Equalities Impact Assessment

Name of review:	Pet Policy
Period of review:	2012-2013
Scope of the review:	Residents who live in Council owned stock are permitted to keep pets, subject to the conditions we determine as a landlord. We have a total of over 14,500 tenants and leaseholders living in the Brighton and Hove area. The Council employs five Animal Welfare Officers (two full time, and three part time) who have a statutory obligation to collect stray dogs, to investigate breaches of the law such as dog fouling, and to investigate welfare concerns. These welfare officers deal with both council tenants and residents who privately rent or who own their properties. The conditions which residents must abide to when keeping pets are determined by law, or by their landlords. The Council's pet policy is written for its own tenants and leaseholders, although many of the conditions are underpinned by existing legislature. The purpose of reviewing the pet policy is: 1. To produce a comprehensive policy detailing which pets we allow and under what circumstances, and to clearly outline the responsibilities of pet owners, especially in promoting animal welfare and preventing their pets from causing anti social behaviour. 2. To be supportive of responsible pet ownership, and to be as inclusive as possible, whilst maintaining sensible restrictions where conditions would be clearly unsuitable (ie., no farm animals). 3. Through clearly defined obligations, and procedures for addressing anti social behaviour caused by pets, to reduce the most common problems, such as dog fouling, noise, and dogs being poorly controlled. 4. To introduce compulsory micro chipping of dogs to increase the number of stray dogs being reunited with their owners, and thereby to save the council money in kennelling costs, and reduce the number of dogs needing to go to rescue societies, or being euthanized.

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<tr><td></td><td>5. To introduce a No Breeding of Pets clause in order to reduce nuisance caused by breeding, prevent "accidental ownership" of pets, and to help to stem the number of unwanted pets.

6. To adhere to guidelines on how to manage pets in social housing provided by the major animal welfare agencies; in particular the RSPCA has published comprehensive guidelines and awards "Footprint" awards each year to Local Authorities. We are currently a "bronze level" performing authority and aim to be awarded a "gold" level.

7. Where problems occur, especially anti social behaviour, to produce clear guidelines for staff and residents on how to deal with these.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Review team:**</td><td>Eve Hitchens, Senior Neighbourhood Officer</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Relevant data and research:**</td><td>Guidelines produced by the RSPCA, and the Pet Advisory Committee. Legislation relating to Animal Welfare/Control. Demographic data from OHMS, the main housing database.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Consultation:** indicate who was consulted and how they were consulted</td><td>The policy was approved by Environmental Services, including the Animal Welfare Officers.
A presentation was made to the four Area Panels in January 2013 (to talk generally about pet problems/suggested solutions), and in September 2013 when the draft policy was presented to them. Also presented to Estate Services Monitoring Group and to the Housing Management Consultative Panel (HMCC) in late 2013.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Assessment of impact, outcomes and key follow-up actions:**</td><td>The success of the new policy will be determined by:
* a reduction in the number of pet related complaints
* a reduction in the number of stray dogs
* greater efficiency with which pet related issues are dealt with
* better joint working between council departments (especially Environmental Health, and Housing) and between the council and animal welfare agencies</td></tr>
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