

Committee: **Executive Committee**
 Date of meeting: **16th March 2022**
 Report Subject: **Contract Extension – Pest Control Treatment Service to 31 December 2023**
 Portfolio Holder: **Councillor J Wilkins, Executive Member, Environment**
 Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager – Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
25.1.22	27.1.22	01.03.22			28.2.22	16.3.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update Executive Committee on the pest control treatment service currently provided by Rentokil.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Local Authorities are not under a statutory duty to provide a Pest Control treatment service. However, historically, it was common place for local councils to provide treatment services as part of their wider public health role either directly or indirectly by way of arrangements with specialist service providers. The availability of timely treatment services enables earlier eradication and prevention of pest problems and reduces the need for enforcement action by Environmental Health, which in many cases is a statutory duty.

2.2 In 2016/17, following the discontinuation of the service a couple of years earlier, the decision was taken by the Authority to reintroduce a Pest Control Service, further to complaints about rats relating to refuse accumulations in local neighbourhoods resulting from problems associated with changes to household waste and recycling arrangements. After due consideration, agreement was received to tender for a private company to deliver the service on behalf of the Authority, to minimise set-up and delivery and administrative costs and to enable expedient implementation and service resilience.

2.3 For 2019/20, the service was re-tendered in accordance with procurement rules. The tender specification was unchanged from the initial tender in 2016 to include concessions for the chargeable services reflecting the high levels of deprivation in Blaenau Gwent. Mitie were again awarded the contract for 12 months with an option to extend for a further 12 months. During 2019, Mitie Pest Control were taken over by Rentokil. As such, since 1st October 2019, Rentokil has delivered the Blaenau Gwent contract.

2.4 Following the takeover of the contract by Rentokil in 2019, and given the low take up of concessions, Officers and Rentokil representatives agreed to restructure the contract costs and paid for service costs to enable a revised

contract price of £59,793 per annum (with concession costs being invoiced on a pay as you go basis). As part of this agreement, the contract was extended until March 2022, with an option to extend it again until March 2023. Based on demand for concessions and in year invoices received, the predicted annual costs are full year cost for 2021/22 is £61,000, which will be met within existing budgets.

- 2.5 Recent meetings with Rentokil have taken place to discuss the status of the service and volume data. In general, the service is operating generally satisfactorily in that our constituents are receiving timely visits for requests for treatment services, especially rats. However, discussion took place in relation to a number of queries relating to garden inspection chamber lifts, volume data queries and re-visits and other service standards. It was noted that the number of paid for services has reduced and this is being looked into. Contingencies are also being put in place to prevent and or deal with telephone line outages. Discussion also took place in relation to improving customer satisfaction survey methods. It was noted that, as an Authority, we had received very few complaints about the service. Monthly meetings will take place going forward to discuss queries and enable specific case conferences, as necessary.
- 2.6 In accordance with Procurement advice, and after discussion with the Executive Member - Environment, the Authority is extending the contract until 31st March 2023, when it will be reviewed and retendered, as necessary, in accordance with Corporate Procurement rules.
- 2.7 **Current Service** (see Appendix 1). The current contract is for free rat infestation treatments for all residential properties. Other treatments, including mice, bedbugs, cockroaches and fleas, are available at a charge (direct to Rentokil) of £58.70. However, residents who are on the following benefits (Universal credit, Income support, Council tax reduction, Working or child tax income credit, Job seekers allowance (income based)) currently receive a 50% concession for the treatment of mice, bedbugs, cockroaches and fleas.
- 2.8 Appendix 2 outlines the service demand data currently available for 2020/21 and 2021/22 up to 31st December 2021. Based on the current data, completed rat treatments are set to remain about the same in 21/22 (estimated 1,700) compared to the 1,729 completed in 20/21. Chargeable services have reduced significantly according to the numbers and discussions are taking place with Rentokil as to the reasons for this. As stated above, there are a number of queries with regard to the data and these are being investigated.
- 2.9 **Impact of Covid 19 on Service Delivery-** Rentokil have reported last year that the Covid 19 pandemic had no significant impact on their ability to deliver the service required by the current contract, with the company introducing appropriate risk mitigation measures to ensure that pest control visits could be conducted safely.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Option 1 - That Executive Committee comments on the service performance and notes the continuation of the contract with Rentokil until 31st March 2023 when it will be reviewed and retendered, as necessary, in accordance with Corporate Procurement rules.
- 3.2 Option 2 – The Executive Committee consider the report and suggests further recommendations for improvement.
- 3.3 Community Services Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 28th February 2022 and, by majority vote, supported Option 1, above. Corporate Leadership Team and Regeneration has considered this report.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 Well-being Plan, Objective 2 – Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities. The use of a free pest control service to target rats helps to create clean and safe environments. By providing this service, the Authority is taking positive steps to try to create a clean and safe environment.
- 4.2 Corporate Plan – Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities Priority objective - To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control. The provision of a free pest control service for rats will assist in achieving this goal.
- 4.3 While the Local Authority is not under a statutory duty to provide a pest control treatment service, by providing a free treatment for rat infestations the Authority can respond to service demands and concerns by the community about pest infestations that may present a risk to public health and take steps to achieving the goals set out in the Wellbeing and Corporate Plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

As outlined above, the current budget for this contract is £62,000. The cost of the current contract is currently £59,793 per annum with additional charges for concessionary treatments. The current estimates for full year costs for 2021/22 is £61,000, which will be met within existing budgets.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

With the ongoing service delivered by Rentokil, risks are low. Reputational risks have reduced with the Authority providing a free service for rat treatments.

5.3 **Legal**

There is no legal duty to provide a pest control treatment service however the benefits that it provides have been highlighted.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no staffing/workforce implications in relation to this report. The free treatment of rats has prevented the increase and spread of rodent problems. Without this service there would be increased demand/pressure on Environmental Health to investigate complaints and take statutory enforcement action on property owners and occupiers due to rodent problems. This would require an increased staffing resource.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

See above and Appendix 2

Sewer Baiting. The Authority had in place arrangements with Caerphilly CBC to enable sewer baiting to reduce/control the general rodent population within the drainage network. This work is funded by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water (approx. £5k per annum). Many of these treatments are undertaken at the request of Environmental Health at specific locations in Blaenau Gwent as a result of complaints about rodent activity in the general environment in areas where it is not possible to safely and legally bait above ground. Unfortunately, CCBC recently informed us that due to Covid and other internal problems, they have not been able to undertake this work so far in this financial year. As such, Officers have prioritised where the work that is needed most following discussions with CCBC, BG officers are putting arrangements in place to undertake this work for the next 3 months – to be reviewed in late May 2022.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Improved public health through the free treatment of rat infestations in domestic premises and the prevention of the spread of infestations to third party land.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The service outlined in this report is necessary to ensure long-term improvements in public health and to reduce the likelihood of the spread of disease.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

By proactively treating pest infestations in specific locations the Authority is preventing further spread and proliferation of infestations to other areas of the County Borough.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The scheme is run in partnership with a private sector service provider and Dwr Cymru/CCBC for man-hole sewer baiting.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment agendas.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not applicable. This is an activities report relating to an existing contract.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

This is an activities report relating to an existing contract. There is no decision to be taken but the existing positive SED impacts relating to Living Standards and Health.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The service has no adverse effects against the protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The service will be monitored by Public Protection Managers and by way of relevant reports to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, CLT and Scrutiny Committee, as necessary

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Pest Control - Current Service Offer

Appendix 2 – Pest Control Treatment Data 20/21 and Q1-3 21/22

Appendix 3 – SED & EIA Screening Assessment