

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 22nd September, 2008.

Present: Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg (Chairman), Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Womphrey and Cllr Bill Woodhead.

Officers: M Batty and M Berry (DNS); Mrs T Harrison and R MacGregor (LD).

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr D Cains, Cllr A Larkin and Cllr M Stoker

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2008 to be signed by the Chair as a correct record**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June as a correct record.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2008 - For Approval**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2008.

The Chair advised that the tri-partite meeting to consider the draft report following the Customer First scrutiny review would take place on 26th September 2008.

Members were informed that nothing had been received back regarding European packaging.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2008 be approved and forwarded to Council for consideration.

4 **Review of: Dog Fouling & Animal Welfare Service**

The Principal Environmental Health Officer gave a presentation to Members detailing the role and responsibility of the Animal Welfare Service. The main responsibilities of the service were as follows:

- Strays - other animals (not just dogs)
- Handover - of all animals
- Stray dogs – 24/7 service
- Dog fouling - education / enforcement
- Animal welfare issues - cruelty / abandonment / the new welfare offence
- Nuisance complaints relating to all animals
- Dangerous Dogs – dog attacks (joint working with Police)
- Micro-chipping - low cost and free micro-chipping
- Neutering - low cost and free neutering
- Promote responsible pet ownership – education, advice

- Animal licensing - boarding / riding / pet shops etc.

Animal Welfare was Local Authorities' equivalent to the R.S.P.C.A.

From April 2008, Local Authorities took over responsibility for stray dogs from the Police which impacted on resources.

Since 2001 the number of service requests had more than doubled.

Members were provided with a breakdown of service requests for dog services and other animal services.

DOG FOULING

Members were advised that the 'Dogs Fouling of Land Act' was introduced in July 2001 replacing the local bylaws that had been in place.

There was no national strategy of guidance to deal with dog fouling.

High profile radio, television and billboard campaigns had been undertaken since 2002 and 7,500 signs and 120 new dog bins has been erected since 2002.

Two animal collection/enforcement officers were appointed and carried out routine patrols. Hotspots had been targeted with the use of large, bright, temporary signs in conjunction with patrols to try and discourage dog fouling.

The Enforcement Officers issued people with on the spot fines (Fixed Penalty Notices). Members requested information on which gender were fined the most.

Areas that were not over-looked or easily seen by the public were areas that people allowed their dog to use and leave waste.

The Officer advised that 60-70% of owners did pick up the mess after their dogs.

Members felt that the review should be split between Animal Welfare and Dog Fouling. Due to budget implications and financial deadlines it was felt that Animal Welfare should be reviewed first.

Members requested that representatives from the R.S.P.C.A be asked to attend and give evidence.

Members discussed co-ordinating with Ward Councillors regarding dog fouling bins as the Ward Councillors could advise where the hot spots were in their area.

Members discussed the use of dog toilets in parks, however it was observed that it would be confusing as not all areas/parks would have them so mess could be left in an area that were not dog toilet without it being clear to the owners.

Members were advised that the next meeting would be held on 13th October

and there would be a group of young people attending as part of Local Democracy Week.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The presentation be noted.
2. Gender analysis of who received the fixed penalty notices will be provided for the next meeting.