

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
6 May 2014

Subject: **HAMBLETON DOG WARDEN SERVICE**

All Wards

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning: Councillor B Phillips

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Dog Warden Service is brought in house to provide an improved service.
- 1.2 The service was provided by the private sector under a joint contract with Richmondshire District Council between April 2009 and March 2014. Since then Craven District Council have been providing the service on an interim basis for both authorities until such time as a final decision is made on the future of the service. Craven has offered to run the service and this offer has been under discussion. The budget for the service is £32,000.
- 1.3 Neither the service provided by the private sector nor the arrangement with Craven District Council include provision for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for dog fouling or providing patrols to monitor fouling. This service was removed from the contract in 2010 to save £20,000 from the budget as very little patrolling and enforcement was being carried out.
- 1.4 Dog fouling Fixed Penalty Notices are currently the responsibility of the Street Scene Team—either the Senior Street Scene Officer or the Waste and Street Scene Supervisors. Due to competing time pressures there are no patrols carried out by these officers and the service tends to be reactive, concentrating on responding to complaints rather than being pro-active in patrolling and prevention. Three fixed penalty notices were issued in 2013/14 for dog fouling.
- 1.5 The new service would deal with stray dogs, but also create the capacity to carry out patrols and target areas where there are persistent dog fouling problems. There have been an average of 93 stray dogs reported each year over the last three years and the number of reports of dog fouling has risen from 14 in 2011/12 to 60 in 2013/14. However, dog fouling is consistently identified as a major issue of concern by the public.
- 1.6 Bringing the service in house would provide a better quality and more responsive service to the public, with the added benefit of being under the direct supervision of the Waste Manager. It is proposed that one new member of staff would be employed, with a liveried van displaying the Council logo and prominent Dog Warden/Enforcement signage to provide a highly visible mobile service. Arrangements would need to be put in place with local kennels to provide an out of hours' service. Neighbouring authorities, such as Ryedale District Council, successfully use this method.
- 1.7 The aim of the service will be for the Council to be more effective in dealing with stray dogs and dog fouling through direct action and the deterrent value of having a highly visible service, including publicising prosecutions.

2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

2.1 This report links to corporate priorities by seeking to reduce the impact of waste on the environment, by promoting healthy lifestyles and by providing a high quality customer focussed service.

3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

3.1 Risk in approving the recommendations:

There are no risks in agreeing the recommendations.

3.2 The key risk is in not approving the recommendations is:

Risk	Implication	Prob*	Imp*	Total	Preventative action
Dog fouling remains a constant problem and limited enforcement action is carried out.	Communities are dissatisfied with the service provided by the Council. Public areas remain contaminated	4	3	12	Increased signage, work with schools, parishes and community groups on promotion.

Prob = Probability, Imp = Impact, Score range is Low = 1, High = 5

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 The cost of providing an in-house service:

Costs of In-House Service	£
Salary plus on costs	26,000
Vehicle lease	4,200
Fuel	4,000
Kennel fees/out of hours service (estimated)	3,800
Equipment purchase	1,000
Training	1,000
Total costs	40,000

4.2 Overall the revenue effects of the recommendation to bring the Dog Warden Service in house will be as follows.

Revenue Effects	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £
Cost of running the service	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Financed by:				
Amount in base budget	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000
Growth items:				
Additional to run service	3,800	3,800	3,800	3,800
Vehicle Lease	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200
	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000

*Vehicle lease fees are based on similar vehicles the Council currently operates.

4.3 The additional costs, detailed in the table, to run the service and the vehicle lease will be financed from the one-off fund in 2014/15 and will be incorporated in the budget from 2015/16.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The legal position regarding stray dogs is covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This Act imposes upon the Council a statutory duty to deal with stray dogs.

6.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 There are no equality and diversity issues related to this report.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

7.1 There are no significant health and safety risks associated with approving the recommendation.

8.1 RECOMMENDATION(S):

8.1 It is recommended that:

- (1) the Council establishes an in-house Dog Warden Service; and
- (2) the additional expenditure to provide the service be financed from the one-off fund in 2014/15 and be incorporated in the budget from 2015/16.

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Background papers: None
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