

SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF THE PET POLICY
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARIANNE UPTON – TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information relating to the impact on the Pet Policy following the recent changes to the Schedule of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, relating to XL Bully dogs.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Government made a decision to add XL Bully dogs to the list of banned dogs in 2023.
- 2.2 The first part of the ban came into force on 31st December 2023 and became against the law to:
- sell an XL Bully dog
 - abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray
 - give away an XL Bully dog
 - breed from an XL Bully dog
 - have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle
- 2.3 The second part of the ban comes into force on 1st February 2024 and will make it a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog in England and Wales unless the dog has a Certificate of Exemption.
- 2.4 There will be some City of Lincoln Council tenants who already have XL Bully dogs at their home, so the Council needs to have a clear corporate position on the rules and the responsibilities for our tenants.
- 2.5 The Council has a Pet Policy document which was last updated in 2013, which needs to be reviewed.
- 2.6 The current policy does not allow any dog breeds covered by the Act, or make any reference to The Dangerous Dogs Exemption Schemes (England and Wales) Order 2015.

3. Proposed Amendments

- 3.1 That the policy is reviewed in full to ensure it reflects all legislation and City of Lincoln Council's reasonable approach to keeping pets in properties.
- 3.2 Ensure that the policy reflects more recent evidence relating to emotional support that animals can provide and provide clear information about this to tenants.

- 3.3 That a clear statement is made about whether banned dog breeds can be kept in our properties in line with any Exemption regulations.

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

To have a fair and consistent approach for our tenants who wish to have pets.

4.2 Let's deliver quality housing

Quality housing is not solely about the condition of the property. It is also about making a positive environment where people can thrive. For many people, the ability to have pets enhances their wellbeing and home.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in reviewing this policy.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications of reviewing this policy.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Although the review of the policy may have an impact on tenants who currently own XL Bully dogs, the change is legislative and beyond the control of the council.

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the policy review to consider the impact of any amendments to tenants and applicants and actions the council can take to support tenants with the changes and information that can be provided.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 (i) Options Explored

6.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

7. Recommendation

7.1 That the Pet Policy is reviewed in full to ensure it is up to date with legislation by 31st March 2024.

7.2 That the council allows current XL Bully owners to retain their pets, subject to them:

- Obtaining permission from us to keep a pet
- Meeting all Exemption criteria
- Not allowing their pets to cause a nuisance.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

None

List of Background Papers:

None

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