

CABINET MEETING – 14 MARCH 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET -

Title of Report :

MUSEUMS SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND

Author(s):

Executive Director of City Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to withdraw from existing arrangements relating to the delivery of Museums Services in Sunderland.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Authorise the issuing of the required 12 months notice to withdraw from the existing Tyne & Wear Joint Museum Agreement, and
- ii) Agree that the Executive Director of City Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Safer City & Culture, renegotiate appropriate arrangements for the delivery of Museum Services in Sunderland.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?

Yes

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

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Museums will be tailored to meet customer expectations and aspirations with services enhanced, not compromised. The City Council will maximise opportunities for securing high profile exhibitions, educational and learning programme and tailored events activity. The services provided will ensure museum services are safeguarded and designed to ensure they are accessible to all

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The following options have also been considered and rejected:

- i) Do nothing

This option was rejected as it maintains the existing arrangement which is not considered to provide the most efficient and effective museums service for Sunderland.

ii) Operate all aspects of the museums service:

This option would require the transfer of all aspects of the Museums Service to Sunderland. It is not considered to be cost effective nor would it enhance service delivery arrangements. Delivering some aspects of Museum Services through TWAM provides opportunities in terms of partnership working/membership with National Bodies, and funding opportunities on a local/regional and national level all of which is considered could continue to be delivered through a renegotiated arrangement. Whilst at an operational level there is confidence that efficiencies can be realised and service delivery improved, the provision of more specialist functions such as archaeological expertise currently shared with other Authorities would result in much higher costs.

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? **Yes**

Is it included in the Forward Plan?
Yes

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Sustainable Communities

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

MUSEUMS SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to withdraw from existing arrangements relating to the delivery of Museums Services in Sunderland.

2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- i) Authorise the issuing of the required 12 months notice to withdraw from the existing Tyne & Wear Joint Museum Agreement, and
 - ii) Agree that the Executive Director of City Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Safer City & Culture, renegotiate appropriate arrangements for the delivery of Museum Services in Sunderland.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Joint Museums Service for the County of Tyne and Wear (known as Tyne and Wear Museums) is provided and administered by a Joint Agreement constituted by an Agreement made between the following Councils:
- Newcastle (Lead Authority)
 - Gateshead
 - North Tyneside
 - South Tyneside
 - Sunderland
- 3.2 Managed through City Services the Agreement came into effect on 1 April 1986 and is due to expire on 31 March 2016. Newcastle City Council is the lead authority and all staff associated with Museums are employed by Newcastle City Council.
- 3.3 Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Joint Committee govern these arrangements. Sunderland has six representatives on the Committee including one of the two vice chair positions.
- 3.4 Under existing arrangements Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) provide:

- Corporate Support
- Museum Customer Focused Specialist Services – including technical and specialist expertise in areas such as Archaeology, Arts, Collection Management and Conservation
- Archives Services
- Operations – direct museum service delivery arrangements in Sunderland

4.0 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

- 4.1 The Agreement is underpinned by a Service Level Agreement which governs the operational running of Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens and Monkwearmouth Station Museum together with the provision of customer focussed specialist services such as the delivery of history, art, documentation, collections, archaeologists, conservation and design and technical support. There is a separate agreement with TWAM in respect of the delivery of Archives Services and Washington F Pit Museum.
- 4.2 The agreement also includes the costs in relation to corporate support provision provided by TWAM through Newcastle City Council which includes HR, Financial, and Legal services. The total budget associated with the TWAM arrangement is £1.4m (nett of relevant grant funding).

5.0 GRANT FUNDING

- 5.1 One of the benefits associated with the Agreement includes the support provided via grant arrangements.

This includes the following:

- **DCMS** – grant paid to TWAM to deliver a regional wide museum service. The level of grant attributed to Sunderland in this current financial year is £317,100. The grant is in place until 2015 and currently offsets some of the costs associated with the agreement.
- **Renaissance Strategic Support Fund** – Major Grants Programme Grant. The Arts Council is now the lead body charged with developing the arts and culture in England and is working to create the conditions in which “great art and culture can be made, experienced and appreciated by everyone”. This Grant supports the delivery of specialist services provided by TWAM specifically designed for Sunderland. TWAM have recently announced that they have been successful in a Renaissance grant application to cover the period 2012 to 2015 inclusive.

6.0 REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 A review of the existing arrangements has afforded the opportunity to rethink how Museum Services are currently delivered within Sunderland and how the City Council can play a more centric role in designing museum delivery. Centred at the heart of the review is the opportunity to influence and tailor services to ensure customer focused services are at the very forefront of service delivery, providing people with choice over what and how they access and use Museum Services.
- 6.2 In order to enable the Council to directly influence the operational, programming, exhibition and specialist elements of museums delivery, it is proposed to withdraw from the existing Agreement.
- 6.3 Under this arrangement the Council could potentially continue to work with TWAM via a renegotiated arrangement to commission elements of the customer focussed specialist services and a level of strategic support.
- 6.4 A Museums Service will be established being directly delivered by the City Council. This will be underpinned by continued close working with the Voluntary and Community Sector and other partners to support in terms of operations and programming.

7. REASON FOR DECISION

- 7.1 Museums will be tailored to meet customer expectations and aspirations with services enhanced, not compromised. The City Council will maximise opportunities for securing high profile exhibitions, educational and learning programme and tailored events activity. The services provided will ensure museum services are safeguarded and designed to ensure they are efficient and accessible to all.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 8.1 The following options have also been considered and rejected:

- i) Do nothing

- This option was rejected as it maintains the existing arrangement which is not considered to provide the most effective museums service for Sunderland.

ii) Operate all aspects of the museums service:

This option would require the transfer of all aspects of the Museums Service to Sunderland. It is not considered to be cost effective nor would it enhance service delivery arrangements. Delivering some aspects of Museum Services through others such as TWAM, provides opportunities in terms of partnership working/membership with National Bodies, and funding opportunities on a local/regional and national level all of which is considered could continue to be delivered through a renegotiated arrangement. Whilst at an operational level there is confidence that efficiencies can be realised and service delivery improved by bringing the operational management in-house, the provision of more specialist functions solely for Sunderland such as archaeological expertise currently shared with other Authorities could result in much higher costs for the Council.

9. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The City Council is required to consult with the other local authorities to consider the impact that Sunderland terminating the Agreement will have on the level of grant paid to TWAM and the consequent viability of TWAM. Provided the Agreement is terminated by Sunderland, the Council will then renegotiate arrangements for the delivery of specialist services to enable the participation in joint funding opportunities and establishment of aligned regional museum outcomes.

a) Financial considerations

As mentioned in Section 1.2 above the current City Council contribution for delivery of a museum service is £1.4m.

b) Legal Implications

Under the existing Agreement Sunderland will need to consider a number of consequences and early termination clauses. These are however predicated on an assumption of full withdrawal and not the renegotiated proposal outlined in this report. The negotiations over the 12 month period of notice will address these issues.

c) Staffing

Staff employed in the direct delivery of Museums Services in Sunderland will have the right to transfer under TUPE legislation to Sunderland City Council. The details associated with the transfer of staff will be finalised and progressed during the 12 month notice period.

d) Equalities

Appropriate arrangements are in place to assess and address any equalities issues related to the proposals. Further detailed equalities analyses will be undertaken as the service is redesigned during the 12 month notice period.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The following background papers were relied upon to compile this report.

- TWAM Joint Agreement
- TWAM Service Level Agreement

