

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

KILMARNOCK SOUTH LOCAL COMMITTEE – 24 MARCH 2004

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH STRAY DOGS AND DANGEROUS DOGS

Joint Report by Director of Community Services and Strathclyde Police

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Local Committee of the arrangements made for dealing with stray dogs and dangerous dogs.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dangerous dogs are defined in statute and responsibility for dealing with these lies exclusively with the Police. Any member of the public having information about a dangerous dog should contact their local Police station as a matter of urgency.
- 2.2 The Council has a duty to inspect its area from time to time and uplift any dogs which are not within the control of a responsible person.

The Council has a duty to accept any dogs handed to them as strays and after a statutory kennelling period of 7 days, has a duty to destroy these animals if not claimed or rehomed.

- 2.3 The Police have similar duties.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 East Ayrshire Council employs 4 trained pest control/dog warden operatives who will deal with reports of stray dogs throughout the area of East Ayrshire Council.

On finding a dog which can be identified, staff will return it to its owner, issue a verbal warning and offer advice on responsible dog ownership. The Council has prepared a guidance leaflet which has proved helpful for such owners in the past.

- 3.2 The good working relationship between the Council and Strathclyde Police means that an informal protocol has been agreed where dogs reported to either the Police or the Council during the Council's working hours (9 am – 5 am Monday to Thursday; and 9 am – 4 pm on Fridays) are normally dealt with the Council's pest control/dog warden operatives. In turn, any reports of stray dogs outwith these hours are normally dealt with by the Police. This arrangement allows maximisation of the resources of the two organisations.
- 3.3 The legislation also provides for any member of the public finding a dog to be able to take responsibility for it for a period of up to 28 days and thereafter become its owner (provided it is not claimed by any other individual).

In practice, the two kennels used by the Police and the Council for strays make informal attempts to find new homes for suitable dogs rather than see them destroyed. A recent

innovation has been the involvement of the National Canine Defence League (now renamed the Dog Trust) who have also been uplifting unclaimed strays at the kennels for rehoming.

The latest available figures indicate that in 2002/03, 227 stray dogs were dealt with by Council Dog Wardens.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The cost of providing the dog warden service together with the provision of kennelling facilities, destruction fees etc is of budgetary significance and regularly reviewed.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990; Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992; and Civic Government Act.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It is in the Council's interests to maintain a public service for the uplift of strays.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 There are a number of pieces of legislation available to the Council and the Police for dealing with stray dogs.

7.2 As a result of the excellent working relationship between the Council and Strathclyde Police, an informal protocol has been devised to maximise the resources of both organisations to provide a 24 hour service, 7 days per week.

7.3 While in theory the Council has a duty to destroy all strays unclaimed at the end of statutory 7 day period, informal arrangements have been made to find new homes (or indeed alternative accommodation) for unclaimed strays.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Local Committee is invited to note the report.

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Director of Community Services
WS/JFC/CAM
24th February 2004

Superintendent L Weir
Strathclyde Police

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

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