

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 1 NOVEMBER 2007

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER (ENVIRONMENT)

(Author: Mike Wheatley Head of Environmental Health, in conjunction with Andrew Grimley, Principal Environmental Health Officer)

THE PROVISION OF THE PEST AND DOG CONTROL SERVICE

Supplementary Information to be tabled at Meeting

The original report was drafted following consultation with DEFRA who have been negotiating changes to Section 68 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This Section has the effect of removing statutory duties for stray dogs from the police and making local authorities solely responsible. Delay has been due to the national debate about funding for these duties and how much funding will be taken from the police and given to local authorities.

On 22 October, last week, DEFRA confirmed that Section 68 will come into force on 6 April 2008, local authorities are the sole statutory authority dealing with stray dogs and funding of £4 million will be given in the RSG to local authorities to provide an out of office hours stray dog service. If this is £4 million is spread evenly across local authorities in the country, it would equate to around £9,750.

The 12 page stray dog guidance received on 22 October has changed direction from the original consultations with DEFRA. They now only insist that every local authority provide the same out of hours service (from 6 April 2008) as is currently provided by the police: to provide facilities to accept stray dogs from the public out of office hours but not provide a stray dog collection service out of office hours. Breckland will, of course, retain its existing duty to collect stray dogs from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

I am currently consulting with neighbouring councils (some have not yet received the DEFRA letter and guidance) who are now reviewing and reconsidering their stray dog service options in the light of this new DEFRA direction.

Breckland's dog and pest services still require reviewing and the report remains appropriate to deal with the new statutory requirements. However, I would draw your attention to the following points with regard to the report submitted with the agenda.

Paragraph 1.1 'is not defined' should now read 'has been laid down in DEFRA guidance'.

Paragraph 1.1 The last sentence should read 'The police will lose their responsibility on 6 April 2008'.

Paragraph 4.1 Dog Control
The words 'are likely to' should now read 'will'.

Second sentence, replace 'if' with 'when'; 'collected ... to end of paragraph' with 'accepted into council care out of office hours'.

Paragraph 5.1 Table, fifth row, replace 'collection' with 'reception'.

Paragraph 6.2 'Likely to come in 2008' should now read 'commencing 6 April 2008'.