

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ANIMALS POLICY (INC WELFARE STATEMENT)</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MANAGER</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek the views of Policy Scrutiny Committee on the attached Animals Policy (appendix A), prior to seeking the approval of the Executive.

## **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 The Council has many and varied roles and functions that relate either directly or indirectly to animals. The breadth of this work, alongside our historical work on animal welfare has brought about the need to refresh, revise, develop and bring together a range of policy areas to present a coherent approach in this area.
- 2.2 The policy has been drafted by experts, consulted on with specialists, third sector and industry bodies and guided by elected members.
- 2.3 The Animals Policy is attached as appendix A. Details in relation to the impact of the introduction of this policy are detailed in the presentation attached as appendix B.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council has many long established roles, policies and practices that are either directly, or indirectly linked to animals, be that in relation to development, the environment or our regulation and enforcement functions. Animals are an intrinsic part of our communities not only as pets but also working animals, the food chain, wildlife, insects and pollinators.
- 3.2 The Council has a long-held tradition of upholding the welfare of animals in its local area both through our service delivery and our policy position. This was reflected in the early 1990s through the development of an animal welfare charter. This charter contained strong statements pertaining to the best possible welfare standards for animals and our support for these standards.
- 3.3 The breadth of our roles, combined with the desire to reassert our views on animal welfare, has meant that crafting a cohesive policy, incorporating a revised charter, has been challenging and has taken significant time to develop, consulting with specialists and industry along with relevant Executive Members.
- 3.4 In order to deliver a cohesive policy, a number of areas have been combined, some of which are dealt with in more detail than others, where a reference may be made to existing policy. The purpose of this is to embed the relevance of the

welfare statement, provide consistency across our services and present a cohesive position externally.

#### **4. Policy Development and Consultation**

- 4.1 The various policy positions have been developed through officer knowledge, legislation, best practice and relevant guidance alongside strong consultation with elected members and industry experts.
- 4.2 Initially and alongside consultation with senior management, officers consulted with the RSPCA and the Councils own contracted expert in exotic veterinary science. The feedback from both being extremely positive, with the RSPCA senior parliamentary advisor stating *“I realise that's quite a lot of feedback but you gave us a lot to think about! The document is fantastic though, as I say I've never seen one so detailed”*.
- 4.3 Officers also consulted with a range of internal departments including;
- Legal services (general)
  - Sport and Leisure (circuses and use of land)
  - Community services (land management and environmental roles)
  - Food, Health and Safety (food industry and H and S)
  - Licensing (boarding establishments, breeding, horses, dangerous wild animals)
  - Planning (development)
- 4.4 Following this initial phase of consultation officers broadened the scope to include the industry locally and opened up an invite for all pet shops in the city to meet with us and discuss the details of our intentions through this policy. A number of our local pet shops (and a national chain) took up this offer and a summary of their feedback is attached as appendix C. It should be made clear that the Council enjoys a good working relationship with industry locally and in many cases our local shops meet or exceed standards in the initial draft and indeed have encouraged us to be more robust in areas which are now reflected in this final draft.
- 4.5 Finally, officers briefed the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Environment, along with the Directorate Management Team of Communities and Environment, which led to further adjustment.

#### **5. Welfare Statement**

- 5.1 The welfare statement within the policy is broad and varied. The blueprint for this section was taken from the welfare charter and updated following significant legislative and industry change. The nature of this statement means it covers a range of subjects, not all of which the Council play a direct role. Whilst our role may be indirect in some areas, this policy recognises our role as community leaders and seeks to lead by example.
- 5.2 The direct effects in terms of service delivery are detailed within the presentation developed for Executive members, attached as appendix B, slides 6 to 13.

## **6. Policy Areas**

6.1 The policy also deals with several individual areas where we have direct responsibilities, which includes;

- Dogs
- Animal nuisance
- Horses
- Dangerous Wild Animals, Breeding and Boarding Establishments
- Pet shop licensing

6.2 More detail on what the areas covered is again detailed in appendix B, slides 14 to 17.

## **7. Combined Policy Information**

7.1 This section lays out the basic information that applies across the policies and includes the legal framework, standards of service and monitoring and review.

## **8. Strategic Priorities**

### **8.1 Let's drive economic growth**

Part of our functions in relation to Animals involve regulation of industry. It is critical that the way we deliver regulation leaves space for business to grow and innovate whilst ensuring high welfare standards are maintained.

### **8.2 Let's reduce inequality**

Animal nuisance, stray or dangerous dogs can often have an impact in some of the most deprived areas of our City. Welfare can be linked to inequality and financial difficulties which can in turn lead to the maltreatment, trade or abandonment of dogs or other animals. This policy ensures the best possible response to tackle these issues.

### **8.3 Let's enhance our remarkable place**

A number of issues associated with animals can negatively impact people's perception of the City and their local areas. This policy sets out a robust and proportionate response to these issues.

## **9. Organisational Impacts**

### **9.1 Finance**

No additional financial implications brought about by this policy.

### **9.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

This policy details how and when we may apply or use our legal powers.

### **9.3 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights (including the outcome of the EA attached, if**

required)

## **10. Risk Implications**

### **10.1 (i) Options Explored**

Do nothing.  
Draft individual Policies.

### **10.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach**

The Council is making a bold statement on its views relating to animals and their welfare. There is always a risk when dealing with regulation that industry or representative bodies may choose to challenge some of the ambitions.

## **11. Recommendation**

### **11.1 The policy is recommended for approval to the Executive.**

<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	No
<b>Do the exempt information categories apply?</b>	No
<b>Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?</b>	No
<b>How many appendices does the report contain?</b>	3 – A, B, C
<b>List of Background Papers:</b>	None
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