

# North Yorkshire Council

## Report to the Corporate Director, Community Development

10 June 2026

### Provision of Beach Lifeguarding Service – Direct Award

#### Report of the Assistant Director – Culture, Leisure, Archives and Libraries

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Corporate Director of Community Development to directly award a contract to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for a period of 10 years, commencing in January 2027 and ending in December 2036, for the provision of a fully managed beach lifeguarding service across designated beaches in Scarborough, Whitby, Filey, and surrounding areas.

#### **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to award a contract to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for the provision of a fully managed beach lifeguarding service across designated beaches in Scarborough, Whitby, Filey and surrounding areas.
- 2.2 This proposal is for a direct award to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for a period of 10 years, commencing in January 2027 and ending in December 2036, with the extended term reflecting the need for long-term service stability, continuity, and effective operational planning across the Council's coastal locations. The proposed arrangement will ensure the continued delivery of a safe, professional, and nationally recognised lifeguarding service throughout the bathing season, supporting public safety and the effective management of the coastline.
- 2.3 Market engagement through a Request for Information (RFI) exercise demonstrated no external interest, and subsequent legal advice confirmed that a direct award is appropriate, compliant, and transparent.
- 2.4 The proposal aligns with the Council's priorities for health and wellbeing, community safety, and economic growth, while representing a robust and proportionate approach to service delivery.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Authority seeks to appoint the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to provide a fully managed Beach Lifeguard Service across designated beaches in Scarborough, Whitby, Filey and surrounding areas. This Contract ensures the delivery of a safe, resilient, and professionally operated lifeguarding service during the bathing season, aligned to the RNLI's national operating model.
- 3.2 The RNLI is a charity with the objectives of saving lives and promoting safety at sea and on inland waters. In pursuance of its objectives the RNLI provides Lifeguard Patrols on various beaches.

## **Scope**

The Contract covers the following RNLI-operated beaches

- Scarborough North Bay
- Scarborough South Bay
- Whitby
- Sandsend
- Filey
- Cayton Bay
- Runswick Bay

The RNLI will provide all staffing, equipment (unless otherwise agreed), supervision, training, operational management, reporting, and deployment required to deliver the service.

## **4.0 DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE**

4.1 The purpose of this Contract is to ensure the safe management of bathing beaches through the provision of competent, proactive, and fully compliant lifeguard services. The RNLI will deliver lifeguard operations in accordance with national standards, water safety guidance, and the seasonal deployment model provided in Annex A.

### **Contract Objectives**

#### **Public Safety**

- Prevent loss of life, drowning, and water-related incidents.
- Provide a visible, skilled lifeguarding presence during all contracted patrol dates.

#### **Operational Excellence**

- Deploy lifeguards in line with Main and Peak seasons.
- Maintain all equipment, communication systems and vehicles to operational standards.
- Ensure continuous readiness, robust incident response and proactive prevention activity.

#### **Compliance**

- Operate in accordance with relevant British Standards, international water safety frameworks, recognised beach lifeguard competencies, and health and safety requirements.
- Maintain accurate and auditable operational records.

#### **Partnership Working**

- Coordinate with the Authority, emergency services, Environment Agency (EA), and event organisers, ensuring a joined-up approach to visitor safety.
- Implement anti-social behaviour (ASB) and water quality protocols as agreed.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES**

- 5.1 The Council has undertaken appropriate market engagement and consultation. A Request for Information (RFI) exercise was published on 20 March and ran until 7 April, which resulted in no expressions of interest being received, indicating limited external market appetite for delivering the service.
- 5.2 Following the RFI exercise, the Council's legal team was consulted and confirmed that the absence of market interest supported the proposed direct award approach. They were satisfied that this course of action was appropriate, transparent, and compliant with procurement requirements. This assurance further reinforces the rationale for the proposed delivery model and demonstrates that the Council has followed a clear, evidence-based, and proportionate decision-making process.

## **6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 The proposed beach lifeguarding service strongly aligns with North Yorkshire Council's corporate priorities by directly contributing to health and wellbeing through the prevention of drowning incidents, provision of first aid, and promotion of safe coastal use, while also supporting vulnerable people by protecting high-risk groups such as children, older adults, and visitors unfamiliar with local hazards.
- 6.2 The service enhances economic growth and tourism by maintaining safe, well-managed beaches that attract visitors and support local businesses and contributes to education and social care through public safety education, water safety awareness campaigns, and partnership working with emergency services. In addition, a professionally delivered lifeguarding operation can embed climate and environmental awareness, encourage responsible beach use and support coastal stewardship.

## **7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 Alternative options for the delivery of the beach lifeguarding service were considered as part of the Council's option appraisal process. These included external procurement through an open tender, partnership or collaborative delivery models, and continuation of the existing arrangements. Market engagement via the Request for Information (RFI) exercise tested the level of external interest; however, the absence of expressions of interest indicated that alternative delivery through the market was not viable at this time.
- 7.2 As a result, and supported by subsequent legal advice, the direct award approach was identified as the most appropriate, proportionate, and deliverable option, ensuring continuity of a critical public safety service while maintaining compliance with procurement requirements and delivering best value for the Council.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The expected cost is within the existing council budget of £176,000.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council's legal team were consulted and confirmed that, following the RFI, proceeding with a direct award was justified in the circumstances.

9.2 They were satisfied that the approach is compliant with relevant procurement legislation, proportionate to the level of market interest demonstrated, and supported by a clear audit trail of engagement and decision-making. The process undertaken ensures transparency, fairness, and accountability, thereby mitigating the risk of challenge and supporting the Council's duty to deliver essential public safety services in a lawful and robust manner.

## **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and is included as Appendix A to this report. A full equality impact assessment is not deemed to be necessary.

## **11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no climate change implications arising because of this process. A Climate Change screening form has been completed and is included as Appendix B to this report. A full climate change assessment is not deemed to be necessary.

## **12.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The RNLI report on a number of agreed national KPI's on a regular basis before during and after the season. There also are a number of specific KPI's that the Council have set that will be required to measure performance throughout the season such as Adherence to Seasonal Deployment Plan, Incident Response and Resolution and Equipment Readiness and Operational Uptime. These will be monitored through regular meetings with the contract manager.

## **13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 As part of the operational requirements of the contract The RNLI shall:

- Conduct daily risk assessments and set appropriate safety flag systems.
- Maintain proactive public prevention activity (e.g., signage, advice, warnings).
- Respond to all water rescues, first aid incidents, missing person reports, and emergencies.
- Maintain operational radios, vehicles and rescue equipment to a safe standard.
- Participate in multi-agency incident response where requested.

## **14.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Risks are elevated during the main summer season due to the influx of visitors to the east coast. In addition to providing a presence on key beaches the RNLI will carry out full risk assessments on an annual basis.

## **15.0 CONCLUSIONS**

15.1 The proposed direct award to the RNLI for the provision of beach lifeguarding services ensures the continued delivery of a critical public safety function across key coastal locations in North Yorkshire.

15.2 The RNLI's established expertise, national operating standards, and proven track record provide assurance that the service will be delivered safely, effectively, and in alignment with recognised best practice. Market testing has demonstrated a lack of alternative provider interest, and the proposed approach has been validated through appropriate legal and governance processes.

15.3 The contract will support the Council's wider priorities, including health and wellbeing, community safety, and economic growth, while ensuring a resilient and professional service is in place for the bathing season.

## **16.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 The recommendation to approve the Direct Award of this service to the RNLI for a period of 10 years is made for the following reasons

- The service is essential to safeguarding residents and visitors and mitigating risks associated with coastal activity.
- Market engagement has confirmed there is no viable alternative provider, supporting the necessity of a direct award.
- Legal advice has confirmed that the proposed approach is compliant, proportionate, and transparent.
- The RNLI offers a nationally recognised, high-quality service with the capability, resources, and experience to deliver effectively.
- The proposal ensures continuity of service provision and represents the most practical and best value option available to the Council.

## **17.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- i) Approval from the Corporate Director of Community Development is recommended to proceed with the direct award to the RNLI on the basis that there is a need to safeguard beaches during the peak summer periods and that following the Request for Information exercise no other potential suppliers came forward to express any interest.

## **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix B – Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None

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Presenter of Report – Stuart Clark, Head of Venues and Attractions

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.