

## **Climate Change, Environment and City Centre**

### **S4544 - Dog Warden service review**

**Q: This should provide the evidence base supporting this anticipated 50% reduction in the council's dog warden service.**

#### **Introduction**

1. The dog warden service is responsible for stray dog collection and temporary kennelling (including managing an 'out of hours' external service contract). The council only has a statutory duty to provide a stray dog kennelling and care service, as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. At weekends this stray dog kennelling is provided by an external supplier. In 2019, the service was re-procured to provide a 3 year kennelling and care service only (i.e. no longer including collection/ transport service); and will deliver an associated annual revenue saving (ref. BSR proposal: S4545).
2. The purpose of the dog warden service is to increase people's awareness of the requirement to clear up after their dogs, and to deal with associated enforcement and education. The service also works alongside local animal charities to deliver educational roadshows.
3. The current dog warden service is delivered by a dedicated part time dog warden post (0.5 FTE) and 0.5 FTE of a public realm enforcement officer (PREO) post. To cover for sickness and holiday absence, the current service is supported by the wider public realm enforcement team (6.5 FTE).

#### **Dog control issue**

4. In 2017, the Council approved the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to address the following dog control issues in 60+ open space sites across the city:
  - Failure to remove dog faeces immediately;
  - Not keeping a dog on a lead in a designated area;
  - Not putting, and keeping, a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer; and
  - Permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded.

5. The PSPO gives authorised Council officers the ability to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN) for dog control offences that were previously not enforced. The penalty for committing an offence contained in the Order is a maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1000) which can be made by the Magistrates Court, following successful prosecution of an offence. Alternatively the opportunity to pay an 'on the spot' FPN (currently £75) is offered in place of prosecution.
6. In January, 2020, the Council approved going out to public consultation on a proposal to extend the PSPO for a further 3 year period, with some minor site modifications, based on evidence of the aforementioned dog control issues continuing.

### **Service review**

7. The current dog warden service (2 x 0.5 FTE) lacks the necessary staff capacity to be able to undertake programmed enforcement patrols of the city's 60+ PSPO sites at the key peak times of demand, ie. when majority of dogs are walked.
8. The current PREO team is trained to deal with dog related enquiries and reports, including stray dogs; and already provides dog warden service cover. The PREO team of officers' work on a geographical area basis, with each officer covering c3-4 wards. The service review proposal is to end the dedicated dog warden service (delete 2 x 0.5 FTE) and integrate the dog warden function duties with the existing public realm enforcement officer duties and so create a single local point of contact for all public realm enviro-crime issues. To provide the necessary capacity, the current PREO team will be increased from 6.5 FTE to 7 FTE. The service review proposal will also address the issue of single person dependency, operational resilience and service efficiency, associated with the current dog warden service structure.

### **Further information**

9. For further information please contact Wendy Johnston, Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager at [wendy.johnston@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.johnston@cambridge.gov.uk) or tel. 01223 458578