

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING ON 20 April 2009**

Report Title. ANIMAL WELFARE IN HARINGEY

Report of Councillor Ray Dodds – Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel.

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Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Non Key Decision

**1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)**

To present to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the final report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review into Animal Welfare in Haringey.

**2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)**

2.1. N/A

**3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

The work of this Scrutiny Review links closely to the **Safer for All** (Community Safety) Strategy where safety and environmental cleanliness are a priority.

**4. Recommendations**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the recommendations of the report.

**5. Summary**

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme based upon submissions made to it for consideration.

5.2 As part of its submission, the Committee took account of the Councils priorities in

particular the Safer Haringey Strategy 2008-2011, agreed with the Safer Communities Partnership. The welfare of animals is a complex area involving a number of issues including anti social behaviour and responsible pet ownership. The Committee selected this topic as an area for investigation to ensure a degree of good practice in Haringey.

5.3 Local authorities play a major role in safeguarding the welfare of animals. Not only are they responsible for enforcing major pieces of animal welfare legislation but they also have wide-ranging discretionary powers.

5.4 The report sets out the findings of the Panel.

#### **6. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

6.1 Funding is available for a dog warden post, but the post is currently vacant.

6.2 Any recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare in Haringey involving additional resources, e.g. the appointment of a Dog Warden officer, need to be clearly identified for consideration as part of the Council's revenue budget process.

#### **7. Head of Legal Services Comments**

7.1 Any legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare in Haringey need to be clearly identified as part of the Cabinet response to the recommendations.

#### **8. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments**

8.1 These are considered throughout the report

#### **9. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs**

9.1 Please see the report.

#### **10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

10.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2009/2010  
Safer Haringey – Safer for All Strategy 2008-2011  
Animal Welfare Act 2006  
RSPCA Reports  
Cleaner Environment Act 2005  
Metropolitan Police Authority Strategic & Operational Policing  
Committee Report January 2009

## **11. Background**

11.1. Britain is a nation of animal lovers; the legislation around animal welfare would seem to back this up. England was one of the first countries in the world to introduce animal welfare legislation, way back in 1822. Two years later, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was established to enforce the new legislation. It was subsequently upgraded to a Royal Society (the RSPCA) in 1840.

11.2 But behind the well meaning legislation hides a more uncertain reality. Deliberate cruelty towards both wildlife and companion animals is still rife. Animal welfare can be compromised as a result of ignorance and deliberate cruelty. The RSPCA received 1.2 million cruelty complaints in 2006, of which 122,000 resulted in full investigations – up 16% from 105,000 in 2003.

11.3 Approximately three and a half million London households own a pet; however animal welfare in London not only concerns the capital's companion animals, but also the welfare aspects surrounding London's diverse and precious wildlife. Many of London's pets have not been microchipped or neutered. This can result in unwanted animals being dumped on the streets and unmarked pets not being returned to owners.

### **11.4 The Mayor's Animal Welfare Framework**

11.5 In 2004 the Mayor of London provided the first ever regional framework for animal welfare in England. The framework is about duties and obligations towards the welfare of animals in London and beyond. It shows how the Greater London Authority will play a significant role in responding to the changing nature of animal welfare.

### **11.6 The Animal Welfare Act**

11.7 The Animal Welfare Act 2006, which came into force in England in April 2007, is the most significant piece of animal welfare legislation for nearly a century. The aim of this legislation is to reduce animal suffering by enabling preventative action to be taken before suffering occurs, rather than the previous system which only enabled action to be taken after the event.

## **12 Current position in Haringey**

Urban Enforcement Directorate provides a stray dog collection and detention service. The Council is currently recruiting a dedicated officer to discharge its statutory duties for the management of stray dogs. The contact number for officers are publicised on the council website and at local police stations. The council currently operates a collection service during office hours and an acceptance point out of hours (at night and during the weekends).

12.2 Stray dogs are housed in kennels at Ashley Road, Tottenham for a period of up to 7 days before being transferred to Battersea Dogs Home (this may be earlier if the dog is distressed). Dogs are fed and watered whilst in the care of officers and are exercised accordingly. Veterinary services are provided by a local provider.

12.3 At the time of writing this report, the Council did not have a Dog Warden Officer in post and recruitment is in progress for this appointment. Interim arrangements are currently in place on a rota basis between volunteers to cover their duties. The appointment of a Dog Warden is necessary to curb the behaviour, particularly of those dog owners who allow their dogs to stray, foul public places, be the cause of traffic accidents; worry livestock, damage property and, at the worst extreme, attack people

#### **12.4 Community Animal Welfare Footprints [CAWF]**

12.5 Community Animal Welfare Footprints is a voluntary scheme developed by the RSPCA to celebrate local authorities that have tried a different approach to improving animal welfare. This may be related to the services covered by the footprints or could be in a different area.

##### **Community Animal Footprints**

- Stray Dogs Footprints
- Housing Footprints
- Contingency Planning Footprints
- Animal Welfare Principles Footprints

12.6 There are three awards for different sections of local government. Local Authorities that meet the requirements of an individual footprint will receive a certificate commemorating their achievements.

12.7 The four elements of the footprints could provide the Urban Environment Directorate with the framework for developing an Animal Welfare Policy for Haringey. The Scrutiny Review focused on these areas to establish a level of good practice.

12.8 The aim of the scrutiny is to carry out an evaluation of the Council's policy and delivery of animal welfare and controlled legislation. The Review focused on the four elements of the Community Animal Welfare Footprints [CAWF].