



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6TH NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Agenda Item - 3

An evaluation of the impact of transferring the kennelling facility to Hope Rescue.

Author: Neil Pilliner, Pollution & Public Health Manager

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the impact of transferring the Council's kennelling facility to Hope Rescue.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members scrutinise the contents of the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 At a Cabinet meeting on the 19th July 2016, the decision was made to outsource the kennelling facility and retain the statutory service for animal control. The Service Director of Public Health and Protection opened a dialogue with third sector organisations with respect to outsourcing the kennelling facility at a location within the County Borough. As a result on the 24th November 2016, Cabinet gave approval for the transfer of the stray dog kennelling service to Hope Rescue.

3.2 Hope Rescue purchased a licensed boarding kennels, Cynllan Kennels, in Llanharan for the purpose of detaining and re-homing stray dogs. The service provided for the Council since June 2017 ensures there is adequate capacity to detain the stray dogs seized by Animal Control Wardens. Through the new partnership with Hope Rescue, there are also improved arrangements to receive stray dogs through a 24 hours/ 365 day service at the kennels. In addition, the kennels are located in a woodland area with improved facilities to exercise dogs and undertake behavioural assessments linked to the Council and Hope Rescue's goal of re-homing stray dogs.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF THE ANIMAL WARDEN SERVICE

- 4.1 Local Authorities duties are to seize and detain stray dogs, return seized dogs to their owners, keep a register of stray dogs and retain the dogs for a period of 7 days. Following the 7 day period the detained dog ceases to be the responsibility of the Council. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC employs Animal Control Wardens to deal with complaints concerning stray dogs and in line with a Service Level Agreement (SLA), since June 2017 Hope Rescue have provided the kennelling facility to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty with regard to detaining stray dogs. Hope Rescue work with relevant stake holders to provide a kennelling facility for RCTCBC, South Wales Police, RSPCA and other Local Authorities.
- 4.2 The Animal Warden Service provides a response to requests for service in respect of stray dogs and irresponsible dog ownership. The Animal Warden Service operated by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is managed within the Public Health, Protection and Community Services Department. The service is managed by a Pest and Animal Control Supervisor and is staffed by 2 Animal Wardens who are responsible for undertaking dog control related duties in a defined part of the Borough. The Animal Wardens also provide cover for the pest control service, particularly during periods of high demand

5.0 DEMAND FOR THE ANIMAL WARDEN SERVICE

- 5.1 The table below illustrates the changes in the demand to kennel stray dogs since the kennelling service was transferred to Hope Rescue in June 2017

Table illustrating service demand for stray dogs in 2016/17 and 2017/18

	2016/17	2017/18	change
Stray dogs collected by AW	366	287	22% down
Received out of normal hours ie>5.00pm-8.30am weekdays, Sat, Sun & Bank Holidays	31	137	342% up
Returned direct to owner	111	104	Neutral change
Detained at kennels	286	320	12% up
Reclaimed from kennels	77	184	139% up
Euthanised	6	7	Neutral change
Passed to Hope Rescue>7 days	196	134	32% down

- 5.2 The table shows there has been a reduction in the number of stray dogs collected by the Animal Warden Service which could be attributed to the significant increase in the number of dogs received out of hours by Hope Rescue from members of the public. The enhanced out of hours service offered by Hope Rescue offers more flexibility, with the public able to contact the Council's Contact Centre outside normal hours to report a stray dog and then being able to take advantage of the 24/7 facility to accept a stray dog at the kennels.
- 5.3 The figures illustrate a significant increase in the number of dogs being reunited with their owners since the transfer of the kennels, with 58% of dogs being reclaimed in 2017-18 compared to 27% in 2016-17. In addition those dogs that are reclaimed are going home in half the time (2 days compared to 4 at Council Kennels). This could be attributed to the increased use of social media and the volunteer work by Hope Rescue to reunite dogs with their owners.
- 5.4 The higher reclaim rate has resulted in a 32% reduction in the number of dogs needing to be kept by Hope Rescue and re-homed after the 7 day statutory period. This demonstrates the proactive work by Hope Rescue to reunite the stray dog with its owner is having a positive effect in preventing any negative impact on the dog through being re-homed and reducing associated kennelling costs.
- 5.5 There were no significant changes in the number of dogs being returned directly to their owners by Animal Wardens, which demonstrates there is still a large amount of dogs which are not micro-chipped or the micro-chip contains the incorrect ownership details. This is despite the legal requirement for dogs to be micro-chipped which was introduced by Welsh Government in April 2016. The All Wales Pest and Animal Control Technical Panel is currently assessing the use of the micro-chipping enforcement powers in Wales, which will be utilised to inform a way forward to achieve greater compliance with micro-chipping requirements.
- 5.6 In terms of location of stray dogs, the Taff area with 137 dogs, had the highest number of stray dogs admitted to the kennels, followed by Rhondda with 103 and Cynon with 80.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPACT OF TRANSFERRING THE KENNELING FACILITY

- 6.1 The annual budget to run the Animal Shelter at Dinas prior to transferring the service in June 2017 was £41,230. The same budget was taken forward for the first year of the transfer to Hope Rescue Kennels in 2017/18. The schedule of agreed costs to be charged to RCTCBC by Hope Rescue are detailed in Appendix 1. The costs include fees for handling, kennelling, management, vaccination/veterinary work, euthanasia, micro-chipping and receiving dogs out of hours. The agreed rates cover the cost of kennelling the dog if it is not reclaimed by its owner after 7 days, including vaccination and any veterinary requirements for the welfare of the dog while at the kennels. If

a dog is reclaimed, Hope Rescue recovers the cost of kennelling from the dog owner in line with the fees detailed in Appendix 2.

6.2 A decision was made during 2017/18 with Cabinet Member support, to allow Hope Rescue to keep the £25 statutory fee when a dog is reclaimed. This was agreed to cover unforeseen administrative costs and to enable Hope Rescue to continue to provide the following added value services to the Council and third sector:

- Free respite for dogs owned by people entering a Domestic Abuse refuge.
- Free respite for dogs of homeless people entering emergency or temporary accommodation
- Free respite for dogs of vulnerable adults under the care of Adult Services
- Subsidised respite kennelling for dogs of adults going into hospital where referrals are received via Council Social Care

6.3 The figures in the following table show that the kennelling facility operated by Hope Rescue has been delivered within budget with a surplus of £15,067.

	Budget 2017/18	Actual spend 2017/18
Kennelling 2017-18	41,230	21,563
Statutory fee retained by Hope Rescue	-	4600
Total	41,230	26,163

7.0 IMPACT OF THE TRANSFER ON PERFORMANCE

7.1 The closure of Dinas Animal Shelter has benefited the service provision of dealing with stray dogs, as the Wardens now have greater capacity to focus on resolving stray and dog control issues in the community rather than deal with the welfare of dogs in the Shelter. The number of patrols has increased since the transfer of the kennelling service, with Animal Wardens having an enhanced community presence in the areas where it is most required. The Animal Wardens have continued to collect dogs when required and are able to undertake proactive patrols as necessary on receipt of reports of stray dogs in an area. In addition the Animal Wardens are able to assist with resolving complaints of nuisance from barking dogs and irresponsible dog ownership.

7.2 A key benefit has been the ability of the Animal Wardens to cover pest control duties during periods of high demand and when a Pest Control Officer is on leave. The Animal Wardens have attended pest control training and passed the necessary examinations to allow them to carry out appropriate pest control treatments. This proved invaluable in maintaining an effective pest control service during the extremely busy summer period in 2018, which saw demand for pest control treatments increasing by 89% in comparison to the

previous year. Thereby the increased capacity to undertake pest control treatments when required, has improved the resilience of the service moving forward in the future.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Council explored different ways of delivering services in order to ensure they are cost effective in the future. Outsourcing the kennelling requirements to a third party organisation is a more sustainable option for the future given demand for kennelling overall is declining and the financial costs of operating our own kennels was unviable. In addition the transfer of the kennelling facility has demonstrated improvements in service delivery and has been delivered within the allocated budget, with predicted efficiencies for the coming years.
- 8.2 The 12 month review of the new kennelling facility operated by Hope Rescue has demonstrated successful outcomes and an improvement in service delivery for the Council, particularly in respect of the 24/7 out of hours service and increased amount of dogs being reclaimed. The evaluation demonstrates that the continued outsourcing of kennelling provision via Hope Rescue, while maintaining an Animal Warden Service, provides a cost effective solution for the future. Regular analysis of Animal Warden Service requests and kennelling demand will continue in the future to establish any changes in service demand going forward.
- 8.3 In respect of performance, the Animal Wardens have maintained an effective stray dog control service, which has been supplemented with the benefits of dogs being taken directly to Hope Rescue by the public through the improved out of hours service. The cover provided by the Animal Wardens has also enabled the Council to maintain an effective pest control service and will make the service more resilient in the future.

Schedule of Costs to be charged to RCTCBC by Hope Rescue
(Ref Paragraph 1.18 of the Service Level Agreement (May 2017))

Effective Date 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Description	Cost (£)(excluding VAT)	Basis of charge
Dog receipt/ handling fee	£5.20	Per dog
Kennelling per night	£10.40	Up to 7 nights maximum
Out of hours service	£10.40 per night	Daily fee
Vaccination charge	£15.60	Per dog
Microchipping	£10.66	Per dog
Euthanasiation Charge (inc disposal of dog)	To be confirmed following contract tender by Hope Rescue and agreed by the Council	Per dog
Management Fee	£5200	Annual charged monthly

Appendix 2

The schedule of costs to be repaid by owners to Hope Rescue is as follows (plus vaccination and veterinary treatment costs if necessary).

<u>HOPE RESCUE COSTS AND STATUTORY FINES FROM 3rd APRIL 2018 (INCLUDING VAT)</u>							
<u>Number of days in kennel or part of any day</u>							
DAYS IN KENNEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
STATUTORY FEE	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25
KENNEL CHARGE	£18.72	£31.20	£43.68	£56.16	£68.64	£81.12	£93.60
TOTAL PAYABLE	£43.72	£56.20	£68.68	£81.16	£93.64	£106.12	£118.60
TOTAL PAYABLE IF DOG NEEDS TO BE MICRO CHIPPED	£56.51	£68.99	£86.47	£93.95	£106.43	£118.91	£131.39