

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

30 JUNE 2020

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE PROVISION OF BEACH AND WATER SAFETY SERVICES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (RNLI).

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on provision of Beach and Water Safety services by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for 2020 following the coronavirus outbreak. The purpose of the report is also to request approval to establish a new long term partnership arrangement with the RNLI to operate a seasonal beach lifeguarding service at local beaches and in doing so seek a waiver under paragraph 3.2.3 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules from the requirement to obtain quotes or tenders by open competition and agreement to enter into a contract with the RNLI.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The coronavirus outbreak has had a fundamental impact on the delivery of services undertaken by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and its partners during the period of the nationwide lockdown. The lockdown, which has placed restrictions on movement, has also impacted on plans and preparations for services which will be delivered in the coming months as the restrictions are amended as directed by Welsh Government.
- 3.2 The RNLI were unable to provide the planned early summer lifeguard season on Porthcawl's beaches due to the impact that lockdown and restrictions on movement had on recruitment, induction, training and deployment of lifeguards as well as on the organisation's ability to deliver the infrastructure that supports lifeguards in the background. It created an unprecedented situation for the organisation that affected

all those involved in delivering the RNLI's lifeguard service – full-time staff, seasonal employees, trainers, delivery partners and landlords.

3.3 In addition to that, the lifeguard service costs for the provision on Porthcawl beaches costs the RNLI more than the contribution made by BCBC and its partners, currently by a ratio of 3:1. Lockdown and restrictions on movement have severely impacted on the RNLI's ability to raise funds in their usual ways to have a level of resource required to deliver a full service.

3.4 Over recent weeks BCBC officers and staff from RNLI have been involved in a four step process to determine a level of service that is feasible and safe. This involved determining the following:

- Step 1: High Profile Beaches. Those beach lifeguard units that cover high profile beaches, with an aim to initially focus service delivery at these locations.
- Step 2: Risk Based Priority. All RNLI lifeguard services have been developed on a risk-based approach. A review was undertaken combined with an analysis of statistical information collected by lifeguards to help determine the future roll out. This assisted in focusing service delivery on beaches where there is a higher than average likelihood of incidents occurring.
- Step 3: Seasonality. 70% of all incidents lifeguards deal with occur in July and August. This supported determining the time period of service delivery to have the largest impact.
- Step 4: Geography: Work to maintain access to a lifeguarded beach for the highest number of people, providing a spread of locations across Porthcawl's beaches.

3.5 Planning for a 2020 provision has been influenced by:

- The notice period prior to the amending of Government restrictions
- The ability and the availability of lifeguards to deploy and, in some cases, train at short notice
- The overall logistics required to run an effective service
- Beach risk profile (which may have changed in light of travel restrictions and social distancing requirements)
- Historical rescue data
- Reviewing what infrastructure is already in place and where the gaps are

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 BCBC officers in partnership with the RNLI have reached an agreement in relation to the provision on beach and water safety services for the summer season 2020, which, based on the four step process outlined in 3.4 and the influencing factors outlined in 3.5, offers an efficient and effective deployment of resources given the constraints in place across Porthcawl's beaches. The provision launched involved the following, which is subject to monitoring and may change:

- Rest Bay: 20th June with a finish date of 6th September.
- Coney/Sandy Bay: 4th July with a finish date of 6th September.
- Trecco Bay: 4th July with a finish date of 6th September*.

**Subject to confirmation of funding from Parkdean holiday park at Trecco Bay related to re-opening etc*

- 4.2 The service which has gone live was agreed with the RNLI based on a level of resource available to them at the time and their assessment of risk. It sees RNLI deploy lifeguards in key locations and BCBC utilising existing staff members to undertake an added element of Beach Patrol activity.
- 4.3 This revised provision, which has been communicated via BCBC media releases and social media awareness raising, went live on the 20th June 2020 and will continue into September. Delivery will be monitored in line with Welsh Government guidelines as they evolve and restrictions on movement change. Any changes to the service will be communicated to stakeholders and members of the public.
- 4.4 The level of provision that BCBC has been able to secure in partnership with the RNLI is due to the strong and positive working relationship that exists and the commitment to building on that relationship in the future.
- 4.5 The 2020 season is the third season of the current agreement with the RNLI. The agreement has provided value for money, been delivered successfully and provided a level of safety for beach visitors which would otherwise not have been available. It has become a core element of the offer for tourists to the area and assisted the County Borough in maintaining two Blue Flag beaches.
- 4.6 It is therefore proposed that BCBC and the RNLI enter into a new three year partnership agreement to operate seasonal beach lifeguarding services at Porthcawl's beaches, commencing in 2021.
- 4.7 It is proposed that the core funding contribution by BCBC is a fixed figure of £38,000 per year. In addition to this, additional funding will be sought from key stakeholders to enhance the level of resource available as has been with the previous agreement. However, any agreement will be based on a standard contribution of £38,000 per year, and this would impact on what the RNLI are able to offer in return.
- 4.8 The agreement would be based on the following requirements:
- The RNLI would generate investment towards the total costs of operations, which will be supplemented through the arrangement with BCBC.
 - The provision for each season will be based on a recommendation from the RNLI, developed following a risk assessment of each of the beaches covered. RNLI will seek agreement from landowners for this provision.
 - The RNLI will manage the recruitment, training, event cover, equipment, uniforms, supervision and management of lifeguards and ensure the shared use of facilities and joint working arrangements with local clubs within the parameters of the agreed resources.
 - The RNLI will work with local stakeholders to consider options for additional services beyond those agreed within the parameters of the core service, provide cost estimates for such additional services and support local stakeholders to consider alternative additional resources required.

- Throughout each season regular update meetings will take place between BCBC and RNLI and the RNLI will produce an end of season report each year.

4.9 Such an agreement will require a waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules relating to the requirement to obtain quotes or tenders by open competition for the provision of the services on the basis that the services can be provided by only one particular tenderer in accordance with rule 3.2.3. In proposing such an action it is highlighted that the RNLI is a unique organisation in respect of such services due to its core focus on coastal safety. What is proposed here currently operates successfully in other Local Authority areas, such as Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and the Vale of Glamorgan.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 This report is requesting a waiver under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the procurement of these services.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Screening has highlighted that no issues arise as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is below:

- Long-term: The elements that make up the proposed delivery for 2020 and the new three year agreement with the RNLI have been identified following discussion with key stakeholders and in relation to current understanding of the potential long term challenges and impacts of coronavirus and Welsh Government guidelines.
- Prevention: A clear four step process, based on research and evidence has been undertaken to develop a service provision in the short term that seeks to provide a level of beach and water safety service appropriate in the current context.
- Integration: The service delivery for 2020 has been based on approaches being undertaken in other areas, the approaches being taken in relation to other BCBC services and support from partner organisations.
- Collaboration: The service delivery for 2020 is based on collaboration between BCBC and its range of service areas and the RNLI.
- Involvement: The service for 2020 will be delivered in close partnership with a range of local stakeholders through existing engagement mechanisms. The delivered will be closely monitored with information for review sought from partners. The future agreement will be based on involvement of local land owners and other service providers.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The delivery of the proposed beach and water service provision for 2020 through activity by RNLI and BCBC Beach Patrol referenced in 4.1 and 4.2 will be achieved utilising existing BCBC budgets for Coastal Services.
- 8.2 The annual budget currently available for BCBC to contribute towards the overall cost of delivering the seasonal lifeguarding service is £38,000. This report seeks for BCBC to enter into a partnership arrangement for a commitment to 2023/2024. This agreement will however include clauses relating to flexibility of service. In previous financial years Porthcawl Town Council contributed funds along with Parkdean. At this time it is proposed to seek additional funding from these key partners and other stakeholders to enhance the resources committed by BCBC. If additional funds are not secured then the service will be based on the provision of a core service with a base budget of £38,000 per year.
- 8.3 Should there be additional service proposals developed by the RNLI in partnership with local stakeholders beyond the parameters of the core service then then funding for these will be sought from other sources and any variance agreed to the contract value would comply with the service level agreement.

9. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to

- 9.1 Note the process undertaken by BCBC officers and RNLI to determine the level of beach and water safety service communicated prior to its launch on 20th June 2020 and the on-going monitoring process.
- 9.2 Authorise the Corporate Director, Communities to finalise negotiations with the RNLI and enter into a three year partnership arrangement and associated service level agreement with the RNLI and in doing so agree a waiver under paragraph 3.2.3 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

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Background documents:

None