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## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

### Executive Board

Date: 1 April 2009

### Subject: Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) Statement on Enforcement of Dog Fouling

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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The Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) published a statement on Enforcement of Dog Fouling in February 2009.

In accordance with the requirements of the constitution, the response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations needs to be agreed by the Executive Board. Attached to this report is the statement of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods).

The Directorate's comments to each of the recommendations are as follows:-

*Recommendation 1 - That the Council works in close partnership with local parish and town councils to ensure the effective use of Dog Control Orders across the city and maximise available enforcement resources.*

The Director agrees with Recommendation 1. It is recognised that consultation with Parish and Town Councils will be a key part of the dog control order process. In addition, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives provision to Parish Council's in relation to fixed penalty notices for Dog Control Orders, an option that could be explored further. The consultation process will also assist in identifying specific local issues which the Dog Strategy can support.

*Recommendation 2 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods determines a suitable figure for Leeds that will be enforced in relation to the maximum number of dogs that any one person can walk at any one time.*

The Director agrees with Recommendation 2. The Dog Warden Supervisor is currently compiling a list of "Dog Groups" who will be approached for consultation to give their views from a Dog Owner/Walker Perspective. The Service will also review historical data, looking

at complaints from walking “multiple dogs” that have been received within the Leeds District and look at hotspot areas.

*Recommendation 3 - That the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods carries out a review within the next 4 months of the options available to the Council to extend Dog Control Orders in Leeds.*

The Director agrees with Recommendation 3. A Project Board will be set up to steer the Dog Control Order process. The Service Manager for this area will draft a discussion paper for review.

*Recommendation 4 - That an action plan is drawn up on how the Dog Control Orders agreed upon following the review can be progressed. This action plan will be brought back to the Scrutiny Board for consideration by June/July 2009.*

The Director recommends that the timescale for this action plan should be amended. Recommendation 10 should precede this in terms of timescales as the outcome of Strategy should inform the Action Plan on Dog Control Orders.

*Recommendation 5 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods will roll out the training programme for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for litter and dog fouling over the next 12 months to all Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Ranger staff and recommend that this involves any other enforcement staff who may be able to carry out such works.*

The Director agrees in principle to Recommendation 5 and will liaise with City Development. Some work is already being done around this. In the meantime the Service will continue to drive the policy on dog fouling amongst the current Environmental Action staff that are trained and authorised.

*Recommendation 6 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods conducts a review of existing staffing resources within the Dog Warden Team to determine whether it is adequate enough to meet current service demands.*

The Director agrees with Recommendation 6.

*Recommendation 7 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the full budget provision for the Dog Warden Service each year, which includes the additional funding from West Yorkshire Police, is spent on improving that service.*

The additional funding received via the rate support grant to deal with stray dogs out of hours has been placed into the dog warden budget. As with all Council budgets, it is not felt appropriate to be prescriptive on how budgets are spent as this can detract from the flexibility needed to deliver a range of services according to varying demands. The Directorate is committed to tackling both the problems with stray dogs and also dog fouling and the review mentioned at recommendation 6 will report on the current challenges faced and the scale of resources available to meet them.

*Recommendation 8 - That the contract specification for the provision of stray dog kennels is reviewed prior to its renewal and that further opportunities are explored to help generate greater interest from local suppliers.*

The current kennelling contract was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and will expire 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The kennel contract is divided into two lots – Lot 1 Daytime for Leeds City Council and Lot 2 Out of Hours – collaborative contract between Leeds, Wakefield and

Kirklees. As part of the original tender scoping exercise for Lot 1, all Leeds licensed boarding kennels were contacted in writing by the Service Manager, informing them of the forthcoming contract and inviting them to tender but unfortunately, none of those contacted submitted a tender.

As part of the contract review a further scoping exercise will be carried out, exploring further options, in particular around collaboration with other authorities.

*Recommendation 9 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods reviews an out of hours flexible working scheme for the Dog Warden Service and explores opportunities to utilise other relevant enforcement staff working out of hours to assist with the enforcement of dog fouling.*

The Director agrees to Recommendation 9. However, the current contractual arrangements with dog warden staff specify normal office hours, which ensure the service is covered in terms of its statutory obligation around stray dogs. A move towards extending contracted hours or introducing shift patterns would have a significant financial impact.

*Recommendation 10 - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods produces a Dog Control Strategy for Leeds by September 2009 setting out the duties of the Dog Warden Service; the current and potential role of other officers in enforcing Dog Control Orders; strategies for future education campaigns; and the implications of having additional Dog Control Orders for Leeds.*

The Director agrees with Recommendation 10 subject to the comments made in regard to Recommendation 4.

### **Recommendations**

To recommend that the Executive Board approves the proposed responses outlined in this report.

### **Background Papers**

9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009: Statement of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods): Enforcement of Dog Fouling