

CABINET MEETING – 14th JANUARY 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Sunderland Seasonal Lifeguard Service

Author(s):

Director of Community and Cultural Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet to begin a tendering process to procure the services of an external organisation to deliver the beach lifeguard service at Seaburn and Roker from the months of May to September for a five-year period from 2009.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is requested to approve the tendering for lifeguard services as set out in this report.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes/No

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Based on current budget provision for the operation of a seasonal lifeguard service, the contract value for the external provision of the service would be in excess of £250,000 over a five-year period which would necessitate a formal tendering process. In accordance with current rules of procedure on procurement it would also be necessary to determine if any other organisation would express an interest in providing the service.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The alternative option would be for the Council to continue lifeguard operations. However, in terms of resources, evidence from other local authorities that have contracted out beach lifeguard services, suggests a much larger investment in the provision of the service in terms of human resources and facilities and specialised equipment would be needed if providing the service in-house.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Relevant Review Committee:

Culture and Leisure

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

SUNDERLAND SEASONAL LIFEGUARD SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet to begin a tendering process to procure the services of an external organisation to deliver the beach lifeguard service at Seaburn and Roker from the months of May to September for a five-year period from 2009.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DECISION (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the tendering for seasonal lifeguard services as set out in this report.

3.0 INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council was approached by the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) in January 2007 with an enquiry to investigate the potential for RNLI involvement in life guarding provision in Sunderland.
- 3.2 The RNLI have formally expressed an interest in providing a beach life guarding service to Sunderland, South Tyneside and North Tyneside. In August 2007 officers from all three authorities visited Cornwall to investigate and observe RNLI beach life guarding services in operation and to meet with fellow officers from Carrick District Council.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Lifeguard service for Seaburn and Roker is currently provided by the Resorts Section of Culture and Tourism within the Community and Cultural Services Directorate. Approximately fifteen seasonal operatives are employed from May to September annually. There are constant budget pressures associated with the provision of the service, particularly with regard to the purchase and maintenance of specialised equipment and uniform and also in recruitment, selection and training.
- 4.2 The Royal National Lifeguard Association (RNLI) are successfully providing lifeguard operations to over twenty other local authorities in England. The RNLI anticipate that an additional eight local authorities will contract their services during the 2009 season adding another thirty resort beaches to their operations. Currently detailed discussions are ongoing with both Scarborough and South Tyneside in the North East region.
- 4.3 It should also be noted that any proposal to contract a third party organisation to provide the beach lifeguard service in Sunderland would affect seasonal employees only and would have no impact on full time members of staff currently employed at Resorts.

5.0 REASONS FOR DECISION

- 5.1 Based on current budget provision for the operation of a seasonal lifeguard service, the contract value for the external provision of the service would be in excess of £250,000 over a five-year period which would necessitate a formal tendering process. In accordance with current rules of procedure on procurement it would also be necessary to determine if any other organisation would express an interest in providing the service.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The alternative option would be for the Council to continue lifeguard operations. However, in terms of resources, evidence from other local authorities that have contracted out beach lifeguard services suggests a much larger investment in the provision of the service in terms of human resources and facilities and specialised equipment would be needed if providing the service in-house.

7.0 RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS / CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Members are advised that discussions have been ongoing with colleagues in the City Treasurer's Department and appropriate procurement advice has been provided to ensure relevant considerations are taken into account in respect of this proposal.