

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 8th January 2018

Report Title: Lifeguard Service

Report By: Monica Adams-Acton

Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture

Purpose of Report

To recommend to cabinet that the RNLI ('Royal National Lifeboat Institution') be appointed to operate the Hastings' beach lifeguard service for three years (the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons) and ask cabinet for authority to appoint the RNLI without going through the competitive tendering procedures

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That a three year contract with the RNLI to provide our beach lifeguard service covering the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons is entered into, and they are appointed without going through the competitive tendering procedures**
- 2. That authority is delegated to the director of operational services or his nominee, in consultation with the lead member responsible for resort services and the chair of the charity committee, to conclude the necessary legal agreements.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Because the RNLI, the 'gold standard' of lifesaving at sea, is able to provide a better service at a lower cost than we can provide in-house, whilst paying the lifeguards more than we were paying them when the service was operated in-house.

Introduction

1. Until the end of the summer 2016 season, Hastings Borough Council and the Foreshore Trust operated an in-house seasonal lifeguard service.
2. For its meeting on 20th March 2017, the charity committee received a paper which explained that following changes to the management of the team in early 2017, it was necessary for the council and trust to make interim arrangements for the upcoming summer season. The charity committee resolved (unanimously) that the council and Foreshore Trust enter into a one season agreement with the RNLI for the RNLI to provide a beach lifeguard service at Hastings for the 2017 season, this operation to be reviewed at the end of the season. The purpose of this paper is to outline this year's operation, and consider the future operation of the service

2017 Season

3. Overall the RNLI lifeguards attended 88 incidents during the 2017 summer, 34 at Marina, 18 at Pelham West, and 36 at Pelham East. Seven of these were classified as 'casualty care', when the casualty has their vital signs assessed and drugs may have been administered, and they have the potential for illnesses and injuries that could be life threatening
4. The RNLI provided their service for an estimated £40 000 (subject to final invoice being received) for the 2017 season, for providing an enhanced service over that which HBC provided in 2016. On a 'like for like' basis the RNLI charged £27 183, which included training, supervision and management, against an HBC figure of c£54 000 in 2016, which did not include supervision or management. In 2016 HBC paid an additional c£7 500 for training, induction and supervision from our lifeguard consultant. The RNLI also provided, at no cost to HBC, new accommodation and equipment for the lifeguards in 2017. It should be noted that the RNLI pay their staff at a higher hourly rate than HBC did, even allowing for pay increases.

2018 Season

5. For next year, we are looking to increase our lifeguard provision. This would include starting earlier at all three sites (w/c 26th May), so bringing the dates of operation of the pier and Marina sites in line with those at Pelham. The total cost to HBC of this operation is £43 488 (based on this year's level of operation the cost would have been £37 332).
6. It should be noted that, even with us providing a longer season, particularly at the pier and Marina, the costs are c£10 000 lower than we paid in 2016. In addition, the RNLI provide accommodation at Pelham and the pier at no additional cost to us, and a very high standard of lifeguard equipment. As noted above, they provide excellent training and specialist management support, and are widely seen as providing the 'gold standard' of lifeguarding operation.

7. The RNLI have indicated that, given the level of investment they are providing, they would like to enter into a three year agreement with us to provide our beach lifeguarding service. Such an agreement would also provide us with certainty of operation.
8. Ordinarily, our financial operating procedures requires us to tender for contracts over £50 000. However, there is provision within the procedures (paragraph 21, clause j) for derogation from this requirement if expressly approved by cabinet on consideration of a report from an authorised officer. The RNLI, a national charity dedicated to lifesaving at sea, provides the 'gold standard' of lifeguarding, and manages beach lifeguarding services for many local authorities around the country. It is able to provide a better service at a lower cost than we can offer in-house, whilst paying the lifeguards more than we were paying them when the service was operated by Hastings Borough Council. The RNLI now operate lifeguarding at Camber Sands and Bexhill on behalf of Rother District Council, and Hastings fits well into this local structure; this helps provide additional resilience for the Hastings service. The RNLI also operates Hastings lifeboat station, of course. It is therefore recommended that the RNLI be appointed to operate the Hastings lifeguarding service for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons.

Timetable

9. Agreement in principle with the RNLI to operate the service for the next three years has already been sought, and the charity committee agreed at its meeting on 11th December to appoint the RNLI, subject to cabinet agreement. If cabinet agrees the recommendation to appoint the RNLI, contracts will be drawn up before the end of March, allowing the service to start w/c 26th May 2018, as indicated in the report.

Recommendation

10. That a three year contract with the RNLI to provide our beach lifeguard service covering the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons is entered into, and they are appointed without going through the competitive tendering procedures

Wards Affected

All (indirectly)

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

Risk Management X

Environmental Issues X

Economic/Financial Implications X

Human Rights Act
Organisational Consequences X
Local People's Views
Anti-Poverty

Additional Information

Officer to Contact

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