

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Activities Report – Pest Control Treatment Service up to December 2019**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr G. Collier, Deputy Leader / 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)
14.1.20	21.1.20	26.02.20			27.2.20	11.3.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To update Members 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 Until 2012/13, Blaenau Gwent provided an in-house Pest Control treatment service. However, with ongoing issues relating to service resilience and annual pressures for revenue budget savings, alternative options for service delivery were considered with a view to achieving a more sustainable service at reduced cost. This included a consideration of private market testing and partnering with another local authority.

2.3 In April 2013, the Authority partnered with Caerphilly CBC, achieving revenue budget savings of £23k. Caerphilly delivered the service on behalf of Blaenau Gwent under an SLA for 2 years before the service was discontinued completely by the Council, in 2015, due to further budget pressures. (However, Caerphilly CBC is continuing to undertake sewer baiting on behalf of the Authority - see paragraph 10.7, below). As a result, Environmental Health enforcement action duly increased.

- 2.4 In 2016/17, 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.
- 2.5 Mitie Group plc was awarded the work following a competitive tender process undertaken in accordance with corporate procurement rules by way of access to an established ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) framework. The cost of the service at the time was £60,000. A budget was allocated and the contract was awarded for an initial 12 months with an option to extend the contract for a further 12 months.
- 2.6 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 was again successful although the contract price increased by £10,000. Mitie were 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 on the same terms as Mitie.
- 2.8 The cost of the current contract is £70,000 per annum. Despite the increase in cost since 2016, the budget allocated by the Authority has remained the same (£60,000). No additional funds were allocated. Thus, the service has had an ongoing budget pressure of £10,000.
- 2.9 However, given the low take up of concessions, Officers and Rentokil representatives have 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). The contract will be extended until March 2022, with an option to extend it again until March 2023. Based on current demand for concessions, the max cost to the Authority is estimated at £61-62k per annum.
- 2.10 As a condition for the change, Rentokil has requested that the paid for price for wasp treatments is increased by a small amount from £48.00 to £57.60 (incl VAT) in line with the other paid for treatment prices. This has been agreed.
- 2.9.1 **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.
- 2.9.4 Appendix 2 outlines the service demand data currently available for 2018/19 and 2019/20 up to 31st December 2019. Based on the current data, completed rat treatments

are set to remain at a similar level in 19/20 to the 1,140 completed in 18/19. During the summer months of 2019, the number of wasp treatments increased significantly as too the number of concessions, which is positive.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The report will be presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2020 and any comments from the Committee will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.2 Option 1

That Members note the service performance and provide any specific comments prior to approval.

Option 2

That Members approve the report as provided.

4 Recommendation(s)/Endorsements by other Groups

4.1 Corporate Leadership Team and Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team have considered this report.

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

5.1 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.

5.2 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 will assist in achieving this goal.

5.3 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.

6. Implications Against Each Option

6.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

6.2 As outlined above, the current budget for this contract is £60,000. The cost of the current contract is currently £70,000 per annum which has created a £10,000 budget pressure. This is now largely mitigated. As a result of the change in contractual arrangements, and the current trend data relating to concessions, a new budget level of £62,000 will be built in to the 2020/21 budget, with the difference met from other service budgets where possible.

7. **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
 - 7.1 With the ongoing service delivered by Rentokil, risks are low. Reputational risks have reduced with the Authority providing a free service for rat treatments. See also paragraph 9.1, below.
8. **Legal**
 - 8.1 There is no legal duty to provide a pest control treatment service however the benefits that it provides have been highlighted.
9. **Human Resources**
 - 9.1 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.
10. **Supporting Evidence**
 - 10.1 **Performance Information and Data**
 - 10.2 See above and Appendix 2
 - 10.3 Sewer Baiting. The Authority has continued with 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) and results in approximately 600 “man-hole lifts” for treatments each year. 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. In 2018/19, 16 referrals were made (all referrals would result in multiple “man-hole lifts”), and to 31st December 2019, there have been 27 referrals.
11. **Expected outcome for the public**
 - 11.1 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.
12. **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
 - 12.1 The Executive Member – Environment has been consulted on these minor amendments to the contract. Procurement colleagues participated in the recent contractual discussions and were consulted on the content of this report, as appropriate.
13. **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
 - 13.1 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.
14. **Preventative focus**
 - 14.1 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. .
15. **Collaboration / partnership working**
 - 15.1 The scheme is run in partnership with a private sector service provider.

16 **Integration(across service areas)**

16.1 The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment Agendas.

17. **EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

17.1. The proposals will no adverse effects against the protected characteristics.

18. **Monitoring Arrangements**

18.1. 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 19/20