

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

### AGENDA ITEM

### REPORT TO CABINET

9<sup>th</sup> July 2009

### REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

## CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council, Councillor Lupton  
Arts, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Mrs Womphrey

### FREE SWIMMING

#### 1. Summary

To update members on how the FREE Swimming initiative has been received since its inception on 1<sup>st</sup> April 09.

#### 2. Recommendations

- Members note an increase in swimming participation by Under 16's and Over 60's
- Members endorse Officers pursuing additional capital funding from the FREE Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme, to secure further improvements to existing facilities

#### 3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

- To ensure that members are aware of the increases in participation generated since the inception of FREE Swimming

#### 4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held –

- In a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- In any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

And must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**9<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Leader of the Council, Councillor Lupton  
Arts, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Mrs Womphrey**

**FREE SWIMMING**

**SUMMARY**

To update members on how the FREE Swimming initiative has been received since its inception on 1<sup>st</sup> April 09.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Members note an increase in swimming participation by Under 16's and Over 60's
2. Members endorse Officers pursuing additional capital funding from the FREE Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme, to secure further improvements to existing facilities

**DETAIL**

1. The FREE Swimming initiative funded primarily by Central Government via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) started on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, with free swimming being available at the Splash, Billingham Forum and Thornaby Pool facilities.
2. The initiative has proved very popular and has already seen 24,747 free swims throughout April/ May 2009 (20,681 – U16 / 4,066 – Over 60). This is an overall increase of 2,888 for the same period in 2008, which may be

attributable to the FREE Swimming initiative. This equates to a 13% increase in swimming participation in the target age ranges.

3. Tees Active Ltd (TAL) has issued over 11,000 swipe cards in the first two and half months of the FREE Swimming initiative, which indicates that the scheme has been very well received. We do not however at this time know how many of the participants are residents of the borough although TAL will be providing this information to us following comprehensive analysis of quarter 1 of the programme.
4. As a consequence of signing up to the FREE Swimming initiative for Under 16's and Over 60's, the Council became eligible to bid for a share of £25m nationally for capital improvements to swimming facilities. This was through Round 1 of the FREE Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme (CMP). We were fortunate enough to receive an allocation of £300,000 from the CMP towards the development of a movable floor at Billingham Forum and to develop additional family changing at Splash. We have also been advised that nationally there is a £2m under-spend from the Round 1 CMP so officers are currently assembling an additional submission to support the Billingham Forum scheme.
5. The scheme will from a revenue point of view cost the Council in the region of £22,000 over the two years. However this has not only provided social and health benefits to our residents, it has also yielded to date £300,000 in capital investment into our swimming facilities, with the opportunity for more through the CMP.
6. Splash has by far been the most frequented of the 3 TAL operated swimming facilities in the borough. As Splash is the only facility with Teesside offering slides and a wave machine as part of its offer user numbers have consistently been very high, resulting in the facility being at times unable to maintain the levels of cleanliness that TAL pride themselves on.
7. There is an opportunity to bid for additional capital resource through Round 2 of the FREE Swimming CMP. We are currently looking at options as to how a bid for a share of this funding could benefit the facilities we have within the borough. As there is only £25m nationally it is not realistic to look at funding new facilities due to the levels of funding that would be available from this programme (max. £300,000 - 500,000). The views of members in regard to Round 2 bidding to the CMP would be welcome.
8. With regards to the success of FREE Swimming in other local authorities, this information is currently being sought and will be available following the release of data for the first quarter.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

1. Due to the increases in participation at Splash this had led to TAL having to operate with higher than normal staff ratios and also led to greater costs associated with cleaning of the facility.
2. Upon cessation of the funding (31<sup>st</sup> March 2011), there is concern about the effects this may have on participation and particularly of those who have become accustomed to swimming for free. Tees Active & officers of SBC will

be proactively considering ways that the loss of FREE Swimming from April 2011 can be partially mitigated.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None identified at this time

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

No risks identified at this time

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

1. The FREE Swimming initiative contributes to the following Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes:
  - Increase in positive activities for young people
  - Halting the year on year rise in obesity amongst children under 11 years
  - Reduce health inequalities
  - Improved personal well being of older people
  - Real choice, control and equal access to facilities and services for older people
  - Greater Equality of Opportunity
  - Increased opportunities for young children/ young people in care (SCS)
  - Reductions in anti-social behaviour/ criminal damage

## **CORPORATE PARENTING**

The FREE Swimming initiative supports all children and young people under 16 years to become more active through water based play/ swimming regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/ COUNCILLORS**

Members were consulted on the scheme and the opportunity it presented prior to the Council agreeing to participate in the FREE Swimming initiative.

**Name of Contact Officer: Neil Russell**

**Post Title: Leisure & Sports Development Manager**

**Telephone No: 01642 526412**

**Email Address: [neil.russell@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:neil.russell@stockton.gov.uk)**