

Report of Chief Officer, Housing Management

Report to Director Environment and Housing

Date: 30 April 2014

Subject: Review of tenancy management policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The council's Tenancy Agreement outlines tenants' rights and responsibilities. It states that tenants must abide by the policy on keeping pets in council houses and obtain the council's permission before obtaining a pet, an electric mobility scooter or installing a satellite dish. Detailed guidance on implementing these areas is contained in the draft policies which unify current practice.
2. The existing policy on keeping pets was last updated in 2011. The policies on keeping electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes are new policies which support the existing Tenancy Agreement.
3. The council has consulted on the policies including with council officers, council tenants and, in the case of the pets policy, animal welfare charities. The policies also incorporate feedback from the council's Housing Advisory Board in April 2014.
4. The council achieved the RSPCA's Bronze Community Animal Welfare Footprint (CAWF) in 2009. This recognises the council has consistently demonstrated a commitment to animal welfare through its housing policies and procedures, and allows the council to display the Bronze CAWF logo. The council is now in a position to work towards achieving a higher standard.

Recommendations

5. That the new policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are approved and implemented from 2 June 2014.
6. That 'section 2' or Index Exempt Dogs are not permitted in council properties.
7. That the council seeks to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard CAWF award in June 2015/16.
8. That in order for the council to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard Award, the Orchard Housing Management system is amended to allow the council to monitor the number and type of animals kept in council homes.
9. That the revised policies are publicised to tenants through tenants' newsletters giving feedback from the consultation.
10. That housing staff are briefed on the revised policy prior to its implementation.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for three tenancy management policies covering:
 - keeping pets in council homes
 - electric mobility scooters
 - installing satellite dishes
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval for the council to work towards achieving the RSPCA's Gold Standard Community Animal Welfare Footprint award.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The council's High Rise Working Group, established to review the management of high rise properties, recommended a number of policies underpinning the Tenancy Agreement were reviewed to ensure consistency in their implementation.
- 2.2 The Tenancy Agreement states council tenants who wish to keep pets must comply with the policy on keeping pets in council homes. This document was last updated in 2011. The council has identified a number of areas which need reviewing, which are outlined in this report.
- 2.3 The Tenancy Agreement also states tenants must obtain permission to keep electric mobility scooters and to install a satellite dish in a council property. The council proposes to introduce two new policies which formalise existing procedures.

2.4 The policies have been reviewed to ensure the council's procedures on these tenancy management areas are clear and applied consistently across the city.

2.5 The new policies are summarised in section 3 below, and available in full in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this report along with full equality impact assessments. The new policies are supported with an application form, information leaflet, and template permission and refusal letters.

3. Main issues

3.1 Revision of the policy on keeping pets in council homes

3.2 The council recognises the benefits of pet ownership and will generally permit tenants to keep a pet. However, there are circumstances where the council will not grant permission, for example, where a tenant has a history of neglecting animals, allowing them to cause nuisance, or where the property type is not suitable to keep a pet.

3.3 The council's High Rise Working Group made a number of recommendations to the existing policy which were consulted on with tenants and animal welfare agencies. Feedback has highlighted the need for a consistent approach to be taken across the city to reduce complaints about animals being kept in unsuitable conditions and address the issue of tenants who already have pets without permission. The policy has also been discussed at the Pan-Leeds Pets Forum attended by housing management officers and animal welfare charities. The policy incorporates good practice outlined in the Pets Advisory Committee guidance and Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The revised policy has also taken into account feedback from Legal Services.

3.4 The revised policy sets out:

- that tenants must seek written permission to keep a pet
- when the council will refuse permission to keep pets
- the types of pet that can be kept domestically
- how many pets can be kept in a council property
- the conditions the council will attach to permission to keep pets, and
- how the council will enforce the policy, including applications from tenants who already have a pet

3.5 The council will refuse permission to keep a pet where:

- the animal they want to keep is a of a type to which section 1 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies
- the animal has ever caused injury, is illegal or dangerous
- the tenant or member of their household has a history of or convictions for animal cruelty, neglect or abandonment, has had any tenancy enforcement action taken against them in relation to keeping pets in a council property or is disqualified from keeping pets

- the tenant wants to keep more than two cats or dogs (ie a total of 2 animals). More than two smaller animals such as rodents, birds, reptiles or fish may be permitted, provided the numbers kept are reasonable.
- the property they live in is considered unsuitable to keep a pet which requires outdoor exercise (dogs and cats). This refers mainly to properties with a shared communal entrance including high rise accommodation and low rise flats.

3.6 The table below gives a summary of whether properties will be considered suitable for cats and dogs:

Property type	Cats / dogs permitted?
House	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Bungalow	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Flat, bedsit, maisonette with their own entrance	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Flat, multi-story flat, bedsit, maisonette with a shared / communal entrance or walkway	No

3.7 Where the property has a communal garden, the local housing office will decide in consultation with current tenants whether pets which require external access (ie. dogs and cats) can be kept. Tenants will not be permitted to erect housing for pets in communal areas such as hutches and runs.

3.8 Currently, the pets policy states that any dog type which is considered as a dangerous dog will not be allowed in a council property. The police and courts may permit ‘dangerous’ dogs listed on the Index of Exempt Dogs (IED) to be kept on condition that the owner complies with additional restrictions set out in section 1(2) Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

These conditions are:

- the dog must be neutered, tattooed and micro-chipped
- the owner/keeper must take out (and renew each year) third party insurance for the dog
- the dog must only be taken out in public by someone over the age of 16 and kept on a lead and muzzled when in public, and
- the dog must be registered on the Index of Exempt Dogs

3.9 The council has the option to allow dogs on IED to be kept in council properties on condition the tenant complies with the conditions outlined above. Some social landlords permit IED dogs to be kept provided the Court has determined it is satisfied ‘that the dog would not constitute a danger to public safety’.

- 3.10 It should be noted that any breed or type of dog can behave aggressively and cause serious and fatal injuries, and this is not just limited to types listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act. The option of permitting tenants to keep IED dogs on condition they abide by the restrictions would mean the authorities are aware of where the dog is kept. Feedback from the Housing Advisory Board meeting of 8 April was that IED dogs should not be permitted in council homes.
- 3.11 Where a tenant requests a support dog, the council will give permission provided supporting information is received from a recognised animal charity, ie Guide Dogs for the Blind, Epilepsy Dogs, Hearing Dogs. The council will also seek assurance from the charity which trained the animal that it is happy for the animal to be kept in the current home.
- 3.12 Requests to foster animals on behalf of animal welfare charities will be considered on the same basis as other requests, and must be supported by the charity. The council will not permit tenants to operate businesses from their council home which would breach the policy in terms of number of animals cared for, unsuitable property type or any activity involving animal breeding.
- 3.13 Pet owners have responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure their pets have a suitable living environment, are free from pain, suffering, injury or disease, are fed correctly, are able to exhibit normal behaviour and have a suitable living environment. The council expects tenants to keep their pets in a responsible manner.
- 3.14 Animal welfare charities have reported their rehoming centres are often at full capacity, and are unable to respond quickly to requests for rehoming. For this reason, the form for tenants to request written permission to keep a pet includes a checklist to prompt prospective pet owners to consider the long term responsibilities of pet ownership.
- 3.15 To prevent unwanted breeding and keep the number of animals to reasonable numbers, the council strongly recommends pets are either kept in same gender pairs or are neutered.
- 3.16 From 2016 all dogs must be micro-chipped, and tenants will be expected to comply with this legislation. Animal charities such as the Dogs Trust offer a micro-chipping service for free or at a low cost.
- 3.17 The policy requires tenants to ask permission to keep a pet. Tenants who already have pets should request retrospective written permission. Where a tenant moved into their current property and obtained a pet before 2 June 2014 the council will grant retrospective permission provided the animal is kept in accordance with the policy in terms of the property type and the number of pets being kept. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.
- 3.18 In exceptional circumstances where the tenant is keeping excess numbers of animals, or the property type is not deemed to be suitable, the council may grant limited permission to keep the current pets. This permission will be limited to the

lifespan of the pets. Alternatively, the council may seek to assist the tenant with a planned move to a suitable property or to rehome the pets responsibly.

- 3.19 Where the council refuses permission to keep a pet, the council will explain the reasons fully to the tenant in writing.
- 3.20 The policy has been revised to include additional guidance on what action will be taken against a tenant who fails to comply with the policy. The council will take action against tenants if they allow their pet to cause a nuisance, which may range from informal intervention to possession proceedings.
- 3.21 RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Housing Footprint**
- 3.22 The RSPCA's 'Community Animal Welfare Housing Footprint' award recognises good practice by local authorities and registered social landlords. This includes operating a sound and considered pets policy, ensuring welfare standards and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- 3.23 There are three 'Footprint' awards – Bronze, Silver and Gold. Leeds City Council achieved the Bronze Footprint award in 2009 which was renewed for 2013/14 as a result of successful partnership working with local and national animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, Cats Protection and Dogs Trust. This requires the council to demonstrate it has a clear and positive written policy for all housing that is controlled or influenced by the local authority.
- 3.25 In order to achieve the Gold Standard, the council needs to fulfil the following criteria in conjunction with partner agencies:
- written pet care advice/information from a recognised animal welfare source made available to residents on registering their pets in the accommodation
 - the active promotion of discounted permanent identification and neutering of pets to prevent unwanted breeding
 - provision for pet owners in temporary or emergency housing
 - an updated register of all animals kept in each dwelling
 - an established link with a recognised animal welfare organisation that provides residents with advice on pet care on request or by monthly or quarterly visits.
- 3.26 At present, the council has no record of how many pets, or the types of pets being kept in council properties. This will be addressed through developing a register of pets.
- 3.27 Under the new policy, the council will keep a record of the pets it gives permission to keep. The council will need to know if pets are being kept in a property and record details of pets where permission has been granted in case there is an emergency, such as a flood or a fire or the tenant has to go into hospital.
- 3.28 It is the tenant's responsibility to rehome their pet responsibly if they are no longer able to care for it. However, where a tenant is evicted or abandons their property leaving a pet behind, the animal is considered 'property' in law. Cases have arisen where the council was not aware of pets being kept in a council property until the

eviction date, and have had to arrange for animals to be looked after. During the tort period the tenant is liable for any costs, which the council can seek to recoup, however, until the tort notice has expired the council is legally unable to sign over the animals to a welfare charity. For this reason the council will consider reducing the time period a tort notice applies to animals to a reasonable time period of 24 hours.

- 3.29 Where a tenant abandons a pet, it may be possible for the RSPCA to take action against the tenant under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The council will keep a record of tenants known to have abandoned or mistreated a pet. Should they reapply for housing the council may find them non-qualifying or apply reduced preference on their new application, and will not normally grant permission to keep a pet in the future.
- 3.30 **New policy on keeping electric mobility scooters**
- 3.31 The council's Tenancy Agreement states that tenants must obtain written permission to keep an electric mobility scooter. The new policy provides further guidance on how the council will respond to requests and maintain high standards of health and safety to ensure the council meets its legal obligations.
- 3.32 The council recognises the benefits to older and disabled tenants of having an electric mobility scooter. However, the storage and charging of scooters have the potential to present health and safety risks to tenants, leaseholders, visitors and staff. This relates primarily to fire risks due to unsafe storage which blocks emergency exits and fires being caused by unsafe charging.
- 3.33 The new policy has been developed through a joint working group with representatives from housing management, adaptations teams, fire safety and housing policy. Housing Leeds has undertaken consultation with tenants. Good practice from other landlords has been taken into account in developing the policy. The revised policy has also taken into account feedback from Legal Services.
- 3.31 The policy sets out:
- when the council will grant permission to keep an electric scooter
 - examples of safe storage and charging areas
 - the size and number of an electric scooters that can be kept in a council property, and
 - how the council will enforce the policy, including applications from tenants for retrospective permission to keep an electric scooter.
- 3.32 The council will generally only refuse permission to keep a mobility scooter where:
- there is no safe storage or charging space in the tenant or leaseholder's property and no safe area can be provided
 - a major physical alteration to the premises is required which the council believes to be unreasonable in terms of cost and/ or disruption to other tenants and residents
 - a tenant/ leaseholder fails to take out the necessary insurance cover if required
 - the scooter is too large to fit through internal or external entrances, or

- the tenant wishes to keep more than one scooter.

- 3.33 The policy requires tenants who already have scooters to request retrospective written permission to keep them. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.
- 3.34 Where permission is given it will be granted for a specific size and number of scooters.
- 3.35 Wherever possible the council will seek to identify a safe storage and charging area. Examples of safe storage and charging spaces may include:
- a designated room within the property
 - a designated communal room
 - a designated external space
- 3.36 Where permission is refused, the council will explain the reasons and give details of the appeal process. Where permission is given, this will be conditional, and will outline storage and charging arrangements.
- 3.37 The policy includes additional guidance on what action will be taken if a tenant fails to comply with the policy. Action will only be taken as a last resort after all other options have been exhausted, including the possibility of a move to another property.
- 3.38 **Policy on installing satellite dishes**
- 3.39 The Tenancy Agreement states council tenants who wish to make structural alternations to their property must obtain permission. The council has identified a number of properties, particularly high rise multi story blocks where satellite dishes have been installed in breach of the tenancy agreement.
- 3.40 The council recognises that tenants want to enjoy the benefits of satellite television, but will only give permission to install a dish in certain circumstances.
- 3.41 The new policy has been developed following consultation with officers as part of the High Rise Working Group and with tenants. The revised policy has also taken into account the planning regulations and feedback from Legal Services.
- 3.42 The policy seeks to ensure that requests from tenants to install a satellite dish are dealt with fairly and consistently. It also outlines the action the council will take where tenants have already installed a satellite dish without permission.
- 3.43 The council will refuse permission to install a dish in high rise properties because of the damage caused to the external structure of the property. In other property types, the council will expect the tenant to abide by the relevant planning permission guidance, have the dish erected by a competent contractor and obtain adequate Public Liability Insurance.
- 3.44 The council will conduct regular audits of properties, especially high rise blocks, and take action where a dish has been installed without permission. This could

involve granting retrospective permission or ensuring the dish is removed safely. The audits undertaken to date in high rise blocks have shown a number of dishes were installed by a previous tenant and are no longer in use. In future this will be picked up as part of the void process and removed.

3.45 In property types other than high rise blocks, the tenant can request retrospective written permission, which will normally be granted where the dish has been installed in accordance with the policy. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.

3.46 The council is providing an enhanced satellite television service to tenants in the seven blocks within the Little London and Beeston Hill and Holbeck regeneration area.

3.5 Implementation of the new policies

3.5.1 A detailed implementation plan will be drawn up but in summary, the key points for individual policies are:

- Electric mobility scooters – Tenants can request permission to keep a new mobility scooter from their local housing office. Requests will be dealt with in line with the policy. The local housing office and Fire Safety Officers will continue to audit high risk blocks to check where a tenant already has an electric mobility scooter, and will take the appropriate action within the policy, such as granting retrospective permission or securing alternative storage etc.
- Satellite dishes – a similar policy has already been implemented within the PFI areas. The new policy will be rolled out across the city, with a focus on high risk properties, through audits and ATVs linking in with Property and Contracts and Voids Teams.
- Pets – the council will adopt a risk-based approach with an initial focus on high rise properties where satisfaction surveys show that pets are a major concern for tenants. The application form will ask tenants to consider the long term commitment of looking after a pet before getting one.

3.5.2 The policies will be incorporated into the council's Annual Tenancy Visit procedures. Information about the policies will be available on the council's website. This will include a standard application form to request permission. Staff will be fully briefed on the new policies.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation was undertaken on a revised pets policy and a new policy on satellite dishes with tenants in summer 2013, when an article was included in the Tenants Newsletter delivered to all tenants across the city in the former Aire Valley Homes,

East North East Homes and West North West Homes. Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation held a consultation event at a tenant panel.

- 4.1.2 73 responses were received to the newsletter consultation by email and post.
- 4.1.3 In relation to pets, there was broad agreement for the proposals. 52% of respondents agreed that pets should not be kept in high rise properties, with a further 10% who believed that only small animals should be allowed as pets in high rise properties. 92% agreed that illegal pets should not be allowed and 94% agreed that the council should take action against tenants who neglect their pets or allow them to cause a nuisance to others.
- 4.1.4 Respondents expressed concerns that pets currently kept outside of the policy would have to be destroyed (which is not the case), and there was widespread recognition of the benefits of keeping pets, particularly for older and vulnerable customers.
- 4.1.5 A key issue which arose during the consultation process was that dogs are being kept in unsuitable high rise properties, an area of concern also raised by tenants in the council's 2012-13 STAR survey.
- 4.1.6 Feedback from council officers highlighted the need to operate a consistent policy having clearer enforcement for new tenants, and dealing with current tenants who are keeping pets without written permission.
- 4.1.7 The council has also discussed the revised policy with a number of animal welfare charities which attend the council's Pan-Leeds Pets Forum.
- 4.1.8 86% respondents agreed that permission should be obtained to install a satellite dish, 55% agreed planning permission should be obtained and 60% agreed that tenants should obtain public liability cover. 64% respondents agreed that satellite dishes should not be permitted on high rise flats.
- 4.1.9 Housing Management has been consulted through the High Rise Working Group. Feedback from officers was that a consistent approach to dealing with requests to install satellite dishes was needed.
- 4.1.10 Housing Leeds has undertaken consultation on the new mobility scooter policy with tenants. The main issues raised have been from tenants concerned that the council will not give permission, but assurance has been given that the council will only refuse permission where a satisfactory storage area cannot be identified. In this respect the new policy seeks to formalise existing practice and meet the council's health and safety duties.
- 4.1.11 The council has statutory duties in respect of ensuring the health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, visitors and members of staff. The policy has been framed to ensure that wherever possible, tenants are provided with a safe storage and charging area.

4.1.12 In drafting the suite of policies the council has aimed to balance the feedback received from tenants with its duty to comply with health and safety duties.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The council has undertaken an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment on the each of the proposed policies.

4.2.2 Positive impacts:

- The revised pets policy allows disabled tenants who require support dogs (ie. Guide Dogs, Epilepsy Dogs, Hearing Dogs) to keep them in a council property.
- Effective enforcement of the pets policy will benefit all tenants and residents by reducing cases of nuisance and antisocial behaviour.
- Under the mobility scooter policy the council will seek to identify a safe storage and charging area and will make minor adaptations to facilitate this
- The council will normally give permission to install a satellite dish, provided the property type is suitable
- The new satellite dishes policy will maintain the structural integrity of buildings and reduce risks of damage to property and people

4.2.3 Negative impacts:

- Pets such as dogs and cats will not be permitted in unsuitable property types, mainly general needs flats with a shared entrance and sheltered properties with communal areas. These properties are generally let to single people or couples without dependent children. Sheltered properties are generally let to customers aged 60 and over.
- There may be some areas which are deemed unsafe for charging mobility scooters where the council will refuse permission to keep a scooter
- Tenants living in certain property types may be unable to access satellite services. This may have an impact on tenants who wish to receive overseas broadcasts

4.2.4 The following actions have been included in the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment:

- The revised policies will be publicised through tenant newsletters and officers will be briefed on the policies.
- Information about whether pets are permitted will be included in the Leeds Homes property advert so prospective tenants are aware of any restrictions.
- The policy includes scope to consider requests to keep pets in sheltered schemes where there is a communal garden, provided existing tenants are consulted.
- The implementation of the scooter policy will continue to be monitored through regular health and safety audits and the annual tenancy visit process.

- The council is investing in communal satellite dish provision in a number of high rise blocks to allow tenants to access digital services without the need for individual dishes.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The introduction of the tenancy management policies will assist in meeting the best council outcomes of:

- Improving the quality of life for residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or in poverty. This will be achieved by encouraging responsible pet ownership, allowing disabled people to keep recognised support animals, and supporting older and disabled people to maintain their independence.
- Achieving the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services. This will be achieved by operating fair and consistent tenancy management policies, reducing complaints and damage to council properties.

4.3.2 The new policies support the following best council objectives for 2013 – 17:

- Supporting communities and tackling poverty – involving people in shaping their city with a focus on strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities
- Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council with a focus on getting services right first time and improving customer satisfaction by providing a high quality service to tenants by managing requests fairly and effectively, and reducing complaints.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The introduction of the tenancy management policies will have resource implications for the council in terms of dealing with requests to keep pets, mobility scooters or installing satellite dishes. There may also be costs of taking enforcement action against tenants for breaches of the policy, although the council may seek to recover legal costs, eg for injunctions.

4.4.2 Other costs may arise from looking after any animal abandoned by a tenant, although the council can seek to recoup some costs by recharging the tenant.

4.4.3 The policies aim to reduce costs overall by ensuring the council operates a consistent policy across the city, reducing complaints and potential damage to property.

4.4.4 There are potential costs to the council if it failed to comply with its legal health and safety duties. The council is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, visitors and members of staff. The policy seeks to reduce fire hazards in council properties by ensuring emergency evacuation routes are clear and the risk of fire caused by charging electric mobility scooters is minimised.

- 4.4.5 The council has developed a separate investment plan to convert and create safe storage and charging areas for mobility scooters.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Under the council's Tenancy Agreement, tenants must comply with the pets policy, and ask permission to keep an electric mobility scooter or install a satellite dish. Failure to do so may result in tenancy enforcement action being taken against the tenant.
- 4.5.2 Enforcing the pets policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate policy objective, namely to prevent nuisance and problems arising from keeping pets in unsuitable properties. The policies on mobility scooters and satellite dishes relate to the council's duties to maintain health and safety standards in council properties.
- 4.5.3 Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 pet owners have responsibilities to ensure their pets have a suitable living environment, are free from pain, suffering, injury or disease, are fed correctly, are able to exhibit normal behaviour and have a suitable living environment. Specific legislation applies to dogs under Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- 4.5.4 The European Courts have held that keeping a domestic pet does not fall within the sphere of the owner's private life for the purposes of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The policy takes into account Article 14 Human Rights Act (the Prohibition of Discrimination) and the Equality Act 2010 by allowing for disabled tenants to keep a guide dog, a hearing dog or assistance dog.
- 4.5.5 Under the satellite dish policy, the council will consider any reasons for the tenant's request which relate to Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for example, a disabled tenant may only be able to engage in his or her particular religious community if they can receive transmissions of specific religious services held overseas which are exclusively available by satellite. However, simply wanting to have access to more channels for entertainment is unlikely to be a breach of a tenant's human rights in itself. Consideration will be given to alternative ways of accessing television stations, for example, accessing via the internet or through digital channels. Permission will be refused if installation would breach planning law or if installing a dish is dangerous. This would outweigh the human rights issue.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The council's Tenancy Agreement sets out the council's and tenants' rights and responsibilities.
- 4.6.2 Failure to adopt clear policies could result in the damage to the council's reputation, for example, if prosecutions are taken against tenants who neglect pets, if mobility scooters are charged in unsafe areas or if improperly installed

dishes cause damage to the external condition of a council property. The attainment of the RSPCA's CAWF award recognises the council takes animal welfare seriously in its policies and procedures.

5 Conclusions

11. In order to ensure the council's Tenancy Agreement is applied consistently and fairly, the council has consulted on changes to the policies on keeping pets in council homes, obtaining an electric mobility scooter and installing satellite dishes in council homes.
12. The council has taken account of responses from tenants, animal welfare charities, officers and Legal Services in developing the policies.
13. The council achieved the RSPCA's Bronze Community Animal Welfare Footprint (CAWF) in 2009. This recognises the council has consistently demonstrated a commitment to animal welfare through its housing policies and procedures, and allows the council to display the Bronze CAWF logo. The council is now in a position to work towards achieving a higher standard.

6 Recommendations

1. That the new policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are approved and implemented from 2 June 2014.
2. That 'section 2' or Index Exempt Dogs are not permitted in council properties.
3. That the council seeks to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard CAWF award in June 2015/16.
4. That in order for the council to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard Award, the Orchard Housing Management system is amended to allow the council to monitor the number and type of animals kept in council homes.
5. That the revised policies are publicised to tenants through tenants' newsletters giving feedback from the consultation.
6. That housing staff are briefed on the revised policy prior to its implementation.

7 Background documents¹

1. None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy on keeping pets in council houses

Appendix 2: Policy on electric mobility scooters

Appendix 3: Policy on installing satellite dishes

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment – pets policy

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment – electric mobility scooters policy

Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment – installing satellite dishes policy