

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny
Committee

Date: 11 February 2009

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Report No: ESSC/42/09

Contact Officer: John Sharrock

Tele No: X6927

Report Title: **Transfer of Out of Hours Dog Control**

**Confidential /
Non Confidential:**

(**Non-Confidential**) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

To provide the Committee with a general update on the Transfer of Out of Hours Dog Control.

Recommendations:

The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report and to consider whether further policy development in relation to Dog Control is necessary at present.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

with background docs)

--

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present Scrutiny Committee with an update on the service for the out of hours collection of stray dogs which became the responsibility of the Council from 6th April 2008.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 During office hours, Local Authorities provide a dog control service in accordance with duties prescribed by Section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In Bolton this service is provided 'in house' by the Environmental Education and Enforcement Team. Stray dogs collected by the service are kennelled for up to 7 days at the Destitute Animal Shelter or Leigh Animal Sanctuary.
- 2.2 Prior to 6th April 2008, out of office hours, Greater Manchester Police provided a reception and temporary kennelling service for stray dogs brought to Police Stations. This facility was a duty prescribed by Section 150 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 2.3 The Clean Neighbourhoods Act commenced in April 2005 and transferred the out of hours duties placed upon the Police to Local Authorities so that Local Authorities became the sole agency responsible for stray dogs and would need to extend their current service provision accordingly. The Nationwide implementation was delayed until April 2008 due to the need to agree transfer of funds from the Police and for Local Authorities to establish out of hours services.
- 2.4 The funding negotiations and service provision were resolved through the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) Public Protection Partnership.
- 2.5 The 11 AGMA Authorities looked to meet the new requirements through provision of an out of hours stray dog collection and kennelling service, which exceeded the minimum standards outlined within Department of Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) guidance. The minimum standards do not prescribe a collection element to the service. The out of hours collection service is primarily a service for dealing with dogs that have been confined in some way and whose owners are unknown or cannot be reached at the time of notification. It is not designated or intended as a patrol service to catch roaming stray dogs nor deal with dogs injured in road traffic accidents, dangerous dogs or dogs belonging to persons taken into care, custody or hospital.
- 2.6 The AGMA out of hours collection service provider is Animal Wardens Ltd and the kennelling service is provided by Leigh Animal Sanctuary. Please note that the Destitute Animal Shelter is not used by the Out of Hours service.

3.0 AGMA Contract with Animal Wardens Ltd

- 3.1 The AGMA service level agreement allows the contractor to return dogs to their owners where ownership can be established and provided that the dog is not a persistent stray. The service level agreement also allows the contractor to charge a release fee. (£60.00)
- 3.2. All dogs that are taken to kennels remain under the control of Bolton MBC for up to 7 days during which time they can be collected from kennels by the 'person in charge' subject to a release fee. (77.50)

4.0 Microchipping

4.1 Dogs that are returned directly to owners are not micro-chipped.

4.2 When a dog is released from the Council's control (kennels), the person in charge of the animal is offered the opportunity to have the dog micro-chipped free of charge. The data for microchipping is currently being prepared by Leigh Animal Sanctuary and will be circulated to Scrutiny Members as soon as possible.

5.0 Information on Follow Up Actions

5.1 Monthly data on following up actions such as re-homing, returns to persons in charge etc. are provided at Appendix One to this report. All dogs which have not been collected by the person in charge within 7 days of kennelling are assessed for re-homing suitability. Some dogs are considered unsuitable for re-homing for reasons such as ill health or aggression.

6.0 Revenue Implications

6.1 The cost of out of hours collection and kennelling of dogs is £20,000 per annum. This funding was transferred from the Police to Local Authorities as part of the Revenue Support Grant for 2008/9.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 That Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee notes the report and considers whether further policy development in relation to Dog Control is a priority.

Appendix One

Table One - Dogs Returned Direct to Person In Charge (not taken to kennels)			
	Out of Hours Animal Wardens	Office Hours Council Warden	TOTAL
		Page 4 of 6	

Apr-08	9	4	13
May-08	7	6	13
Jun-08	13	8	21
Jul-08	11	10	21
Aug-08	9	11	20
Sep-08	0	7	7
Oct-08	0	5	5
Nov-08	2	8	10
Dec-08	2	11	13

Table Two: Leigh Animal Sanctuary Kennelling and Follow Up Data

	Out of Hours Animal Wardens	Office Hours Council Warden	TOTAL	RECLAIMED	REHOMED
Apr-08	18	42	60	22	21
May-08	22	19	41	19	18
Jun-08	17	19	36	13	21
Jul-08	26	25	51	26	22
Aug-08	29	21	50	23	17
Sep-08	22	18	40	22	16
Oct-08	23	19	42	18	16
Nov-08	28	27	55	21	24
Dec-08	35	23	58	16	26

Please note that dogs can be collected and reclaimed/rehomed in different months and therefore do not directly relate back to the total number kennelled.

