

Leeds City Council - Health and Environmental Action Service

Operational Policy Subject: **Stray Dogs**

Approved By: Chief Environmental Services Officer

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Version number: 2

Version revised by: S. Campbell

1 **Scope**

- 1.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 makes provision for dealing with stray dogs. A stray dog is defined as any dog which is in a place not with a responsible person or owner.
- 1.2 This policy provides information on how the Department will respond to complaints or sightings of stray dogs.

2 **Objective**

- 2.1 To seek an improvement in the visual street environment by reducing the number of stray dogs on the streets. Stray dogs can cause health hazards due to fouling, and compromise public safety with aggressive behaviour and straying on the highway.

3 **Link to Strategic Outcomes**

- 3.1 The Council has identified 8 strategic outcomes which it has prioritised for action. These are supplemented with key improvement priorities.
- 3.2 Environment – Cleaner, greener and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours is relevant. The key improvement indicators which apply are addressing neighbourhood problem sites; improving cleanliness of green spaces; improving the quality of the built environment.

4 **Application of the enforcement policy**

- 4.1 “Paragraphs 5.3.1 Community Benefit and par 5.3.2 Flagrant Breach of the Law” apply to the problem of stray dogs. Appropriate legal action will be taken where public health and safety is put at risk.

5 **Legislation**

- 5.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Section 149 - places a duty on local authorities to appoint an officer to deal with stray dogs. Where the officer has reason to believe that any dog found in a public place, or any other land/premises, is a stray dog, s/he shall seize the dog and detain it. It requires the service of a notice on the owner of the dog, where known.

It makes provision for the keeping of stray dogs and the return to owner upon payment of a prescribed fee, and makes provision for the disposal of unclaimed dogs by selling/donating or destroying them.

- 5.2 The Control of Dogs Order 1992 - Every dog (with few exceptions including a pack of hounds, and various working dogs), while in a highway or place of public resort, must wear a collar with the name and address of its owner inscribed on it or on a plate or badge attached to it.

6 Policy

- 6.1 The Service will respond to requests to pick up stray dogs collected by members of the public within one working day of receiving the complaint.

- 6.2 The Service will respond to reports of a stray dog:-

- As soon as practical if the dog is at large;
- Within 1 working day if the dog is not at large and the owner is unknown;
- Within 3 working days if the dog is not at large and the owner is known.

In the latter situation, contact will be made with the dog owner.

- 6.3 Anonymous complaints will not normally be responded to unless public interest factors are high.

- 6.4 Dog Wardens will also patrol the areas of the local authority on a pro-active basis and seize any dogs found straying.

- 6.5 When a stray dog is seized, reasonable attempts should be made to re-unite the dog to its owner(s). The officer will check the dogs collar for ID, scan the dog for a microchip, and where possible, check relevant lost dog reports with the office. If a telephone number is available for the owner, they will be contacted and ownership confirmed and be asked to confirm their details such as name/date of birth/full address.

- 6.6 If the owner can be identified, the dog will be returned to the owner (subject to 6.7 below). Dogs will not be returned to addresses outside of the Leeds boundary.

- 6.7 The dog will be impounded at the kennels if:-

- The dog is a second-time seizure;
- The warden is unable to locate an owner;
- The dog has been witnessed roaming on previous occasion(s) but not caught;
- The owner has had previous warnings (either verbal, on record, or in writing) from a dog warden or appropriate agency about their dog roaming;
- The dog(s) seized belongs to a particular owner/address which has previously had a dog returned.

- 6.8 Where an owner is identified for an impounded dog, notice will be served on the owner advising them that they must collect the dog within 7 days, or notify the Department if they no longer own the dog.

- 6.9 Where dogs remain unclaimed and the owner has been notified of their whereabouts but failed to collect them, the Department will invoice the owner for any expenses incurred to the Council.
- 6.10 Stray Dogs found by members of the public out of operational hours can be taken to the Council's appointed acceptance point. The Dog Warden Service does not operate an out of hours collection service and Police Stations no longer accept stray dogs.