

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 27 APRIL 2000

NEWMILNS DRY SKI SLOPE

Report by Director of Education

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the condition of Newmilns Dry Ski Slope and to consider options regarding the future of the facility.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Newmilns Dry Ski Slope was opened in 1975 and has been in use on a daily basis since that time.
- 2.2 In 1995 a survey was carried out on the slope which identified that the whole slope required upgrading, including replacement of the brushes, improving the fabric of the centre and upgrading the range of facilities available from the slope.
- 2.3 A lack of capital investment in the slope has resulted in the continuing deterioration of the facility. The ski slope now requires significant investment to bring it up to a reasonable quality standard with the proviso that further investment would be required to bring it to a standard of quality and safety which would be preferred within the Council.

**3. CURRENT ISSUES**

- 3.1 A local community group; the Irvine Valley Regeneration Trust are keen that this facility should be positively considered. They have made application to the Local Committee for funding for a feasibility study, which will consider the demands for such a facility, the effects of local competition and possible funding sources for future investment.
- 3.2 The post of ski instructor has recently become vacant allowing review of the service delivery. Income from the slope has reduced in recent years in spite of attempts by staff to encourage attendance at the slope. It is felt that lack of a quality surface and provision of cheaper equipment in conjunction with the lack of property repairs has adversely affected use.
- 3.3 The budget of Community Education targets community based learning. There is no doubt that the focus of activity in the ski slope is not only educational, but also contributed significantly to social inclusion perspectives.
- 3.4 A recent Health and Safety report indicates seven areas of concern which are designated as hazardous, requiring urgent attention. While these risks in themselves do not require the closure of the slope, taken in conjunction with the need for capital investment they constitute a major issue monitoring investigations.

#### 4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 In the light of the range of problems associated with the ski slope and the lack of projected capital spend. It is proposed that consideration be given to closing the property and declaring it surplus to requirements.
- 4.2 Before a final decision is made, it is suggested that contact be made with the Irvine Valley Trust to assist in conducting a feasibility study to determine present, future and projected use of the facility.
- 4.3 In addition, the Community Education Service will consult with users of the service to assist in this process. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be brought back to a future meeting of the Education Committee.

#### 5. FINANCIAL REPORT

- 5.1 The total cost of the ski slope in 1999/2000 was £48,733 which includes building, staff, janitorial and utility costs.
- 5.2 The ski slope generated £8,277 in income in the financial year 1999/2000.
- 5.3 Running costs for the slope last year were £40,456.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) agree that the Director of Education consult with users of the Newmilns Dry Ski Slope to determine present use of the facility;
  - (ii) the Community Education Service assist the Irvine Valley Regeneration Trust in a feasibility study on future and projected use of the ski slope;
  - (iii) a report outlining the results of the consultation exercise and feasibility study be brought back to a future meeting of the Education Committee; and
  - (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Education

AJ/SB  
17 April 2000

#### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Margaret Burnell, Senior Depute Director of Education, Tel: (01563) 576104, or Anne Jackson, Principal Community Education Officer, Tel: (01563) 576126.

**AGENDA**