

Subject: RNLI Lifeguard service

Report to: Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee – 14 March 2019

Report by: Neil Shaw, Strategic Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the council agree a new three-year contract with the RNLI for the provision of lifeguard services from the start of Spring 2019.**
- 2. That the council delegate authority to one of the council's Strategic Directors to develop and sign the contract for the lifeguard service.**
- 3. To seek agreement from the GYBS Company Board to reduce the GYBS joint venture budget by £46,500 and transfer this funding back to the council and update the GYBS Partnership Agreement to reflect the change of service provision in the joint venture.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The council currently funds a lifeguarding service for the beaches at Hemsby, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston provided by the RNLI. Currently the service is funded from the GYBS joint venture partnership budget and has been part of the joint venture since 2008.
- 1.2. This report is proposing that the council contract the service from the RNLI direct and this service is therefore removed from the GYBS joint venture. The new approach seeks to provide more clarity on service provision through the agreement of an updated contract with the RNLI, for the lifeguards to take on a wider role around promoting the borough and to achieve better value for money.

2. LIFEGUARD SERVICE PROVISION

- 2.1. The RNLI service to the borough currently covers the following activities:

- Recruitment of lifeguards
- Training
- Lifeguard patrolling and rescue
- Equipment provision and maintenance
- Incident report
- Pollution reporting
- Water safety education

The service is funded partly by the council and by the RNLI.

- 2.2. The service is provided on three beaches in the borough – Hemsby, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. The service is provided during 'main' season (12 May – 6 July) and 'peak' season (7 July – 9 September). Main season provision is provided only at

Gorleston with two lifeguards and peak season provision takes place at all three beaches with three lifeguards present at Gorleston and Hemsby and two at Great Yarmouth. The dates of the service provision change marginally each year depending on the timing of bank holidays. The service is provided from 10:00 to 18:00 seven days per week. The main season provision at Gorleston enables promotion of a lifeguarded beach in the borough at times when beach visitors fluctuate in May and June.

- 2.3. The majority of the funding provided by the council is used to fund the direct cost of the lifeguards. The RNLI supplement this funding to ensure the service is adequately supported, for example, through provision of vehicles, equipment, first aid training and risk assessment. The RNLI also undertake wider work, for example, water safety education sessions in local schools to complement the lifeguarding work. This is funded by the RNLI.
- 2.4. The volume of activity the service undertakes is notable. Lifeguards undertake actions to prevent people becoming exposed to danger which includes safety advice and the placement of flags/signage etc. The tables, below, shows the number of preventative actions and incidents undertaken over the last couple of years. Data for 2018 is still being collated.

Preventative actions

	2017	2016
Hemsby	10,417	8,197
Great Yarmouth	5,191	4,014
Gorleston	13,383	6,112
Total	28,991	18,323

2017 Incidents

	Rescue	Assistance	Major First Aid	Minor First Aid	Search	Near Miss	Other	Missing / Found	Total
Hemsby	0	4	2	38	2	0	0	2	44
Great Yarmouth	0	4	2	6	2	0	3	3	13
Gorleston	1	2	0	38	0	7	2	0	44
Total	1	10	4	79	4	7	5	5	101

3. NEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1. The RNLI provide a highly regarded service, which the council is looking to build upon. The council is now proposing to contract with the RNLI direct. This will enable more clarity on service provision through the agreement of an updated contract. The contract will be based on the following service provision:

- Lifeguard patrolling and rescue
- Incident reporting
- Pollution reporting
- Borough promotional activity

- 3.2. In addition to this provision the RNLI provides wider services which have a positive impact for the borough, summarised earlier in 2.1. These will continue to be funded by the RNLI.
- 3.3. The council has explored the potential for lifeguards to play a role in promoting the borough to tourists whilst on patrol, without this distracting them from their core role. Lifeguards will be provided with information to enable them to signpost tourists to key events, activities and the tourist information centre. This will enable them to play a role in positively promoting the borough.
- 3.4. Directly contracting with the RNLI will avoid the imposition of a 4% overhead added to all GYBS activity through the joint venture. As GYBS have no role in service provision for this area and contract with the RNLI, the council undertaking this role will avoid the overhead of around £1,860 in 2018/19, providing better value for money.
- 3.5. The proposal will need the formal approval of the GYBS Board. Verbal agreement has already been reached and both parties have mutually agreed the proposal. A report will be considered at the next GYBS Board meeting. However, as this is not until 23 April 2019 it is imperative the council approves the proposal to ensure sufficient preparation can take place before the start of the service provision in Spring.

5. FINANCE

- 5.1. In 2018/19 £46,500 was included in the GYBS joint venture budget to fund the RNLI contract. The joint venture budget will be reduced by this amount for 2019/20. The service will cost the council £44,965 in 2019/20, which includes a 2.5% increase from the previous year. The small difference will be a saving to the council.
- 5.2. The RNLI provide the following services at no cost to the council - recruitment of lifeguards, training, equipment/vehicle provision and maintenance and water safety education. They also supplement the wages of the lifeguards.

6. RISKS

- 6.1. Council funded provision of lifeguard services plays a key part in safeguarding against loss of life and negative reputational damage to the borough such as that which occurred in 2016 at Camber Sands in East Sussex when seven people drowned off an un-lifeguarded public beach in two separate incidents. Continued provision of a lifeguard service mitigates the risks associated with such incidents.
- 6.2. All lifeguards must attend a one-week training course and are supervised by experienced RNLI staff. The RNLI undertake a risk assessment to identify hazards and determine control measures to ensure the safety of the beaches during the operation of their service.

7. LEGAL

The new arrangements will be underpinned by the development of a new contract with the RNLI. This will enable an updating of the service requirements and will be put into effect for the start of the 2019 season. The council will develop a three-year contract with annual review points to enable a systematic review of performance

and enable the council to review provision during the three years. The Head of Environmental Services will have responsibility for monitoring the contract.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. That the council agree a new three-year contract with the RNLI for the provision of lifeguard services from the start of Spring 2019.**
- 8.2. That the council delegate authority to one of the council's Strategic Directors to develop and sign the contract for the lifeguard service.**
- 8.3. To seek agreement from the GYBS Company Board to reduce the GYBS joint venture budget by £46,500 and transfer this funding back to the council and update the GYBS Partnership Agreement to reflect the change of service provision in the joint venture.**

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Yes
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	No
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	No
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No
Risk Implications:	Yes
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	No
Crime & Disorder:	No
Every Child Matters:	No