

**Animal Licensing Forum
Council Chamber
Wednesday, 22nd June 2011**

Present: Ken Rowe – Animal Welfare Officer NHDC
Gio Silverio – Licensing and Enforcement Manager
Steve Cobb – Senior Licensing Officer
Georgina Clements – Waterdell Cattery
Vivienne Huffer – Cozy Cats Cattery
Barry Huffer – Cozy Cats Cattery
Jeanette Deards – Deards Kennels

Apologies: Peter Eymor – Country Boarding Kennels
Councillor Barnard

Minutes

Action

GS opened the meeting by welcoming those present. Housekeeping rules were outlined and apologies made for the postponement of the previous meetings.

GS advised that the standard conditions relating to Cat Boarding Establishments had a three year shelf life and that the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss the policy, potential changes and timetable as a whole that would be set out. These changes would form part of the Housing and Public Protection Service Plan.

GS then reviewed the minutes of the meeting from 26th January 2011 and asked those present if they had looked at the website and its format and whether they were happy with it. VH stated that the website had not been updated as it stated that the next meeting was in April. KR apologised and stated that this would be updated shortly.

GS stated that the Councillors had shown interest in attending the forum, however due to other commitments, at present they were not able to attend. GS confirmed that she would request the Councillors did attend particularly when discussions concerning changes were taking place.

GS also confirmed that she was aware of the comments made at the last meeting regarding her attendance, however as the L & E Manager, she was not always able to attend and so Steve Cobb would be in attendance when she could not be. That way, a Senior officer would always be at the meeting. BH stated that he felt that the issue was that without the decision maker at the forum a second discussion took place without the licence holders being present. GS explained that she was not the decision maker; decisions are made by the Head of Service, Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and LAC. BH explained that he thought that the forum was to agree the terms and conditions to put forward. GS confirmed that KR takes the views of the licence holders forward and represents them.

BH stated that there were no rules at present as these were to be formulated within the forum so he felt that no rules exist. GS explained that the Cabinet had adopted the Animal Licensing Policy with the opt out existing for licence holders with further exemptions regarding the sale of businesses.

SC explained that the purpose of the forum was to feedback concerns, as licence holders felt the rules were impracticable and to feedback any problems. Elected members (volunteers) then feedback any suggestions/changes that they feel need to be made and this is all put out to Consultation through LAC/Cabinet or Head of Service if minor. GS and SC are of an advisory capacity within the forum.

GC stated that she felt the previous minutes for 29th Sept 2010 were incorrect. BH and GC confirmed that they were consulting/collating with the other catteries and submitting their views. GC confirmed that they had not consulted with the Firs, Preston Hills or Roger and Ken at Little Wymondley. However these were either already working to the standards or were at half capacity. GS confirmed that they would still need to be part of the consultation.

KR

GS confirmed that the minutes of today would also correct the previous meetings minutes and these were to be checked with KR.

GS confirmed that the Animal Licensing Policy document was adopted in January 2010 and took effect 1st April 2010 and it therefore expires on 31st March 2013. GS explained that the document as a whole will be circulated to the trade and forum members to see if there are any issues/amendments required between January – March 2012. In April the timetable will be set out to adopt/amend the policy and this will set out the stages including the committees – LAC and Cabinet. It will need to go to these as it is a local policy. Any minor changes that take place have to be agreed by the Portfolio holder and the Head of Service and these will be on the document. If the changes are not agreed prior, then they will be included in the consultation period. Review of the policy will be consulted for 12 weeks even if there are no changes, as the policy will need to be adopted again and this is part of the review process. It would be possible to extend the shelf life to 5 years and we will look at doing this. It was agreed that this was a good idea as the policy has just bedded in and it is then having to be discussed again. The proposed timetable for 2012 is dictated by committee meetings and is usually a formal consult in April-June, LAC – September and Cabinet – November.

Standard Conditions re Cat Boarding Establishments

KR to collate and report back on feedback and areas identified where minor changes can be made. The reasons for the changes will be required. BH pointed out that the EH guidelines are from 1995 and that no changes had been made and they were not practical. This is why the changes are required. GC confirmed that she felt that by making these changes it would benefit the cats. KR confirmed that the LA had varied slightly to make them more practical and workable.

BH expressed his concerns that the document is how they must work rather than a guide and so agrees that changes are required to make it more workable.

The Policy in particular the conditions relating to the Cat Boarding Establishment was then discussed and updated accordingly. This has not yet been completed and so continues to be work in progress. It was agreed that a further meeting would be arranged so that these discussions could be completed then.

5. Dates of the Next Meeting

The Next meeting will be held on 29th June 2011 at 13.00hrs in The Council Chambers.

Comments, queries and agenda item can be sent to:

licensing@north-herts.gov.uk

This then allows for other officers to pick up any queries if Ken is away from the office.

Any other Business

None

Meeting closed at 3.00pm.