

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/17

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

2ND AUGUST, 2016

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Agenda Item 2

**Provision of Dog Kennelling
Arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf**

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1. MEMBERS WILL FIND ENCLOSED:

- A. Copy of the Cabinet Report **(Pages 3- 26)**
- B. Copy Decision Notice of Cabinet **(Pages 27 - 30)**
- C. Copy Extract of Overview and Procedure Rules re: Call-in **(Pages 31 - 34)**
- D. Copy of Prescribed Call-in Form **(Page 35)**

2. PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Each case for Call-in must be considered on its merits and there is no set procedure.
- 2.2 On the 19th July, 2016 a meeting of Cabinet was held and consideration was given to the report (late item) **Provision of Dog Kennelling Arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf** (Copy of the report is attached as Appendix A)
- 2.3 The Cabinet decision in respect of the above was published on the 19th July, 2016. (Copy of the decision is attached as Appendix B.)
- 2.4 Rule 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules dealing with call-in is reproduced as Appendix C of this report.
- 2.5 A call-in form was received on the 26th July, 2016, which complied with the relevant criteria. (A copy of the Prescribed call in form is attached as Appendix D)
- 2.6 Members will note that the Call-In Provisions were changed at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May 2014, to enable any 3 Non-Executive

Members (from either (i) at least 2 political groups or (ii) in the case of an unallocated Member(s) – that unallocated Member(s) and a Member(s) from a political group). **Of the three Members making the Call-in, two Members are Members of the Committee and therefore will be able to vote on the matter.**

- 2.7 At the Council's Annual General Meeting held on the 20th May 2015 Members agreed the proposed changes to the Scrutiny structure to reflect that the 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee will deal with all Call-ins, and as and when appropriate to invite Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs and Co-opted Members to such meetings'
- 2.8 The three Members who called in the decision will be invited to address the Committee, on a proposal that the decision relating to **Provision of Dog Kennelling Arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf** be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration with regard to the reasons set out in the Notice of the Call In form (as reproduced below)

Reason for calling in decision: -

"To request the Cabinet not to implement their intention to outsource the kennelling facility until all factors, including the delegated officer decision, consultation responses and the executive decision and reasons are the subject of proper scrutiny".

- 2.9 One of the three Members will be given the right to make a final address to the Committee membership immediately before a vote is taken on the proposal.
- 2.10 If the proposal to refer the matter to Cabinet for reconsideration is passed then the matter will be referred: If the proposal is lost then the decision will take effect from the conclusion of this meeting.
- 2.11 The relevant Cabinet portfolio holder(s) will be invited to the meeting to answer any questions Members of the Committee may have with regards to the subject matter of the call in.

3. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Committee adopt the procedure for the conduct of the meeting set out in paragraphs 2.7.and 2.8 above.

APPENDIX A

LATE AGENDA ITEM

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

19th JULY 2016

**PROVISION OF DOG KENELLING ARRANGEMENTS FOR RHONDDA
CYNON TAF**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER,
CLLR J. ROSSER.**

**AUTHOR(s): Louise Davies, Head of Environmental Health, Trading
Standards and Community Safety.
Neil Pilliner, Pollution and Public Health Manager**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the results of the consultation exercise and consider options in relation to the future provision of dog kennelling arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Consider the outcome of the consultation and other matters as outlined in the report and the appendices in respect of the future provision of dog kennelling arrangements and direct the Service Director for Public Health & Protection accordingly.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 There has been a steady reduction in the number of dogs seized and requiring detention at Dinas Animal Shelter over the last 3 years. This trend is set to continue in line with the requirement for compulsory micro-chipping of dogs by their owners, which will enable Animal Wardens to return more dogs directly to owners on the first occasion they are found straying. There is potential to outsource the service and manage costs over the next 1-3 years in a more sustainable and efficient manner, as the current operation of the Council's Animal Shelter is no longer cost effective. In addition, the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) in Porth requires redevelopment and the cost

benefits of extending the existing CRC are significant when compared with relocating that facility.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 Dealing with stray dogs is the core activity of the Animal Control service. The Council has a statutory duty to deal with stray dogs and legislation requires that the Council makes provision to seize and detain any stray dog and charge a fee for dogs that are claimed by their owners within a statutory 7 day period. The legislation does not stipulate that the Council must have its own kennelling facility.

4.2 The Council currently operates its own Animal Shelter at Dinas Depot in Porth which has capacity for 36 dogs. Of the dogs seized by the Animal Control service, those found to be micro-chipped are returned to the owner free of charge on the first occasion they are found straying. For those that are detained, some will be reclaimed by owners but the majority are given to a third sector charity for re-homing. The number of dogs the Council has euthanized has reduced significantly to only 10 in 2015-16.

4.3 The following table illustrates the outcome achieved for all dogs seized and/or detained by the Council over the last three years.

Stray Dogs Outcome	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Seized- Returned to owner directly (microchipped)	128	144	93
Detained- claimed by owner	158	132	125
Detained- sold by LA	24	1	1
Detained- rehomed via rescue charity	258	288	247
Detained- euthanised	65	7	10
Total Seized	633	572	476

4.4 The Animal Control Service is staffed by 3.6 FTE staff. It is open each afternoon, Monday to Friday and Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday mornings. Due to health and safety considerations it is necessary for two staff to be present at the shelter at all times when dogs are being handled or the facility is open to the public. This has a direct impact on the ability of the service to maintain a visible presence across the County.

4.5 The Animal Control service currently takes stray dogs into the shelter outside normal working hours and at weekends. There is no statutory requirement to have a standby provision but there is a statutory requirement to have arrangements in place to detain dogs. A Memorandum of Understanding with the Police requires that this

arrangement is available outside normal working hours, at weekends and bank holidays. Most local authorities fulfil this requirement through a contractual arrangement with a private kennels.

- 4.6 Staff numbers have reduced over time to manage the costs of running the service. In spite of this, a review of the cost per dog per day based on the average number of dogs detained in the last three years is at least £11.25 per day. This compares to £8.50 per day quoted in the private sector. The actual cost per day of detaining a dog varies annually as our costs for running the facility (building cost and shelter staff) are fixed while the number of dogs we detain shows a gradually decrease every year. The daily cost of kennelling a dog in our own facility is therefore predicted to increase in coming years.
- 4.7 The statutory fee charged as a fine to owners for each dog reclaimed is specified in legislation and cannot be increased. The additional charge for kennelling a dog per day is increased annually in line with all Council discretionary fees and charges.
- 4.8 The animal shelter at Dinas is positioned directly adjacent to a Council Community Recycling Centre (CRC). There are current plans to redevelop and make improvements to the Council's CRC to relieve instances of congestion on the adjacent A4058, Cymmer Road, due to the volume of traffic trying to access the CRC site. The possible availability of adjacent land to the existing CRC at Dinas provides an opportunity as a means of reducing congestion through increasing the size of the facility and improving the current site layout.
- 4.9 An extension of the site would allow for a continuation of the current split level design onto the land currently occupied by the Animal Shelter, so allowing a number of bins to be relocated onto the lower level. This will in turn:
- Allow a greater volume of vehicles to be accommodated within the site to reduce the numbers queuing on the highway
 - Reduce the frequency of temporary site closures as a result of haulage vehicles being now able to access and swap over these well used bins without the need to close the site
 - Reduce the number of haulage vehicle movements to site by increasing the size of these bins to allow for greater capacity to be stored before removal.

5. **OPTION APPRAISAL**

- 5.1 Two potential options have been identified for the future provision of kennelling facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf. These are summarised below.

PREFERRED OPTION - OUTSOURCE THE KENNELING FACILITY AND RETAIN A STATUTORY ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE

- 5.2 The majority of local authorities in Wales use a private kennel to provide kennelling facilities for detained dogs. A scoping exercise has been undertaken with the Procurement Team to identify alternative provision for kennelling facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.3 The outcome of the market testing did not identify a private kennels in RCT interested in providing the kennelling facility but there were options to utilise kennels used by neighbouring LA's. Out of County facilities will present additional travel distances for owners who wish to reclaim their dogs. This should be balanced against the owners' responsibilities to ensure their dogs are not allowed to stray and the low proportion of dogs (25%) that are reclaimed from the current kennel.
- 5.4 The introduction of a mandatory dog chipping requirement for dog owners on the 6th April 2016 is likely to have a further, direct impact on the number of dogs being detained. As a result, the future revenue budget required to pay for private kennel facilities is likely to reduce. On analysing the funding required to outsource the kennelling facility, this can be achieved within the existing budget.
- 5.5 The Animal Control Service out of hours detention service receives a very low level of demand (56 dogs in total detained in 2014-15) and there is an additional cost to the Council of maintaining this service. Other local authorities require out of hours detention provision to be made by their private kennels as part of a contract. Therefore, there is a potential to cease the in house out of hours' standby provision and achieve a saving for the Council.
- 5.6 If the kennelling service was outsourced, the Council would continue to employ Animal Wardens to undertake the Council's statutory duty to deal with stray dogs. This would afford the Animal Wardens greater capacity to focus on resolving stray dog and dog related issues in the community rather than deal with the welfare of dogs in the Shelter.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION - RETAIN THE EXISTING SERVICE AND INCREASE FEES/CHARGES

- 5.7 The statutory detention fee charged per dog is specified in legislation and cannot be increased. The additional charge per day is increased annually in line with all Council discretionary fees and charges. The actual cost per day of detaining a dog varies annually as our costs for running the facility are fixed however the number of dogs we detain varies and over recent years has shown a gradually decrease every year.

- 5.8 Only around 25% of the dogs detained are currently reclaimed by their owners. Owners reclaiming their dogs have to pay the statutory fine and a cost for each day their dog has been in kennels. On average, dogs which are reclaimed by owners are detained for 3.7 days and the income derived from dogs that are reclaimed by owners is small. The fee charged to owners for re-claiming their dog could be increased to reflect the true cost of operating the service.
- 5.9 Other costs such as for the sale of dogs from the kennels could also be increased although dog sales directly from the shelter are negligible as the Council works with the third sector to re-home dogs on our behalf. There is a risk that any increase in fees will result in a decrease in the number of dogs being reclaimed. Based on the low proportion of dogs that are reclaimed by owners, any additional income would not make a significant contribution to the overall costs of running the dog kennels.
- 5.10 Following the requirement to make dog micro-chipping compulsory, a £10 fee was introduced on the 4th July 2016. The fee has been kept as low as possible, with other local veterinary practices charging between £15 and £40 per dog for micro-chipping. Based on demand for micro chipping in 2015-16 the introduction of a £10 fee could provide additional income of £4000. However some dog rescue charities still provide micro chipping free of charge, which could influence demand for this service.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The preferred and alternative options for the future kennelling facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf were subject to a 4 week public consultation which took place from the 6th June to the 4th July 2016.
- 6.2 The full consultation report is attached in Appendix 1. The responses received can be summarised as follows:
- 1,733 pre-completed forms stating support for retention of the kennels
 - 15 emails
 - 5 letters
 - 1 petition (571 signatures): “Do not close the Dog Pound”
 - 1 telephone feedback
- 6.3 The majority of respondents were opposed to the preferred option, namely outsourcing of the kennelling facility and supported the alternative option, namely to retain the current kennelling facility and increase fees. The key themes to emerge from the consultation can be summarised as follows:

- Specific impact - concern that dogs could be put at risk, that there would be an increase in stray dogs, potentially dangerous dogs and an increase in dog fouling.
- Distance Issues – an increase in distance to the alternative dog pounds could result in people not travelling (due to cost or the lack of a car) and this could lead to more dogs being abandoned or left unclaimed.
- There was some concern that the vehicles used to transport the animals were not suitable, as they have no air conditioning.
- Impact on Staff - job losses
- The existing service should be improved (eg. Opening times)
- The existing service is invaluable
- Costs should be increased to keep the service
- Private Kennels are full
- Agree with owner responsibility, should teach in schools.
- It won't help the recycling facilities, won't stop the queuing

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business officer

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Preferred Option - Direct costs of contracting out the service are likely to be cost neutral.
- 8.2 Alternative Option - This will be cost neutral for 16-17 as the level of additional income that may be achieved by increasing fees must be offset by the reduced likelihood of owners reclaiming their dogs.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to deal with stray dogs (Section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). The Act requires that the Council makes provision to seize and detain any stray dog and charge a fee for dogs that are claimed by their owners within a statutory 7 day

period. The statutory fee that must be charged by Council's for the seizure of dogs is set by law and is £25 per dog. The Council has discretion to charge an additional fee for the detention of any dog. Any dog that is not claimed after 7 days must be disposed of by the Council, either by selling it, giving it away or destroying it humanely.

9.2 The Environmental Protection Act does not stipulate the arrangement the Council must have to detain dogs.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.

10.1 In line with the "Living within our means" Priority, the Council needs to explore different ways of delivering services in order to ensure they are cost effective in the future. The demand for kennelling dogs at the Animal Shelter is likely to decrease in coming years and the option to outsource the kennelling requirements while maintaining an Animal Warden service, provides a cost effective solution for the future.

10.2 A "Place" priority of the Corporate Plan is to improve recycling rates in RCT in order to send less waste to landfill. The closure of the Animal Shelter will provide the necessary space to carry out the planned redevelopment of the Community Recycling Centre at Dinas, which in turn will aim to encourage increased rates of recycling.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The two options have advantages and disadvantages which need to be considered in respect of future arrangements for a dog kennelling for Rhondda Cynon Taf. There has been feedback from the public and stakeholders to the consultation undertaken and this requires appropriate consideration. As a result of the projected decreasing demand for kennelling capacity in the future, there is an opportunity to re-configure the Animal Warden service to be cost effective in the years ahead. The consultation undertaken identified the preferred option namely to close the Animal Shelter and outsource the kennelling facility and this option was considered in the context of the future space requirements for the the necessary improvements at the existing Civic Recycling Centre at Dinas.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny

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Consultation Report

Future Kennelling Facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf

July 2016

Consultation Team



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the consultation.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 6th June to the 4th July, 2016.

Responses Received

The following number of responses were received;

1,733 pre-completed forms
15 emails
5 letters
1 petition (571 signatures)
1 telephone feedback

- 1733 individuals sent in a pre-completed form that stated support for the retention of the existing dog kennelling at the shelter in Dinas.
- 571 people signed a petition – “Do not close Dinas Dog Pound”.

The following are the main themes to emerge from the consultation;

- Specific impact - concern that dogs could be put at risk, that there would be an increase in stray dogs, potentially dangerous dogs and an increase in dog fouling.
- Distance Issues – an increase in distance to the alternative dog pounds could result in people not travelling (due to cost or the lack of a car) and this could lead to more dogs being abandoned or left unclaimed. Could be an issue for older residents.
- There was some concern that the vehicles used to transport the animals were not suitable, as they have no air conditioning.
- Impact on Staff - job losses.
- Loss of other facilities at the pound, such as pest control and recycling kitchen and changing rooms.
- Financial issues – Suggestions of how income could be generated.
- Problems with micro chipping, not always working or used.
- Importance of keeping a local kennel facility.
- The existing service should be improved (eg. Opening times).

- The existing service is invaluable. Out of hours service is essential.
- Private Kennels are full.
- Agree with owner responsibility, should teach in schools.
- It won't help the recycling facilities, it won't stop the queuing.
- Importance of working in partnership with dog charities as this has been successful.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a consultation on the future of kennelling facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.2 As a result of the projected decreasing demand for kennelling capacity in the future, there is a need to re-configure the Animal Control Service to be cost effective in the years ahead. There is potential to outsource the service and manage costs in a more sustainable and efficient manner. The option to close the kennelling facility also needs to be considered with regard to the future space requirements for the Council to continue operating the existing Community Recycling Centre at Dinas.
- 1.3 The preferred option is to outsource the kennelling facility and retain a statutory Animal Control Service. The majority of Local Authorities in Wales use a private kennel to provide kennelling facilities for detained dogs. A scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify alternative provision for kennelling facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.4 Section 2 outlines the background to the proposal and why changes are proposed.
- 1.5 Section 3 details the methodology used.
- 1.6 Section 4 presents the consultation results.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As a result of the projected decreasing demand for kennelling capacity in the future, there is a need to re-configure the Animal Control Service to be cost effective in the years ahead. There is potential to outsource the service and manage costs in a more sustainable and efficient manner. The option to close the kennelling facility also needs to be considered with regard to the future space requirements for the Council to continue operating the existing Community Recycling Centre at Dinas.
- 2.2 Dealing with stray dogs is the core activity of the Animal Control Service provided by RCTCBC. The Council has a statutory duty to deal with stray dogs. The legislation requires that the Council makes provision to seize and detain any stray dog, then charge a fee for dogs that are claimed by their owners within a statutory 7 day period. Any dog that is not claimed after 7 days must be disposed of by the Council, either by selling it, giving it away or humane euthanization. The legislation does not stipulate the arrangement the Council must have to detain dogs therefore it is not necessary for the Council to have its own kennelling facility.
- 2.3 The Council currently operates its own Animal Shelter at Dinas Depot in Porth which has capacity for 36 dogs. Of the dogs seized by the Animal Control Service, some are found to be micro-chipped and are returned to the owner free of charge on the first occasion they are found straying. For those that are detained, some will be reclaimed by owners but the majority are given to a third sector charity for re-homing. Due to the success of this partnership, the number of dogs the Council has euthanized has reduced significantly and only 10 dogs were euthanized in 2015-16.
- 2.4 There has been a steady reduction in the number of dogs seized and requiring detention at Dinas Animal Shelter over the last 3 years. The Council predicts that this trend is set to continue in line with the requirement from the 6th April 2016 for compulsory micro-chipping of dogs, whereby on establishing ownership details, Animal Wardens will be able to return more dogs directly to the owner on the first occasion they are found straying.
- 2.5 The Animal Control Service is staffed by 3.6 staff. It is open each afternoon, Monday to Friday and Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday mornings. Due to health and safety considerations it is necessary for two staff to be present at the shelter at all times when dogs are being

handled or the facility is open to the public. This has a direct impact on the ability of the service to maintain a visible presence across the County.

- 2.6 Staff numbers have reduced over time to manage the costs of running the service. In spite of this, a review of the cost per dog per day based on the average number of dogs detained in the last three years is at least £11.25 per day. This compares to £8.50 per day quoted in the private sector. The actual cost per day of detaining a dog varies annually as our costs for running the facility (building cost and shelter staff) are fixed while the number of dogs we detain shows a gradually decrease every year. The Council predicts that the daily cost of kennelling a dog in our own facility is likely to increase in coming years.
- 2.7 The statutory fee charged as a fine to owners for each dog reclaimed is specified in legislation and cannot be increased. The additional charge for kennelling a dog per day is currently increased annually in line with all Council discretionary fees and charges.
- 2.8 In addition to the increasing costs of operating the kennels at Dinas, there is also a need to redevelop the Dinas Community Recycling Centre, which is next to the Animal Shelter. There are current plans to redevelop and make improvements to the Community Recycling Centre, which are outlined below. The closure of the Animal Shelter would enable the land to be utilised for the benefit of the required improvements at the Community Recycling Centre.

Extension of Dinas Community Recycling Centre

- 2.9 Dinas Community Recycling Centre (CRC) was opened to the public in 2006 and being located within the centre of the Borough has been, and continues to be well used, attracting large numbers of residents especially on weekends. Unfortunately, on occasions the volume of traffic trying to access the site has led to congestion in both directions on the approach to the CRC on the adjacent A4058, Cymmer Road.
- 2.10 With a view to reducing the reliance on Dinas and also to providing additional high standard and accessible facilities throughout the Borough to meet its statutory recycling targets, the Council has invested over recent years in developing its portfolio of Community Recycling Centres. This has been demonstrated with the opening within the last six months of new sites at Llantrisant and Treherbert.

- 2.11 The possible availability of adjacent land to the existing CRC at Dinas also provides an opportunity as another means of reducing congestion through increasing the size of the facility and improving the current site layout.
- 2.12 It has also been identified that a cause of the congestion is the need to temporarily close the site to the public on health and safety grounds when the bins are full and need to be swapped over.
- 2.13 An extension of the site would allow for a continuation of the current split level design onto this adjacent land so allowing a number of these bins to be relocated onto the lower level. This will in turn:
- Allow a greater volume of vehicles to be accommodated within the site to reduce the numbers queuing on the highway
 - Reduce the frequency of temporary site closures as a result of haulage vehicles being now able to access and swap over these well used bins without the need to close the site
 - Reduce the number of haulage vehicle movements to site by increasing the size of these bins to allow for greater capacity to be stored before removal.

Preferred Option

- 2.14 The preferred option is to outsource the kennelling facility and retain a statutory Animal Control Service. The majority of Local Authorities in Wales use a private kennel to provide kennelling facilities for detained dogs. A scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify alternative provision for kennelling facilities for Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 2.15 The outcome of the scoping exercise did not identify a private kennels in RCT interested in providing the kennelling facility but options were identified to utilise kennels used by neighbouring Local Authorities. Out of County facilities will present additional travel distances for owners who wish to reclaim their dogs. This should be balanced against the owner's responsibilities to ensure their dogs are kept under control at all times and are not allowed to stray. Specific arrangements could be put in place within the Animal Control Service to mitigate the impact of these increased travel distances on vulnerable groups.
- 2.16 The introduction of a mandatory dog chipping requirement for dog owners on the 6th April 2016 is expected to have a further, direct impact on the number of dogs being detained at the Animal Shelter. As

a result, the future revenue budget required to pay for private kennel facilities is likely to reduce.

- 2.17 The Animal Control Service out of hours detention service receives a very low level of demand. Animal Wardens on call receive a stand-by payment to be on call and a further payment when they are required to attend the Shelter. A facility to take dogs in outside normal hours could be maintained at external kennels.
- 2.18 If the kennelling service was outsourced, the Council would continue to employ Animal Wardens to undertake the Council's statutory duty to deal with stray dogs. This would benefit the service provision of dealing with stray dogs, as the Animal Wardens would have greater capacity to focus on resolving stray dog issues in the community rather than deal with the welfare of dogs in the Shelter. In addition the Animal Wardens would be able to assist with resolving complaints of nuisance from barking dogs and have greater involvement in promoting responsible dog ownership.
- 2.19 The option of outsourcing the kennelling facility has key advantages and disadvantages which are as follows:

Advantages

- Opportunity to redevelop and undertake necessary improvements at the adjacent Dinas Community Recycling Centre
- Potential to realise estimated savings in dog kennelling costs
- Enables the Animal Wardens to have greater capacity to focus on their core duty of dealing with stray dogs in RCT.
- Opportunity for the Animal Wardens to increase engagement in projects to promote responsible dog ownership in RCT.
- An Out of hours service will be maintained and made a requirement of any contract with an external kennelling facility.

Disadvantages

- Increased travelling distance for residents wishing to re-claim their dog which could result in less dogs being reclaimed.
 - Increased travelling distance and time for Animal Wardens to drop off dogs which need kennelling.
 - Loss of local standby service
 - Staff redeployment/job loss.
- 2.20 Implementing this Option is the most cost effective way of delivering sustainable dog kennelling arrangements for the RCT. It also supports the Council's strategy of improving our community recycling facilities and improving recycling rates in the County Borough.

Alternative Option**Retain the existing dog kennelling facility and increase fees/charges**

- 2.21 Under this option the Council would continue to operate the kennels at Dinas and would increase fees/charges to offset the higher costs of maintaining the service.
- 2.22 Only around 25% of dogs detained are currently reclaimed by their owners. Owners reclaiming their dogs have to pay the statutory fine and a cost for each day their dog has been in kennels. On average, dogs which are reclaimed by owners are detained for 3.7 days and the income derived from dogs that are reclaimed by owners is small. The fee charged to owners for re-claiming their dog could be increased to reflect the true cost of operating the service.
- 2.23 Other costs such as for the sale of dogs from the kennels could also be increased although dog sales directly from the shelter are negligible as the Council works with the third sector to re-home dogs on our behalf. There is a risk that any increase in fees will result in a decrease in the number of dogs being reclaimed. Based on the low proportion of dogs that are reclaimed by owners, any additional income would not make a significant contribution to the overall costs of running the dog kennels.
- 2.24 The option of retaining the existing kennelling facility and increasing fees/charges has key advantages and disadvantages. These can be outlined as follows:

Advantages

- Retains a dog kennelling facility within RCT
- Increases income to offset the cost of service
- Retains the option to provide an out of hours standby service.
- Maintains links with our existing animal re-homing charity organisation

Disadvantages

- Removes option to provide the necessary space to carry out the required redevelopment of the Community Recycling Centre
- Reduces the opportunity for the Animal Wardens to have greater capacity to focus on their core duty of dealing with stray dogs in RCT.
- The use of the facility is likely to reduce over time due to the impact of micro-chipping
- Increasing charges/fees may lead to reduction in demand for dogs being reclaimed

This option is not proposed.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the future of kennelling facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.2 The consultation has been conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 6th June to the 4th July, 2016.
- 3.3 A consultation booklet was produced to outline the background to the proposal. The booklet was sent to key stakeholders, including current licensed animal boarding establishments and copies were available in the kennels at Dinas, as well as in the Council's libraries and One4All Centres.
- 3.4 People were invited to let us know their views in writing to a freepost address or by email.
- 3.5 The consultation was also placed online and promoted via social media.

Responses Received

- 3.6 The following number of responses were received;
 - 1,733 pre-completed forms
 - 15 emails
 - 5 letters
 - 1 petition (571 signatures)
 - 1 telephone feedback
- 3.7 The following are a list of any stakeholder groups that submitted written submissions to the consultation;

Councillors/AMs/MPs

Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP

Cllr. Pauline Jarman – Plaid Cymru

Voluntary/Community Groups/Special interest

Hoperescue charity

- 3.8 All of the responses received are available for Officers and Members to view, in addition to this summary report.

4 CONSULTATION RESULTS

- 4.1 1733 individuals sent in a pre-completed form that stated support for the retention of the existing dog kennelling at the shelter in Dinas (see below);

<p><u>ALTERNATIVE OPTION</u> <u>RETAIN THE EXISTING DOG KENNELING</u> <u>AT THE SHELTER AT DINAS</u></p> <p>I WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER MY SUPPORT FOR THE ABOVE OPTION TO RETAIN EXISTING KENNELING</p> <p>NAME -----</p> <p>ADDRESS -----</p>

- 4.2 The following petition was received with 571 signatures.

PETITION FORM
DO NOT CLOSE DINAS DOG POUND

- 4.3 3 people from Port Talbot sent in individually signed identical letters. The main themes in the letter were as follows.

- Adverse impact on the welfare of dogs.
- A problem with dogs being reunited with their owners, as a result of micro chipping not always being correct or up to date and that some dogs are not micro chipped.
- Lack of transport will result in more strays and abandoned dogs.
- Potential for criminality (dog fighting), unlicensed breeding and cruel activities.

- Alternative pounds will be full to bursting and unable to cope at holiday times.
- Dog rescue centres are full to bursting and will not be able to cope with demand, therefore more dogs will be put to sleep.
- Job losses

4.4 Of the 5 letters and 15 emails that were received as part of the consultation, the following main themes emerged;

Specific impact

4.5 There was concern that dogs could be put at risk, that there would be an increase in stray dogs, potentially dangerous dogs and an increase in dog fouling.

“by this time next year we will be overrun with stray dogs and dogs fouling the streets”

“.. more dogs straying and posing a threat to the community”

“the closure of this pound will result in stray dogs to be left roaming the roads”

“people phone the shelter daily to report their dogs missing....”

“.....I foresee that people will be less inclined to help these dogs. This will lead to further issues, more dog fouling, possible road traffic accidents, unsupervised dogs attacking other dogs, worse still people”

Distance Issues

4.6 Some of the respondents felt that the increase in distance to the alternative dog pounds could result in people not travelling, due to cost or the lack of a car, and this could lead to more dogs being abandoned or left unclaimed.

“more dogs will be left unclaimed because people are not willing to travel that far or may not have transport.....”

“how will residents be able to retrieve their dogs if they are going to be held many miles away?”

“people who now surrender locally will in the most part not be willing to go all the way to Cardiff or Blackwood and there will consequently be more dogs dumped in parks and the like”

A respondent also noted concern that the impact may be felt more by older people.

- 4.7 There was some concern that the vehicles used to transport the animals were not suitable, as they have no air conditioning.

“There is no air-conditioning in the vans, therefore it is not suitable to transport dogs for any length of time”

“the wardens are going to spend the majority of their time ferrying dogs miles out of areas, in vehicles which I believe are not suited to taking animals for long journeys..”

Impact on Staff

- 4.8 There was concern for the job losses that could result from the proposal being taken forward. Also, other issues that may impact upon the staff.

“...loyal dedicated and caring staff some of whom they're jobs would be under threat” (sic)

“the wardens will get more verbal abuse than they do now”

“loss of staff changing room and showers”

Loss of other facilities

- 4.9 There were a number of other facilities that one respondent listed as disadvantages of closing the animal shelter, including;

- Poison Room for pest control section
- Storage for dead animals for the highways dept.
- Changing room and kitchen
- Car parking for 56 men from the refuse and recycling dept.

Financial Issues

- 4.10 Some of the respondents questioned the savings that would be made by taking the proposal forward and suggestions of how more income could be made, including;

- pest control and refuse and recycling share the building and have an office, changing locker facilities, rest room and large car parking facility. They should share the running costs.
- At present dogs brought to the animal shelter and are found to be microchipped are returned to their respective owners with no charge on the first occasion of straying.....owners should pay the standard administration fee plus the relevant days kennelling fees to retrieve their animal.

4.11 There was also concern for the potential impact on charities;

“I fear that there will be a massive financial pressure put on already struggling animal and dog charities within the area if harm comes to these dogs, whether that be intentional or unintentional as a direct result of the pounds closure.”

Telephone Service

4.12 There were concerns raised about the out of hours telephone service and how it was now going to work, who would be responsible for taking the calls and logging the correct information. This part of the service was seen as essential.

Microchipping

4.13 There was some concern about micro chipping of dogs, including that the details are not always correct or kept up to date, they do not always pick up in dogs and not all dogs are micro chipped, even though they are compulsory.

Alternative Proposal

4.14 The alternative proposal was the preferred option of hoperescue, the charity that works in partnership with the Council, based on the following;

- Our current working relationship with the kennel staff ensures that the stray dogs are given the best care within the resources available, including regular vet checks, vaccinations and worm and flea treatment and temperament tests. The dogs are transferred in to our care as soon as possible following the completion of their 7 days. The information provided by the kennel staff is invaluable in helping to find foster home or rescue placements for the dogs. Some of the staff also volunteers their spare time to contact us with information or help by transporting the dogs to kennels/vets. If the contract is outsourced then there is no certainty that any external provider will continue to work with us and the welfare benefits of our established partnership could be lost.
- It is important that a kennelling facility is retained locally. Owners may not be prepared to travel to collect their dogs if the facility is provided out of county, increasing the number of unclaimed dogs. We also receive many calls each week about stray dogs, particularly out of hours. It is often difficult to persuade finders to drop dogs to Dinas, and this will be even more difficult if they need to go to a facility out of county.

Other reported issues

- The existing service should be improved (eg. Opening times)
- The existing service is invaluable
- You should increase costs to keep the service
- Private Kennels are full
- Agree with owner responsibility, should teach in schools.
- It won't help the recycling facilities, won't stop the queuing
- Must continue to work with the dog charities as this has been successful. This was confirmed by one the charities in their response.

APPENDIX B

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

DECISION MADE BY: Cabinet DATE DECISION MADE: 19th July, 2016

Urgent Item : Agenda Item 12

SUBJECT: Provision of Dog Kennelling arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Chairman of the meeting being of the opinion that the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services be considered, in accordance with the provision of section 100(b)4(B) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances i.e. The need for Cabinet Members to consider the feedback from the public and relevant stakeholders to the recent consultation undertaken on this matter and to consider the options to be taken forward.

**Cabinet Members Present
County Borough Councillors:**

A.Morgan (Chairman), R.Bevan, A.Crimmings, M.Forey,
& G. Hopkins.

**Apology for Absence
County Borough Councillors:**

E Hanagan, M Norris, J Rosser & M Webber

Other Councillor(s) in Attendance:-

C Davies, T Leyshon & J Ward

1. DECISION MADE:

Agreed –

1. To note the outcome of the consultation, any potential impact of equalities issues and other matters as outlined within the report and subsequent appendices.
2. To proceed with implementation of the following option:-
 - To outsource the Kennelling facility
 - To retain a statutory animal control service
 - To maintain arrangements for the receipt of stray dogs out of hours.
3. That the Service Director, Public Health & Protection open dialogue with interested Charities and Trusts in respect of outsourcing the Kennelling facility within the County Borough.
4. That a further report be presented to Cabinet in respect of the provision of Dog Kennelling arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. REASON FOR THE DECISION BEING MADE:

- Following consideration of the Consultation outcomes and options appraisal the need for a decision to be taken on the provision of Dog Kennelling arrangements for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

3. LINKS TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES / FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

- Living within our means – Council needs to explore different way of delivering services in order to ensure they are cost effective in the future.
- Place - Improve Recycling rates in RCT

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO DECISION BEING MADE:

- As outlined within Section 6 of the report, a 4 week public consultation was undertaken from the 6th June to the 4th July, 2016.

5. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY A COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

- None

6. PERSONAL INTERESTS DECLARED:

- None

7. DISPENSATION TO SPEAK (AS GRANTED BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE):
N/A

8. (a) IS THE DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YES NO

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 5 clear working days after its publication i.e. Implementation date of the **27th July, 2016** to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

8. (b) IF NO, REASONS WHY IN THE OPINION OF THE DECISION-MAKER THE DECISION IS DEEMED EXEMPT OR NON APPLICABLE:

I. COUNCIL/SCRUTINY FUNCTION (CALL IN IS THEREFORE NON APPLICABLE):-

Reason:.....N/A.....

II. URGENT DECISION:-

Reason:.....N/A.....

8. (c) IF DEEMED URGENT - SIGNATURE OF MAYOR OR DEPUTY MAYOR OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE CONFIRMING AGREEMENT THAT THE PROPOSED DECISION IS REASONABLE IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR IT BEING TREATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 17.2:

N/A

.....
(Mayor)

.....
(Dated)



.....
(Proper Officer)

19th July, 2016
(Dated)

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APPENDIX C

17. Call-In

17.1 Rules

- (a) Where a decision is made by the Cabinet, an individual Member of the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, an Area Committee, under joint arrangements or a Key Decision is made by an Officer (under the General Scheme of Delegation), it must be published on the Council's website by the responsible proper officer within 2 clear working days of it being made. A copy will also be available at the main offices of the Council. All Members of the Council will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same time scale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.
- (b) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 5 clear working days after the publication of the decision, unless any 3 Non-Executive Members object to it and call it in for review under these procedure rules.
- (c) During that period the Monitoring Officer shall call-in a decision for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if so requested in the specified format by any 3 Non-Executive Members and, shall then notify the decision taker of the call-in. Following the expiry of the 5 clear working day period in which a decision can be called-in the Monitoring Officer shall convene a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on such a date as he/she may determine. Where possible the Monitoring Officer will consult with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as to a suitable date and in any case the meeting will be held within 5 clear working days of the expiration of the relevant call-in period (only in exceptional circumstances will the Chair (in his/her absence the Vice-Chair) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider extending this time limit).
- (d) As soon as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee signs a call-in form he/she shall cease to be the Chair for all purposes for the duration of the call-in process. If this situation arises then for the purposes of these Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules references to 'Chair' of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be read as a reference to the 'Vice-Chair' of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In the situation where both the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee signs a call in form then the Chair of the meeting in respect of matters relating to the call-in shall be selected from the rest of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee membership by majority vote.
- (e) If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee refers it back to the decision making body or person

for reconsideration or the matter to full Council, it must set out in writing the nature of its concerns. If referred to the decision maker they shall then reconsider within a further 5 clear working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision. This decision shall take effect and be implementable on the date and time immediately following the closure of the relevant meeting

- (f) If following an objection to the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not meet within the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date and time immediately following the closure of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- (g) If the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, the Council will refer any decisions to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the Cabinet as a whole, or a Committee of it, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 5 clear working days of the Council's request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 5 clear working days of the Council's request.
- (h) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is earlier.
- (i) In order to ensure the call-in is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay, certain limitations are to be placed on its use. These are:
 - (i) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may only call-in a total of 3 decisions per 2 month period;
 - (ii) any 3 Non-Executive Members (from either (i) at least 2 political groups or (ii) in the case of an unallocated Member(s) – that unallocated Member(s) and a Member(s) from a political group) are needed for a decision to be called in;
 - (iii) once a Member has signed a request for call-in under paragraph 17 (call-in) above, he/she may not do so

again until the period of 2 months has expired.

- (iv) No Education Co-opted Members may report a decision be called in.
- (j) The Monitoring Officer may veto any request for call-in if it falls outside the remit of this scheme.
- (k) Save in exceptional circumstances all Members requesting a matter be called in must attend the meeting at which the matter is being considered.

17.1A Reference to a 'clear working day' in these Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules is defined as the following:-

A complete period of 24 hours (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays), beginning and ending at midnight on the day in question.

Therefore, by way of example, for the purposes of these call-in rules it shall exclude the day on which the relevant Cabinet decision notice is published and the day on which the call-in meeting is held.

17.2 Call-In and Urgency

- (a) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Cabinet or an individual Cabinet Member is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council's or other public interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public, shall state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Mayor must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor's consent shall be required. In the absence of both, the Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee's consent should be required. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported at the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- (b) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

APPENDIX D

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES – RULE 17**

SCRUTINY CALL IN FORM

THIS FORM MUST:

- (A) BE SIGNED BY AT LEAST THREE MEMBERS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT POLITICAL GROUPS
- (B) BE DELIVERED TO PJ LUCAS, THE MONITORING OFFICER, THE PAVILIONS, CAMBRIAN PARK, CLYDACH VALE, CF40 2XX OR SENT BY FAX TO (01443) 424114 WITHIN THE TIMESCALE NOTIFIED WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION

DETAILS OF DECISION

Decision of Cabinet/Cabinet Member/Other (Please delete as appropriate)

Date of Publication of decision:.....*19th July 2016*.....

Subject of Decision.....*Provision of Dog Kennelling arrangements for RCT*.....

Decision Called in (Please quote from the record of decision)

.....*To proceed with implementation of the following option*
.....*To outsource the kennelling facility*.....

Reason for calling in decision		
<i>To request the Cabinet not to implement their intention to outsource the kennelling facility until all factors, including the delegated officer decision, consultation responses and the executive's decision and reasons are the subject of proper scrutiny</i>		
Names	Signature	Group
<i>Pauline Jarman</i>	<i>P. Jarman</i>	<i>Plaid Cymru</i>
<i>EMYR WEBSTER</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>PLAID CYMRU</i>
<i>PAUL WASLEY</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>Independent</i>

Date:.....*26.7.2016*.....

For Office use only by the Monitoring Officer

Date & Time of Receipt.....*26.7.16 3:27pm*..... Officer Receiving.....*K. May*.....

To be submitted to Scrutiny Committee.....*0*.....

Decision of Scrutiny Committee.....