



Agenda item:

[No.]

**Cabinet**

**On 21 July 2009**

Report Title. **Overview and Scrutiny - Executive Response on Animal Welfare**

Report of **Director Of Urban Environment, Niall Bolger**

Signed :  7<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**Contact Officer :Robin Payne, Head of Enforcement, 020 8489 5513**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Non Key Decision**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. This report provides a the Executive response to the recommendations made by an Overview and Scrutiny review of Animal Welfare in Haringey and reported to Cabinet on 16 June 2009.

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

- 2.1. I welcome the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the recommendations of the review report. There has been a big strategic gap in this area, and the cross service and multi agency steering group that will now be established will help us to develop a strong and joined up response. This strategy and its implementation will ensure that we are active in our priority areas; particularly tackling antisocial behaviour and promoting responsible pet ownership.

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

- 3.1. Animals in an urban environment present both a source of enhanced wellbeing and of antisocial behaviour. As well as statutory duties and powers to protect

animals, the Council has a strategic interest in promoting responsible pet ownership which supports our priorities for 'Safer and Cleaner' public spaces, 'Wellbeing' and 'Independent Living'.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. That the Cabinet agrees the response to the scrutiny report recommendations and actions proposed in Appendix 1.
- 4.2. That the Cabinet approves the response to the an amendment to Council policy on animals performing in circuses so that domesticated animals, namely equine(horses ponies and donkeys), dogs, and bird (budgerigars) acts are allowed to perform where there is proven high standards and legal compliance.

#### **5. Reason for recommendation(s)**

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare in Haringey has produced a comprehensive report detailing the current arrangements in place. The review used new standards issued by the RSPCA (Community Animal Welfare Footprints [CAWF] ) as a framework for its review and took evidence from a range of key stakeholders to establish how the Council could move forward against Bronze, Silver and Gold standards. This approach has ensured that recommendations are consistent with national good practice and relevant to local issues.
- 5.2. Evidence submitted to the panel sought a change to a current ban on the use of performing animals by circuses. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 the Council can act where there is any breach of the 5 animal welfare freedoms provided by the Act. Evidence submitted was that circuses that only use domesticated animals and which have high standards of animal welfare should be allowed.

#### **6. Other options considered**

- 6.1. No other options have been considered.

#### **7. Summary**

- 7.1. Animal Welfare in Haringey is delivered by a diverse range of providers. Some statutory responsibilities exist but it is substantially for a local authority to determine its local approach and service provision. In Haringey there is no single policy or strategy that captures the Council's approach to Animal Welfare and the report and recommendations show that many services and partners can play a role. Services consulted on this report have agreed the recommendations
- 7.2. A key recommendation of the report is to develop an Animal Welfare Strategy with

supporting policy and emphasis on education and coordination. It is proposed that a cross service and multi agency steering group will be established to formulate a new strategy and to bring forward proposals for adoption at a later date.

- 7.3. The report identifies that current Council policy prevents performing animals on Council owned land and recommends an amendment to this policy that is consistent with the scrutiny panel recommendations.

## **8. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

- 8.1. The Cabinet is asked to agree the scrutiny report recommendations on Animal Welfare in Haringey and the actions proposed as set out in Appendix 1. A principle recommendation of the report is to develop an Animal Welfare Strategy and an Animal Welfare Education Programme; the creation of an Animal Welfare Charter/Policy is also recommended. It is proposed to form a steering group to progress these initiatives and to bring forward proposals for Cabinet to consider at a later date. The report on these future proposals will need to set out any resource implications for the Council and its partners.
- 8.2. Other recommendations in the scrutiny report have some minor resource implications for a number of services across the Council. These will need to be contained within existing budgets.

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

- 9.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.
- 9.2. Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising out of the report, the Head of Legal Services would expect to be asked to contribute to the work of the proposed Strategy Steering Group, and also in drafting the wording of the proposed amendment to the policy against domesticated animals being allowed to perform at circuses and other events on Council owned land

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

- 10.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for any new Animal Welfare Strategy developed. This will identify potential issues for action.
- 10.2. "Understanding the Links: Child Abuse, Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence", a recent report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children suggests that there is increasing research and clinical evidence which indicates that there are sometimes links between the abuse of children, vulnerable adults and animals.

10.3. Evidence demonstrates that some pet owners experiencing financial difficulty are abandoning their pets or compromising their welfare. Stray dog numbers and cruelty cases are therefore on the increase.

10.4. Those living in higher density housing are more likely to find nuisance animals a source of antisocial behaviour. This can lead to controls which limit pet ownership for some forms of tenure.

## **11. Consultation**

11.1. The review consulted widely in the preparation of its recommendations. Strategic and Community Housing, Frontline Services, Emergency Planning, the Equalities team and Recreation have been consulted on this response.

## **12. Service Financial Comments**

12.1. The recommendations cover a range of services across the Council and there will be some minor resource implications for these services. Any proposals for service extension would need to be within existing budgets.

12.2. The Enforcement Service deleted its Animal Warden post and created a new lower graded Dog Warden post in 2008/9 as part of a package to generate pre-agreed savings of £25k. This coincided with alterations under the Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to make Local Authorities solely responsible for stray dog collection. As part of this change, £16k of funding was redirected to the Enforcement budget from the Metropolitan Police and was used to help fund these changes and savings. As a consequence the service has developed a stronger focus on dog control rather than other pets and animals.

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

13.1. Appendix 1 – Table of recommendations and service comments.

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

14.1. Scrutiny review of Animal Welfare in Haringey 2009

## **15. Animal Welfare in Haringey**

15.1 Animal Welfare in the Scrutiny Panel report was clearly identified as an issue that cuts across council services and partners. The table below provides some examples of where lead agency roles lay.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Lead Agency/Service</b>
Animal related Licensing	Enforcement
Animal disease control	Enforcement/DEFRA
Stray Dogs	Enforcement
Dog Fouling	Enforcement/Environmental Resources
Nuisance Animals	Enforcement
Dangerous Dogs	Police/Safer Parks Police
Harassment using dogs/animals	ASBAT/Police
Animal Cruelty	Enforcement/Police/RSPCA
Tenancy breaches	Strategic and Community Housing/ Homes for Haringey
Performing Animals – council land	Recreation/Enforcement

- 15.2 Currently no service has an overall responsibility for animal welfare and in general no overall coordination arrangements or strategy is in place. Substantially the Panel has not reported any significant failings in the services that operate but has identified the need for more strategic coordination and policy in this area.
- 15.3 Up until 2008 the Enforcement Service employed an Animal Warden. This post was deleted and a new post of Dog Warden created. This has allowed for an increased focus on stray dog collection which became the sole responsibility of the Local Authority in April 2008 and has delivered £25k of efficiency savings as from 2008/9. One consequence has been that the resource available to deal with non statutory issues such as broader animal welfare promotion and cruelty has been reduced.

## **16. Scrutiny Panel Recommendations**

- 16.1 The Scrutiny Panel has identified 12 recommendations. These are listed in Appendix 1 together with a service response following consultation with the council services affected. Most services contributed to the review and have accepted the recommendations, although some resource implications are identified.
- 16.2 From the recommendations a number are of particular importance:
- 16.3 Recommendation 8 requires that a Corporate Animal Welfare Strategy and Animal Welfare Education Program are developed. Recommendation 10 is that an Animal Welfare Charter/Policy is also created. It is proposed that a cross agency group, chaired by the Head of Enforcement, is tasked with formulating a way forward and reporting back to Cabinet with proposals. It is proposed that a draft report will be available by October 2009.

- 16.4 Recommendation 9 recognises the link between harm to animals and safeguarding. The Equalities Team have commented that there is increasing research and clinical evidence which indicates that there are sometimes links between the abuse of children, vulnerable adults and animals. Haringey Council has a responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults including those at risk of domestic violence.
- 16.5 Recommendation 12 refers to circuses and allowing animals to perform. Practice and policy since 1983 is to not allow operators to use performing animals at events on Council owned land. Representation to the Panel included the view of one operator that domestic animals and specifically dogs, budgerigars and equine acts should be allowed to perform, subject to compliance with the Animal Welfare Act five freedoms of :—
- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
  - Freedom from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
  - Freedom from pain, injury or disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
  - Freedom to express normal behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
  - Freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Concerns here have traditionally related to the use of wild animals and the ability to express normal behaviour. This proposal is that domestic animals should be allowed to perform subject to compliance by inspection that all 5 freedoms are being met.

## APPENDIX 1 – Response to Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations for Animal Welfare

Recommendations	Service Response
<p>1. The Panel recommend that the Council adopt the Community Animal Welfare Footprints scheme to measure its performance in animal welfare and sets the Bronze award as a minimum local target for 2009/2010. Once achieved, the Service should carry out an assessment into the feasibility of achieving Gold Standard.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The service believes it can easily meet Bronze Standard. A new Dog Warden took up his post on 15 June. This role will support achievement of the bronze standard.</p> <p>A feasibility study for the Gold Standard for stray dog collection will substantially look at options for delivering micro chipping and will build on recommendations for a welfare strategy.</p> <p><b>We will aim to apply for bronze standard by March 2010</b></p>
<p>2. The panel recommends that the appointment of a Dog Warden should be a priority for the Service and that other strategic roles around animal are carried out as part of the duties of other posts.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Enforcement service has appointed a new Dog Warden.</p> <p>Strategic and other operational responsibility for animal related enforcement has been built into enforcement roles for Street Enforcement, Enforcement Response, Commercial Inspections and Licensing.</p> <p>The Head of Enforcement will act as a Strategic Coordinator for other roles identified within a proposed Animal Welfare Strategy</p> <p><b>Achieved</b></p>

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<p>3. The Panel recommends that the Urban Environment Directorate explore the idea of encouraging voluntary micro chipping or tattoo for all cats and dogs.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>Micro chipping is part of the Gold Standard in recommendation 1 above. This can assist the return of stay dogs or reconnecting an owner with an animal found killed.</p> <p>The new Dog Warden will promote a responsible dog ownership campaign as part of their normal duties. This is particularly relevant given the council's statutory role to collect stray dogs.</p> <p>Any activity will need to be self funding and linked to other strategies for promoting responsible pet ownership such as links to tenancy conditions.</p> <p><b>Review to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>
<p>4. The Panel recommends the Urban Environment Directorate should look into whether or not there are any illegal dog breeding activities in the Borough and to take appropriate action against any individuals found to be breaking the law</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>This review will be undertaken. The licensing rules in relation to dog breeding relates to commercial scale operations and does allow for small scale hobby breeding to take place without regulation. Where a breeder is licensed controls include restrictions on how puppies can be sold and this would therefore be part of any review.</p> <p><b>Review to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>



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<p>5. The Panel recommends that the Urban Environment Directorate carry out an assessment with Community and Strategic Housing for a commitment from Homes for Haringey for developing a Service Level Agreement with Community and Strategic Housing Services; and Registered Social Landlords to ensure an effective animal welfare service across the borough</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>Action proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALMO team to ensure Homes for Haringey develops Service Level Agreement with Community and Strategic Housing Services and;</li> <li>• Involve Housing Development team to ensure SLA is extended to RSLs through the RSL forum.</li> </ul> <p><b>Review to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>
<p>6. The Panel recommends that the Urban Environment Directorate encourage Homes for Haringey to participate in educational initiatives to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are aware of issues relating to animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>Action proposed:</p> <p>ALMO team to encourage Homes for Haringey to participate in educational initiatives by raising awareness of animal welfare issues in Home Zone newsletter for secured tenants and for new tenants during induction. It is anticipated that this can be achieved within existing resources.</p> <p><b>Review to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>

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<p>7. The Panel recommends that the Emergency Planning Officer work with Homes for Haringey and Registered Social Landlords to agree emergency contingency procedures to ensure a managed response for the evacuation of pets in the event of a local emergency.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The following actions are proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team (EPBC) to work with local vets and animal welfare organisations to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding covering support available to pet owners in emergencies, and to map local capacity</li> <li>- EPBC team to provide information on preparing for emergencies for pet owners on the Council website and elsewhere</li> <li>- EPBC team to ensure issues relating to pet evacuation are addressed in training events and exercises on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>To be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>
<p>8. The Panel recommends the Urban Environment Directorate, as part of the Corporate Animal Welfare Strategy, ensure that the Animal Welfare Education Program pull together existing resources and support from local organisations such as Wood Green Animal Shelter and the RSPCA to ensure a proactive, co-ordinated education approach</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Head of Enforcement will seek to develop a Strategy Steering Group to implement this proposal. Contributions from those bodies named will be included.</p> <p><b>Review to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>

## APPENDIX 1 – Response to Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations for Animal Welfare

Recommendations	Service Response
<p>9. The Urban Environment Directorate consult with Homes for Haringey, Registered Social Landlords, Children and Young People Services and Adult Social Services; the RSPCA; Battersea Cats and Dogs Home and Wood Green Animal Shelter to devise appropriate procedures to enable the sharing of information when animal welfare issues, child abuse or domestic violence are brought to their attention. These bodies should be alert to animal abuse as a possible indicator for domestic violence and child abuse.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Head of Enforcement will seek to develop a Strategy Steering Group to implement this proposal. Specifically this will include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reporting arrangements will be proposed to the Local safeguarding Children Board.</li> <li>- A process for referral of domestic violence cases to Hearthstone will be put in place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action on above to be effective July 2009.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ALMO team will work in partnership with relevant teams within Strategic Community Housing to raise awareness about animal welfare issues with all the named agencies.</li> <li>- Links will be made to agencies including the Dog Trust Freedom Project, Battersea dog and cats home, RSPCA and Wood Green Animal Shelter.</li> </ul> <p><b>We will go further here and look at options that facilitate pet homing for those at risk of domestic violence.</b></p> <p><b>To be considered as part of Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009.</b></p>

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<p>10. The Panel recommends that the Urban Environment Services produce an Animal Welfare Charter/Policy for Haringey that this should include animals on allotments</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Head of Enforcement will seek to develop a Strategy Steering Group to implement this proposal.</p> <p>Recreation Services have welcomed more coordinated approach, and will actively contribute to developing content/ implementation.</p> <p><b>Draft to be considered as part of a wider Animal Welfare Strategy by October 2009</b></p>
<p>11. The Panel recommends that consideration be given to amending the current policy prohibiting the use of performing animals at organised events on Council land in order to allow animal circuses using domestic animals to be held on the Council's open spaces.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>This will enable the Council to broaden the range of acceptable leisure provision available to borough residents. It would also support delivery of income generation from events use of our parks sites, and thus contribute to our revenue strategy.</p> <p>High standards and compliance will be condition to any agreement to operate on Haringey Council land.</p> <p><b>To have immediate effect, subject to Cabinet agreement.</b></p>
<p>12. The Panel recommends that procedures be put in place for the registration and inspection of any circuses under the relevant legislation as part of the event application process</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Council is responsible for the health and safety of circuses visiting the borough, the licensing of regulated entertainment and has powers available under the Animal Welfare Act to take action where animal welfare is prejudiced. There are no registration</p>

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	<p>requirements beyond the need for the licensing of regulated entertainment.</p> <p>In circumstances where the Council allows a circus to use our land, we can require as part of the hire agreement that appropriate veterinary inspection takes place as part of our general enforcement inspection. This can ensure that the care of animals meets welfare standards, and restrict the animals used.</p> <p>Where any circus fails obligations to ensure animal welfare, offences can be pursued under the Animal Welfare Act. Where any issue purely relates to conditions of the hire agreement, enforcement would be through the agreement not through use of powers and criminal sanction.</p> <p>Veterinary costs incurred will be recovered through the hire agreement.</p> <p><b>To have immediate effect, subject to Cabinet agreement.</b></p>