel has made recommendations to the Cabinet about the action necessary and the distribution of air quality monitors for the future. Work is currently being progressed by the officers on the boundaries of the AQMA's, and the Panel will consider the proposals again in due course.

#### **4. WORK PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 The Panel has looked at a wide range of potential topics that should be reviewed over the forthcoming year, and decided on a short list of subjects that warrant more detailed research. A small working group has been established to look at issues relating to cemeteries, and they will report back to the meeting of the Panel in June, in order to meet the needs of the Portfolio Holder to provide advice by the summer. The Panel will develop project briefs for the remaining topics at the June meeting.

#### **5. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT**

- 5.1 As can be seen from this report the Environment Review Panel has, in my opinion, performed well during the past year. Lessons have been learned and obviously some mistakes have been made but this is all part of the learning curve. The Garden Waste Scheme has been put in place and it will be interesting to see at the end of a further 12 months the actual increase to our recycling target. This coming year there are various issues to tackle particularly the urgent review of the Council owned cemeteries and Fly Tipping. It will be seen from the report in Item 3 that various information is being gathered which will form part of discussions with this panel in the forthcoming year.
- 5.2 Finally I take the opportunity to thank all the officers involved in their assistance to this panel.

# **HOUSING HEALTH AND SOCIAL INCLUSION REVIEW PANEL 2004/05**

## **1. MAJOR REVIEWS**

### **1.1 Housing Stock Options**

The Panel has reviewed the work of the Housing Stock Options Project Group which had been established to meet the requirements of the Office of the Deputy Minister to review how to meet the Decent Homes standard for all Council properties by 2010 and to carry out an Options Appraisal.

In making its recommendations to the Cabinet, the Panel concluded that retention of the Council's housing stock was the only advisable option in the light of tenants' views, particularly relating to perceptions of the quality of the service which they were offered. A large scale voluntary transfer of properties would be expensive and was not wanted by the Council's tenants. Therefore, the Panel recommended retention.

### **1.2 Best Value Review Housing Services – Conclusions of the Review on 'Round the Houses'**

The Panel has agreed an improvement plan for 'Round the Houses', the Council's tenants' newsletter. It aimed to modernize the already successful newsletter. This included putting the production, printing and distribution out to competitive tender.

## **2. OTHER ITEMS WHERE AN ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED OR INFORMATION GATHERED**

### **2.1 Homesearch Housing Allocations Scheme**

The Panel endorsed a series of proposed amendments to the lettings policy prior to consideration by Cabinet. This was designed to allow greater flexibility to assist keyworkers and broaden the category of 'local connections'.

### **2.2 Interim Housing Needs Assessment Results**

The Panel considered the Interim Assessment which investigated the community's housing needs and aspirations and the affordability of housing within the District.

The Panel supported the view that the Council's No. 1 Strategic Housing Policy should continue to be the social rented sector with provision also for shared ownership and keyworker dwellings.

### **2.3 Innovative Construction in the Affordable Housing Sector**

An officer from a local Housing Association made a presentation to the Review Panel on this topic. 'Modern methods of construction' generally involved the manufacture of house parts off-site in factories (either panels or ready made rooms or modules) which could be transported to the site and assembled.

### **2.4 Meals on Wheels and Community Meals**

The Panel has considered progress to date of the Meals on Wheels and Community Meals Review undertaken by Hampshire County Council, as well as the impact on local residents of a price increase as agreed by the County Council.

### **3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.1 Performance Indicators**

The Panel has continued to monitor a wide range of performance indicators relating to the housing service.

### **4. WORK PROGRAMME**

#### **4.1 Open Forum**

The Panel has an Open Forum which enables members and tenants' representatives to draw the attention of the Panel to current issues and to flag up areas of concern. It is a standard item on each agenda.

#### **4.2 How Can We Make a Real Difference to Our Communities?**

Under this title, the Panel is involved in a continuing discussion of the three elements which make up its remit and how it can contribute towards an improvement in each area.

The large number of issues and elements that were identified will be worked up into a practical Work Programme involving key partners such as the Primary Care Trust and educational providers. Sub-Groups will be reporting back to the full Panel on a number of issues.

The Panel's main priorities include:

#### **4.3 Health**

- obesity and diet;
- Public Health and the White Paper
- Lack of services;

#### **4.4 Housing**

- Matching supply and demand and the low proportion of one and two-bedroomed houses;
- Gold Star (incentives to be good tenants)
- Hidden housing need;
- Working with other agencies.

A full day session will be held in August 2005 to consider the review of supply and demand for housing.

## **LEISURE REVIEW PANEL 2004/05**

### **1. MAJOR REVIEWS**

#### **1.1 Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre – Creation of a Mind/Body/Dance Studio**

The Panel made a recommendation to Cabinet on a preferred option to convert two squash courts into a mind/body/aerobic studio at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre as part of the Capital Programme following representations from users of the existing dance studio and dissatisfied squash players.

#### **1.2 Support for Community Groups**

A special session was arranged in order to discuss with interested parties the level of support offered by the District Council's Leisure Service to voluntary and community sector groups, and whether it was an appropriate level. A presentation from District Council officers dealing with Sport and Recreation Development was followed by a question and answer session. The conclusion was that funding was not always the best form of help that the District Council could offer but the District Council might be able to lend support with management and administration of certain organisations. In addition it was felt that the Council could do more to communicate with the community about its work and activities in the community support field perhaps through its Public Relations Section, leafleting literature and via the Council's website. However it was recognised that the team should be seen as enabling rather than delivering project support, given scarce resources.

The information gained will help inform the Council's future approach to working with community groups.

### **2. OTHER ITEMS WHERE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED**

#### **2.1 Tourism and National Park**

The Panel has considered the current position in respect of tourism issues under the new National Park arrangements and, as part of its scrutiny role, has requested updates at every Panel meeting as a standard item.

It was noted that officers had already begun to exchange information and the National Park's Interim Chief Executive had commented she was happy that tourism in the New Forest was well managed. Relations with the Tourism Service would be examined via the National Park Authority's work programme.

### **3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.1 Management Information and the Role of the Panel**

The Panel intends to scrutinise the Expenditure Plan and the Leisure Service Plan as well as Council wide objectives and cross-cutting issues. Lead Scrutiny members have been appointed for the Leisure Services Plan and consideration will be given to the establishment of small sub-groups to work extensively on individual issues and report back to the full Panel in due course.

### **3.2 Leisure Service Plan: Progress**

Following preliminary discussions by two members with officers on the current Leisure Improvement Plan, the Panel agreed five areas from the current Service Plan as worthy of deeper investigation and further discussion:

- Create and agree machinery for the planning and implementation of shared priorities and actions between the health and leisure sectors;
- Prevention of falls in older people;
- Create a Beach Strategic Plan with the role of beach huts included and links to corporate strategy;
- Marchwood Youth Centre; and
- Use of Health and Leisure Centres as a source of more community involvement and information.

### **3.3 Expenditure Plans 2005/06 – 2008/09**

A Working Group of three members and two officers was formed to consider costs and benefits of energy management and reactive versus planned maintenance for further work.

## **4. CALL-IN OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

- 4.1 The Panel has reviewed a decision of the Leisure Portfolio Holder to grant £100 to the Hampshire County Youth Band. They decided that they would not request the Leisure Portfolio Holder to reconsider the grant awarded earlier to the Youth Band.

## **5. WORK PROGRAMME: SPECIAL MEETING OF LEISURE REVIEW PANEL**

- 5.1 The Panel held a special meeting in December 2004 to draw up its Work Programme.

- 5.2 Items for consideration in the Work Programme include:

- A tour of sites at Eling Tide Mill, Hanger Farm, Bartley Park, Minstead Study Centre;
- Lymington Healthy Living Project,
- The Primary Care Trust's "Overweight and Obesity Plan"
- A tour of alternative to car-based visits, ie tour bus, strategic cycle routes, wagon rides and train provision;
- Youth Provision

- Leisure Service Plan – half-yearly review
- Primary Care Trust – importance of leisure activities in the prevention of problems in older people's health
- New Service Plan
- Expenditure Plan and fees and charges;
- Increasing public awareness
- Revenue and Capital Estimates Report 2006/07
- Key Targets and achievements for the Local Performance Plan
- Public transport needs for leisure - to influence the County Council's policies

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