

Report for Information to: Director of Development

Author: Head of Public Protection

Date: 11th January 2018

Title: Policy for Operation of Council Dog Control Services

Introduction

The Council has employed 2.8 FTE Dog Wardens delivering both statutory and non-statutory services in terms of dog control and welfare. One (1 FTE) dog warden has left the service as employment has been obtained in the Contact Centre for a better salary. The dog wardens were unsuccessful in being regraded through the pay and grading process and remain the lowest paid regionally

In order to meet the cost reductions in the Medium Term Financial Plan for Public Protection 2018-22 no requisition to fill this post will be made.

The services provided by the dog wardens are in order of priority and statutory functions:

1. *Stray/dangerous dogs (Statutory)*
2. *Community Protection Notices for responsible dog ownership (Statutory)*
3. *Micro-chipping – non-statutory, however, all part of proactive work. Micro-chipping means the ability to serve notice to require chipping, either under the Micro-chipping regulations or via a Community Protection Notice (CPN). Micro-chipping also links into the statutory duty as regards stray dogs as it assists with the owner identification of the stray, either allowing for the safe return of the dog to its owners or the decision to be made to impound the dog due to irresponsible ownership. This also ties in with the CPN and anti-social behavior work and agenda.*
4. *Dog Fouling – non-statutory but a community and political issue. It is also very time consuming.*
5. *Beach Byelaws for Blue Flag awards etc. non-statutory but a community and political issue. It is also very time consuming.*
6. *Events and educational visits promoting responsible dog ownership – paws in park, crucial crew, school visits etc – non-statutory and again very time consuming.*

The budget for the dog service includes vans (mobile Kennel units) and equipment. The indicative figures are:

2017/18 - £156,000

2018/19 – £135,200

The Council has a kenneling contract currently at £36,000 per annum which is due to be extended or renewed/amended on the 1st April 2018. However, the decision has been made to go through a fresh tendering exercise in conjunction with

Carmarthenshire County Council to align the award of the contract and the contract periods and possibly the delivery of the kenneling provision regionally.

The Dog Control figures for some elements of service provision and requests for service (complaints) are:

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 to Date
General dog issues such as fouling, irresponsible dog ownership, ongoing straying etc.	1245	495 (The reason for this is that not all of the information was being entered onto Tascomi due to technical difficulties with the transfer of data from the CRM.)	982
Dangerous Dogs i.e. where there has been an incident reported regarding a breed type or a dangerous event occur.	3 (The reason for this may be based on information recording)	24 (The reason for this is that not all of the information was being entered onto Tascomi due to technical difficulties with the transfer of data from the CRM.)	78 to date
Number of stray dogs	197	152	134 to date
Number of stray dogs returned without kenneling	Figures not recorded historically but approximate 3 times the level of strays impounded	Figures not recorded historically but approximate 3 times the level of strays impounded	Figures not recorded historically but approximate 3 times the level of strays impounded Tascomi now set up and coded to allow recording. Admin for team to be resolved as Tech Clerk has left post and decision made to not replace to meet cost reductions so need to ensure admin to assist figures is in place.
FPN Dog Fouling	3	13	4 to date

Not requisitioning this post will save approximately **£17,000** per annum.

Policy Implementation

For the immediate future the priority work for the remaining 1.8 FTE resource will be to deal with the following functions as were outlined in more detail above:

1. *Stray/dangerous dogs (Statutory)*
2. *Community Protection Notices (CPN's) for responsible dog ownership (Statutory)*

3. *Micro-chipping – non-statutory, however, all part of proactive work. Micro-chipping means the ability to serve notice to require chipping, either under the Micro-chipping regulations or via a CPN and assists with stray/dangerous dogs.*

The remaining services that have been previously undertaken and not listed above will no longer be delivered. Clear demand management will be required.

Dog fouling and beach byelaw issues will be passed back to the relevant Town and Community Council for them to consider what steps they are able to take. Many Town and Community Councils have already started to undertake this work through the Community Dog Watch schemes.

Impacts

It is difficult to estimate the effect this will have on dog fouling issues, however, if Town and Community Councils continue to implement the ongoing dog watch initiatives community improvement may be made.

Additionally, the beach byelaws are in place so as to ensure that the Authority receives its designated blue flag status. Therefore the Tourism and Leisure sections can decide and future plan on how to ensure compliance and seek to continue its progressive work with the RNLI and utilization of the life guards.

Risks

The services being removed are not statutory, however, a reputational risk may arise which will have to be handled.

There is a resilience risk in providing statutory dog control services with only 1.8 FTE with annual leave, sick leave unforeseen issues etc. Lack of resilience may result in statutory duties not being undertaken on occasion.

In terms of beach byelaws there is a risk that awards may be lost due to lack of dog control if Town and Community Councils do not act.

An initiative is in place with PCSOs to serve FPNs for dog fouling, however, this has not been effective as no FPNs have been served by PCSOs to date.

An Internal Audit report in draft has stated the service is **partially adequate and effective**, however, this is based on 2.8FTE Dog Wardens.

Future Proposals

Planned cost reductions to meet MTFP targets may mean further reductions in dog services however, the statutory duties must be maintained so may also result in further service re-designs.

Consideration is being given to new ways of operating such as seeking a stray/dangerous dog service when tendering for the new kennel contract. and the exploration of offering services regionally which may offer some additional

economies of scale and service resilience. This may mean transfer of existing dog wardens under TUPE terms.

New Policy

Implementation of the above proposals as a Policy in delivering the dog service due to resource reductions will commence immediately.

Assessments

A WCFG Act and Equalities Impact assessments are at Appendix A and B.

Mark Elliott
Head of Public Protection

Officers Consulted:

Sarah Johns , Public Protection Manager - Public Health, Housing and Licensing

Steve Morbey, Lead Officer Public Health

Dog Wardens

Appendix A

WCFG Act Impact Assessment

The Policy proposal has been considered against the five ways of working (long term, prevention, integration, collaboration, involvement) in the Well-being of Future Generations sustainable development principle.

Long term The proposal of advisory engagement with Town and Community Councils and Tourism and Leisure will assist in providing certain areas of the service.

Prevention Dog issues are a continuing issue and the proposals may provide a preventive approach with reducing expenditure to the Authority.

Integration The proposals potentially integrate dog issues with the community, dependent upon the effectiveness of the relevant Town or Community Council.

Collaboration The proposals seek to provide advice to the local community. Where resources are available.

Involvement The proposals seek to involve the local community through advice and upskilling the Town and Community Councils.

Appendix B

Equality Impact Statement

Who are the service users affected by the proposal?

The dog wardens deals with excess of 1000 service requests per year.

Anyone that would normally utilise the service for a dog warden matter may be affected. This may include residents, the business community and farmers and will also include other external/internal partners that the service links in with as regards these functions, such Street Cleansing, Waste, the RSPCA and Dyfed Powys Police

Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?

All service users have equal access to the service. Public Protection ensures that it treats all service users, individuals and organisations, as efficiently and comprehensibly as possible and with respect.

What are the consequences of the above for specific groups?

In general, changes to service delivery would apply equally to all service users. It can be argued that there will be a detrimental effect on the protection of Public Health.

In line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015, please note below what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the proposal would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The proposals do not impact on the use of the Welsh language.

Is full information and analysis of users of the service available?

No. The service is equally available to all. We do not currently monitor service users. The service does not hold a breakdown of the service users based on people's disability, race, gender, sexuality, age, language, religion/belief.

What consultation has taken place?

No consultation has taken place.

How will the proposal be monitored?

Public Protection monitors the numbers of service requests it receives, together with performance data; this practice will continue.

Public Protection follows the corporate complaints procedure for logging and investigating any complaints.

How will the above be evaluated?

Service request data and corporate complaint data will be monitored to assess detrimental impacts.

Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified?

None to date, but advisory meetings may be held with Tourism and leisure if they consider necessary.

Where you have identified mitigating factors in previous answers that lessen the impact on any particular group in the community, or have identified any elsewhere, please summarise them here.

Training may be provided dependent upon resource availability

What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?

This EIA will be used as supporting evidence in the decisions being made around the savings proposals.