

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday 14th September 2026.

Present: Cllr Jim Beall (Chair), Cllr Steve Nelson (Vice Chair), Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Ted Strike and Cllr Marilyn Surtees.

Officers: Steph Williams (PDSA), Stephen Donaghy (Neighbourhoods), and Michelle Gunn (Corporate Services).

Also in attendance: Cllr Norma Stephenson

Apologies: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

PLA/27/26 Livestreaming

The Committee noted the meeting was being livestreamed.

PLA/28/26 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedures.

PLA/29/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PLA/30/26 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PLA/31/26 Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare, Kennelling, and Protection of Pets

The Committee received evidence from the Head Nurse at the local PDSA regarding their experience of delivering veterinary support and the PDSA Animal Welfare (PAW) Report 2025.

The key points highlighted included:

- Owning a pet improved caregiver's lives, combated loneliness, and was a lifeline to many when they faced struggles. It was believed that pets' health and well-being should not suffer during times of their owner's financial hardship.
- PDSA provided services to those who were in receipt of a range of benefits, and those registered would be entitled to either the charitable funded service whereby pets were treated for free, or the concessionary low-cost service which could be anywhere between a third to two thirds cheaper than private or independent practice. The level of care provided was the same across both charitable and concessionary services.
- The Middlesbrough Hospital registered approximately 9,000 clients a year and treated an average of approximately 330 pets a week/1,500 a month.
- While the PDSA provided consultations and surgery, along with 24-7 emergency care, there was also a holistic range of treatments being carried out. 41% of the

individual pet workload a year was focused on preventative activity, and this included neutering (approximately 15 pets per week), vaccinations (approximately 30 pets per week), microchipping, flea and worm prescriptions, and other over-the-counter preventative care. Charitable funded clients would pay the same price as concessionary clients for preventative care.

- While the registration and appointment system was online, clients who could not access the internet were able to get assistance from the National Customer Service Centre.
- The PDSA's online Pet Health Hub was available for all pet owners to access
- The charity did not receive any government funding and relied on donations, including gifts in wills and legacies which funded two out of three treatments, and contributions from clients.
- The PDSA treated more pets than all the UK veterinary charities put together.

It was questioned why TS13 was the only TS postcode the local PDSA did not provide services to. It was explained that this was due to the distance needed to travel to get to the veterinary hospital. It would be better for the welfare of the pet in emergency need to be treated at a veterinary practice nearer to TS13.

Euthanasia of pets was raised, and it was explained this was a part of the work carried out by all veterinary practices. Many of the pets seen by the PDSA were older with long term conditions, and euthanasia would be considered as a treatment option once they were at the end of a treatment platform and the pets health and wellbeing were compromised. Occasionally, it was also a treatment option considered if the owner's circumstances did not allow them to provide the long-term health care their pet needed, e.g. they could not afford the cost of travel to the PDSA for regular appointments, did not have the time in their schedule to give appropriate medication, or could not cope with their specific needs. The PDSA would offer assistance with bereavement and cremation afterwards. Member requested the number of pets euthanised by the PDSA.

While it was noted that the PDSA was not a rehoming charity, it did have links with rehoming services and animal charities, e.g. Dog's Trust, Blue Cross, Cats Protection League and various other charities. Advice and contact information would be given to clients regarding rehoming if required. However, if the animal's health was compromised, they would not be able to advise rehoming as it would be difficult to find a home and therefore put pressure on another charity.

The Committee questioned the waiting times for appointments and informed that this depended on the type of appointment needed. If a registered pet was in an emergency situation they would be seen straight away. There were also regular clinics for preventative treatments e.g. flea and worm treatment, as well as use on the day/week appointment for non-emergency health issues where clients were booked on the next available appointment. In addition, telephone appointments were available with vets, which could be used before a face-to-face appointment was arranged.

Training opportunities were discussed. The PDSA had a good relationship with the local universities and veterinary colleges and offered work placements and charity rotations. They also recruited veterinary graduates who tended to stay at the practice.

The PDSA highlighted how they would like to work closer with the Council to improve animal welfare, including ensuring all vets have details on who to report issues to. The opportunity was also offered for members of the Committee to visit the PDSA hospital in Middlesbrough.

Members thanked the PDSA for the important work that they do, noting how it took pressure off other services, and this was echoed by officers.

The Committee noted a report regarding site visits members had carried out to the Council's holding kennels and partner kennels. A response from Adult Social Care to a suggestion made at one site visit to shorten the time a pet was held before rehoming was included.

The Committee also noted a report outlining responses from North East Local Authorities to questions regarding provision of Animal Welfare Services.

PLA/32/26 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

Consideration was given to the work programme.

AGREED the work programme be noted.

Chair: