



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7 March 2024

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| REPORT TITLE: | ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTE (RNLI) WIRRAL LIFEGUARD SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORT 2023 |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the end of year report from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) regarding the service levels and provision of the RNLI Lifeguard Service in Wirral and includes a review of the Service.

The lifeguard service contributes to the following themes set out in [Wirral Working Together: A Council Plan for 2023 – 2027](#) - Working together to protect our environment, Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

The activity outlined within this report affect the wards of Leasowe & Moreton East, New Brighton, Wallasey and West Kirby & Thurstaston.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note and comment on the report by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) as attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The report provided by the RNLI will inform the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee on the performance of the Wirral Coastal Lifeguard Services during the 2023 season and highlight any key issues within the borough.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The RNLI is the sole provider of an external Lifeguard Service.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 This is the ninth year that the partnership work between the Council and the RNLI for Lifeguard Services has been in operation.
- 3.2 A number of Wirral Lifeguards were awarded The Alison Saunders Award (national) this season, for a specific rescue off Harrison Drive, New Brighton, in 2022.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A new contract was agreed by the Council in January 2023 with the RNLI for 48-months (3/1/23-2/1/27) for Beach Lifeguard Services (DN652204).

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a legal interest as landowner of beaches and foreshore around the Wirral Peninsula.
- 5.2 As owner of the beaches/foreshore the Council owes a duty of care to all lawful visitors attending its beaches under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957. The Council's duty is to ensure that those visiting our land and/or premises are kept reasonably safe. To ensure we are maintaining the standard required to meet that duty, the Council needs to ensure the appropriate inspection programmes, maintenance programmes, risk assessments and reporting procedures are in place. The duty is extended in some limited circumstances to persons other than lawful visitors by virtue of the Occupiers Liability Act 1984.
- 5.3 In addition, the local authority as an employer in its provision of services to the public, is subject to the general duty of ensuring the health, safety and welfare of those at work and, additionally, the protection of those not at work exposed to the risks arising out of Council's undertakings.
- 5.4 Through the Localism Act 2011, local authorities have power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This is referred to as a "general power of competence" and allows a local authority to exercise a broad range of powers to introduce measures that are beneficial to it and/or its residents and visitors. This power can be used by coastal local authorities to introduce measures safeguarding beachgoers,

including assessing risks connected with recreational activities at the beach and providing signage and/or lifeguarding services.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 None arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Wirral has seen a number of tragic water-related fatalities and non-fatal incidents around its coastline. The RNLI Lifeguard Service is a critical factor in the management of the public safety risk and reduces the rate of further incidents.

7.2 The RNLI conducts its own risk assessments, which are reviewed annually and reported to the Council.

7.3 Risks related to the relationship between the Council and RNLI, and RNLI performance against the contract, are mitigated through regular contract management meetings.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Feedback is gathered informally from stakeholders on the execution of the contract.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Predicted climate change and increased weather events add to the public safety risk on Wirral's beaches.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The RNLI successfully recruits lifeguards locally targeting local colleges, increasing future employability and enhancing life skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – RNLI Lifeguard Service Monitoring Report Wirral - 2023

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lifeguard Service Monitoring Report 2021 Wirral
Wirral Lifeguard Report 2020

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Partnerships Committee | 10 March 2022 |
| Partnerships Committee | 29 June 2021 |