

Animal Licensing Forum

Wednesday 19th April 2017
Brotherhood Hall, Letchworth Garden City

Present:	Steve Cobb	NHDC Licensing Manager (Chair)
	Cllr Bernard Lovewell	Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health
	Hannah Sweetman	NHDC Licensing Officer
	Richard Johns	Central Bedfordshire Council EHO
	Caroline Speck	NHDC Admin Support Officer (minute taker)
	John Allard	Greenfields Cattery
	Jeremy Burrowes	Country Boarding for Cats and Dogs
	Renate Burrowes	Country Boarding for Cats and Dogs
	Georgina Clements	Waterdell Cattery
	Barry Huffer	CozyCats Cattery
	Vivien Huffer	CozyCats Cattery

Apologies: None

1. Welcome and housekeeping

SC advised of basic housekeeping and all present introduced themselves.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

All actions from the previous minutes had been completed with the exception of the setting up of a 'Paws on the Doors' sub group which is on the agenda for discussion.

It was suggested that there had been another occasion where a licence holder had not been told of an inspection advisory at the time of the visit and RJ confirmed that he would remind the CBC inspectors of the need to advise licence holders of all such matters during the inspection visit.

3. Changes to animal licensing legislation

SC summarised the recent DEFRA publication entitled "Review of animal establishments licensing in England: next steps". This is the Government's response to a public consultation regarding the future of animal licensing in England and includes the following proposals:

- **Generic licences:** it is intended to introduce one generic licence covering dog breeding, dog/cat boarding, selling pets and hiring out horses.
- **Model conditions:** Government are working with the Canine and Feline Sector group and the Equine Sector Council on establishing national model conditions that will be enshrined within the new legislation
- **Dog breeding:** it is intended to require breeders to obtain a licence if they sell three or more litters per year – selling less than 3 litters will still require a pet shop licence.

It is also proposed to make it a legal requirement to include your licence number in all adverts of animals for sale.

- **Pet sales:** it is intended to make it a requirement to provide written information about suitable pet care for any animal being sold
- **Licence duration:** local authorities will be able to issue licences for a period of up to three years based on a national risk assessment criteria for the individual business
- **Performing animals:** it is intended to replace the performing animals legislation with regulations requiring the registration of animals being exhibited rather than specifically those that are performing

The next steps will be for draft legislation to be produced with accompanying guidance and further consultation between Government and the respective animal sector groups.

4. 'Paws on the Doors' scheme

HS advised that no further work had been undertaken on this proposal due to the work needed in redrafting the current Animal Policy.

The Council are still keen to promote the principles of a 'Paws on the Doors' scheme and will consult further with the trade and specialist organisations at an appropriate point in the future when this can be re-visited. The scheme would have to be based on a criteria whereby all businesses that have obtained a licence would qualify for one 'paw', with subsequent 'paws' being awarded for businesses that offered services and facilities in excess of the Council's basic requirements.

5. Clarification on change of ownership

SC clarified that the current boarding establishment exemption from satisfying kennel/pen sizes was intended to remain in place whilst the licence holders named on the licence at the time the policy was adopted remain on the licence or the business is sold. This does not prevent new family members from being added to the licence provided the original licence holders remain.

Members will be asked to clarify this interpretation as part of the forthcoming consultation regarding a new Animal Licensing Policy.

6. Update on adoption of revised guidelines including changes made

SC advised that new CIEH Model Conditions have been published for dog breeding establishments, kennels and catteries. The existing Animal Licensing Policy commits the Council to follow national guidance when determining local licensing conditions therefore the forthcoming Policy review would be based on these new conditions.

HS advised that she would be working on a draft Animal Licensing Policy based on the new guidance and issues raised in respect of the existing policy. It was hoped to have the draft Policy available for consultation by November with the committee cycle ending at Cabinet in March 2018.

SC reminded Forum Members that there would be a full public consultation of at least eight weeks followed by a recommendation being considered by the Licensing Committee prior to Cabinet making the final decision. Both the Licensing Committee and Cabinet meetings are

public meetings where licence holders would be able to register to speak if they were concerned about the recommended policy.

HS offered to host an Animal Forum meeting during the consultation period of Forum Members thought it would be beneficial.

7. Any other business

RJ asked about the Council's current policy of allowing home boarding in any property provided that there were no children under the age of five years. Central Beds had raised that age limit and RJ recommended that the Council consider a similar change.

Cllr Lovewell asked for a range of options to be included in the draft policy for public consultation.