

## **Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee – 19 October 2004**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee** held on **19 October 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs M J Webster (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs T J Capon  
Cllr Mrs S A Harper

Cllr J M Pullen

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R A Amner

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
H Meggison	- Environmental Health Assistant
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator
K White	- Administrative Assistant, Committee Section

### **32 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Members concurred that animal cruelty and wildlife crimes should be made recordable for Police forces because of the strong linkages with other crime and that the Home Office should be lobbied accordingly.

It was further agreed that officers should be asked to revise the wording of the conditions laid down by the Council relating to pony rides in order to stress the following:-

- If a pony is shod and missing a paired shoe it should cease work immediately until such time as the shoe is replaced.
- A pony that has become lame should cease work immediately.

### **33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs S A Harper declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of the RSPB and EHPPS and of having made donations to IFAW, REDWINGS, AHT and ACT and of having subscribed to PETA.

Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of and either subscribing or donating to the RSPB, RSPCA, PDSA,

Blue Cross, IFAW, PETA, South East Essex Animal Welfare Organisation, Animal Aid, Hunt Saboteurs Association, League Against Cruel Sports, Cats Protection League, Cat Action Trust, Canine Defence League, National Trust, National Trust Rayleigh Mount Committee, Compassion in World Farming, Essex Wildlife Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Council for the Protection of Rural Essex, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Badger Protection Association, Fox Watch, Sir Francis of Assisi Group, The Cinnamon Trust, Donkey Trust, The Brook Animal Hospital, The Vegetarian Society, The Vegan Society, The Rescuers Wildlife Centre and organisations concerning dancing bears in Pakistan and concerning bears in China.

### 34 DRAFT ANIMAL WELFARE CHARTER

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care providing a final draft of the Council's Animal Welfare Charter.

There was a general consensus that all the Minutes from previous meetings of the Sub-Committee should be appended to the final Animal Welfare Charter.

During debate, Members agreed that the Council's policy on blood sports should be included in the Charter in the section under Council Policies. Members further concurred that the Charter should include a statement confirming its lack of support for the release of laboratory animals into the wild. The Charter should also include a statement about this Authority's concern with respect to the threat to British wildlife posed by the release of non native species into the wild. It was also agreed that the Charter should include a statement banning the carrying of guns on all Council-owned open spaces and recreation areas. A series of amendments to the draft were accordingly agreed by Members.

Members concurred that tenants in sheltered housing schemes should not be treated differently from those in other Council accommodation, with regard to the keeping of pets. It was, however, recognised that such a statement within the Charter would be contrary to current Council policy; they would therefore wish to recommend a change in policy.

Although Members felt there would be real merit in introducing free range produce at all Council run functions, they were nevertheless concerned about the financial implications; costs could potentially be increased by up to 50%.

Concluding the debate, Members concurred that the Charter should be reviewed in 12 months' time, unless issues arose that would necessitate an earlier review. The final Charter should be published on the Council's website, in *Rochford District Matters* and distributed to all those organisations that gave evidence to the Sub-Committee and to all other animal welfare agencies, MPs, Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, libraries, primary schools and veterinary surgeries.

### Recommended to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- (1) That the final draft of the Council's Animal Welfare Charter be agreed, including the amendments agreed at this meeting, as appended to the signed copy of the Minutes.
- (2) That Council policy on pets in sheltered accommodation be altered so that tenants in sheltered housing schemes should not be treated differently from those in other Council accommodation, with regard to the keeping of pets.
- (3) That a letter be sent to the County Council requesting that emergency planning arrangements should include farm livestock at risk from flooding and that contingency arrangements in rest centre planning take account of domestic pets.
- (4) That a letter be sent to the local branch of the National Farmers' Union urging them to identify measures that could be taken to avoid animals drowning in the event of flooding, so as to avoid health risks from carcasses.
- (5) That a leaflet be produced and made available on the safety of animals in emergency situations.
- (6) That Members of Parliament be lobbied on the following:
  - The range of animals listed on the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 should not be reduced.
  - Large snakes over eight feet long should also be licensed.
  - The potential hazards to wildlife from the development of wind farms needs to be properly taken into account in the evaluation of proposals.
  - The development of alternative methods of research not involving animals.
  - That animal cruelty and wildlife crime be made recordable for Police forces because of strong linkages with other crime and the Home Office lobbied on this.
  - That similar controls be introduced on the tethering of horses.
- (7) That an article appear in *Rochford District Matters* advising residents that:-
  - work is identified within the Local Plan on wildlife and conservation issues, together with guidance relating to the sensitive treatment of

tree felling associated with planning applications;

- the felling of trees, hedges and ditch clearance and associated works should be discouraged during bird nesting times.
- (8) That other Local Authorities be advised of the value of appointing an ecologist, both in terms of arboricultural, as well as planning, issues and particularly where the introduction of an animal welfare charter was under consideration.
- (9) That consideration be given to the possibility of extending the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and of developing wildlife walks at Foulness with observation posts in order to encourage greater appreciation of wildlife, particularly given aspirations to develop Rochford as a centre of leisure and tourism within the Thames Gateway South East.
- (10) That the Minutes of all Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee meetings be attached to all distributed copies of the Animal Welfare Charter, to include all those organisations that gave evidence to the Sub-Committee and to all other animal welfare agencies, MPs, Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, libraries, primary schools and veterinary surgeries.
- (11) That the Animal Welfare Charter be reviewed in 12 months' time.  
(HHHCC)

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....