

DOG CONTROL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of dog control activities undertaken by Environmental Services, with particular emphasis on dog fouling and stray dogs. The report will examine the current issues, the use of resources, benchmarking and possible improvements in the service.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 There are six potential functions of a local authority dog control service, these include:-

- a) Dog fouling,
- b) Stray dogs,
- c) Dangerous dogs,
- d) Dog Control Orders (bans, dogs on leads etc.),
- e) Promotion of responsible dog ownership, and
- f) Animal welfare:

3 DOG CONTROL ACTIVITIES

- 3.1 The service has attracted the following requests from local residents over the last two years:-

Issues	2014	2013
Number of dogs collected as stray dogs	91	93
Number of lost dog reported	64	54
Complaints relating to dog fouling/lack of signs	126	122
Complaints relating to dog bins (overflowing)	31	17
Miscellaneous – dog issues – nuisance dogs/attacks	10	25

- 3.2 The increase in the number of complaints about overflowing dog bins compared to last year is related to crew changes by our Street cleansing contractor. All service failures result in the issue of rectification notices. Comparative statistics from other authorities are shown in Appendix 1.

Dog fouling

- 3.3 The Council has made a Dog Control Order under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to combat fouling by dogs. The Fouling of Land by Dogs (Rochford) Order 2008 came into force on 11 August 2008 and makes it an offence to fail to clear up after a dog in public places.
- 3.4 There are 111 dog bins on the street and 98 in our open spaces. There are no dedicated resources available to deal with enforcement. This is undertaken by the Street Scene team who also have responsibility for monitoring the refuse and street cleansing contracts.

Cost of Service Provision

- 3.5 The contractor costs for the emptying of dog bins have been estimated at £13,859 for the street scene and £10,000 for our open spaces.

Stray dogs

- 3.6 The Council has a statutory duty to collect stray dogs by virtue of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This responsibility was previously shared with the Police, but Local Authorities became solely responsible in 2005.
- 3.7 In fulfilling this function the Local Authority is obliged to seize any dog it believes to be a stray dog. Once seized, the Council must notify the owner and allow seven full days for that owner to reclaim their dog. The Council must keep a register of all dogs seized, including important details such as a description of the dog, where the dog was found, when and any form of identification. The public has the right to view the register free of charge.
- 3.8 Under the Control of Dogs Order 1992 a dog owner is required to have a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on it, or a tag/disc. Many dog owners choose to microchip or tattoo their dogs and, in these circumstances, would be unlikely to take any action if no tag was provided.
- 3.9 An owner is only entitled to reclaim his dog once he has paid a £25 prescribed fee plus any of our reasonable expenses (normally each day's kennelling fees and transport costs etc.).
- 3.10 Once a dog has gone unclaimed for 7 full days the Council may sell or give the dog to a suitable person, place it within a rescue organisation or have the dog destroyed.
- 3.11 At present the Council provides a Dog Warden service Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm through a contractor. Upon a report of a stray dog, the Dog Warden will visit the location as soon as practicable and attempt to seize the dog. The out of hours phone line directs callers to a reception centre operated by Medi-Vet, who will take care of the dog. Stray dogs found out of hours, must be presented to Medi-Vet by the finder.
- 3.12 Arrangements in place in other local authority areas are shown in Appendix 2.

Cost of Service Provision

- 3.13 At present the stray dogs contract costs £18,600 per annum, approximately £2,000 is re-covered in fees from owners. The contract consists of a collection service between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and the kennelling of dogs for up to 7 days.
- 3.14 Comparative costs from neighbouring authorities will be available for the meeting.

- 3.15 The out of hours reception is covered by Medi-Vet, this service is free, although any essential medication that the Vet may have to administer is re-charged to the Council, the annual cost is approximately £1,500.

Dangerous dogs

- 3.16 The Council has the power to seize dangerous dogs, but is currently not able to do so, in terms of either trained staff or maintaining the appropriate equipment and secure kennelling facilities. We are, however, authorised to take action under the legislation to deal with either dogs dangerous out of control, or prescribed breeds kept otherwise than in accordance with the provisions. The Council is only able to take action in respect of dogs found in a public place, we have no authority to obtain a warrant to seize such dogs from private property.
- 3.17 In general, therefore only the Police deal with “Dangerous Dogs” and dogs worrying livestock.

Dog Control Orders

- 3.18 In addition to prohibiting dog fouling, the Council previously had discretion to make Orders banning dogs from designated areas; requiring dogs to be kept on a lead; requiring owners to place their dogs on a lead if so directed by an authorized officer and to restricting the number of dogs that can be walked by one person.
- 3.19 Following public consultation, the Council made the following Dog Control Orders that came into Force on 11 August 2008:-
- The Dog Exclusion (Rochford) Order 2008 makes it an offence to allow dogs in the enclosed children’s play spaces in the district. (Theoretically removing the risk of dog-fouling within play areas).
 - The Dogs on Lead (Rochford) Order 2008 dogs means that all dogs must be kept on leads on all roads within the district. As a result of consulting the Parish Councils, Pooles Lane Recreation Ground and Marylands Nature Reserve were also included in this order.
 - The Dogs on a Lead by Direction (Rochford) Order 2008 makes it an offence not to comply with a direction given by an authorised officer of Rochford District Council to put and keep a dog on a lead.
- 3.20 As a result of the consultation responses, the Council did not make a Dog Control Order restricting the number of dogs that can be walked by one person. This has an indirect implication on the level of dog fouling that is experienced in Hockley Woods and other open spaces.

Cost of Service Provision

- 3.21 No formal enforcement has been undertaken in respect of these Orders, activity has been restricted to giving informal advice. At present there is no dedicated budget to allow for the installation and up-keep of the required signage.

Promotion of Responsible Dog Ownership

- 3.22 Historically the Council has run a variety of activities giving advice to dog owners in local parks, offering free micro-chipping and promoting responsible dog ownership. More recently the Streetscene team began campaigning on dog fouling during 2013 and this has continued to evolve. Examples of campaigns are shown in Appendix 3.
- 3.23 The 'Love Rochford' campaign was aimed at raising awareness of various street scene issues in the Rochford District. The campaign provided information and education to businesses and the public and one of the key topics identified and addressed was dog fouling.

Dog Fouling spray campaign July 2013

- 3.24 The initial dog fouling campaign was carried out during July and August 2013. Problem areas were identified and targeted, both in open spaces and on the highway. A variety of methods were used to communicate with the public including:-
- Target specific problems of dog fouling by spraying the dog fouling bright orange.
 - Humorous posters of 'Pugs' - We're Watching You' displayed in problem areas.
 - Promotional campaign, using local media, posters, shops, road shows, displays in reception areas and libraries.
 - Regular monitoring to assess effectiveness.

Outcome

- 3.25 Monitoring indicated an overall reduction in fouling. Extensive media coverage was achieved due to the novel nature of spray painting fouling bright luminous orange. Media figures indicate that the campaign reached an estimated 1 Million people via National TV, BBC website, Local Radio, National Press and Facebook (including 825,181 Facebook likes).
- 3.26 The campaign successfully highlighted the issues associated with dog fouling and it became a local talking point and raised the awareness of Streetscene issues in Rochford.

Dog Fouling Social Experiment March 2014

- 3.27 In partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, Rochford took part in a social experiment to test the effectiveness of 'We're watching You' posters, which were made from glow in the dark material displaying menacing eyes and a message aimed at dog walkers.
- 3.28 In total posters were displayed at eight separate locations, five posters per location for a total four weeks. The posters were displayed on lamp posts so that they were out of reach of the public but still highly visible to dog walkers.

Outcome

- 3.29 Monitoring took place before, during and after the campaign to test the effectiveness and in the Rochford District an overall 75% improvement was seen and some locations suffered no dog fouling whatsoever during the campaign. Overall, the campaign saw a reduction of 46% between all 17 land managers taking part.

Dog Fouling School Poster Competition June 2014

- 3.30 School poster competitions were run in Great Wakering Primary School and Hullbridge Riverside School during May/June 2014. Schoolchildren were asked to design a poster to deter dog fouling as we had received a number of complaints about dog fouling near the schools. The winning entries were reproduced and displayed locally in the villages and used for the Environmental Action days held in the villages. The schools were provided educational assemblies on littering, an award ceremony took place for the poster design winners and the schoolchildren took part in litter picks.

Pavement Stencils August 2014

- 3.31 The use of pavement stencils was trialled in August 2014. There are two stencil types with different messages to target the two types of dog fouling; 'Your dog, Your Job' focusses on general dog fouling and 'Bag It' Bin It' targets residents who pick up but subsequently drop the bag of faeces or leave it hanging in trees.
- 3.32 The stencils were found to be very effective for use in areas where it is not possible to put up posters, such as alleyways without suitable lamp posts. The stencils are sprayed with brightly coloured chalk and can be used on pavements and in alleyways. Stencils are a very cost effective way of getting the message directly to dog walkers, and, as they are temporary they don't require any resource to remove them. During the trial thirty stencils were applied in nine locations and monitoring results indicated that dog fouling reduced significantly in the chosen locations.

Dog Fouling Campaign November/December 2014

- 3.33 We are working in partnership again with Keep Britain Tidy who is running a national campaign following the success of the social experiment. The campaign utilises the highly effective 'We're Watching You' posters to target problem locations. We have also applied pavement stencils to target a more diverse range of locations. In total sixteen locations have been targeted for this campaign, which at the time of writing is still ongoing.
- 3.34 A variety of promotional tools are also being deployed as part of the campaign to further raise awareness including press releases, social media, publicity of dogs wearing 'Scoop My Poop' bandanas and the very popular 'Poo To Me' song with accompanying video appearing on YouTube. This video was created in-house and attracted media interest both in the UK and US. It currently has over 2800 views on YouTube.

Tikspac Trial Spring 2015

- 3.35 Tikspac are a Swedish company offering Dog Fouling Bag dispensers enabling dog owners to collect free dog waste bags from a dispensing station. The stations are installed at strategic locations and the stations and bags, as well as ongoing maintenance are provided free of charge by the company who sell advertising space on the stations to fund them.
- 3.36 RDC will be taking part in a trial, proposed by KBT, in 2015 of up to five stations in Open Spaces. These will include Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, Swayne Park, Ashingdon Memorial Ground, Fairview Playing Fields and one other to be selected. The bags provided are made of corn starch, even if dog owners discard the bags they will decompose within weeks therefore alleviating the problem of faeces left hanging from trees. If the trial is successful there may be an option to extend the scheme district wide.

Cost of Service Provision

- 3.37 The main cost of running these campaigns has been officer time to put up posters and stencils, as well as monitoring and running events. Material costs have been minimal, the 'We're Watching You' posters were supplied by KBT at no cost and pavement stencils and chalk spray were approximately £80. The school dog fouling posters were replicated using durable material at a cost of £140.

Animal Welfare

- 3.38 The Council has published an Animal Welfare Charter to set out our policy in this area and this was last updated in February 2014. The Council supports the view that all animals have a right to life free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering.
- 3.39 The Charter recognises that animals are capable of feeling, capable of enjoying a state of well being and equally capable of suffering and therefore considers animals have the right to enjoy five basic freedoms:-

- Freedom from fear and distress
- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from pain, disease and injury
- Freedom from unnecessary constraint.
- Freedom from physical discomfort.

- 3.40 In recent years this Council has been successful in attracting National awards in respect of animal welfare. Rochford secured a Silver award in the community animal welfare footprints run by the RSPCA. Subsequently we were awarded Gold for Stray Dogs, Animal Welfare and Emergency planning by the RSPCA.

Cost of Service Provision

- 3.41 At present there is no dedicated resource directed at animal welfare and callers are generally referred to the RSPCA. Animal welfare issues are only enforced in respect of premises licensed for animal related activities, such as dog breeding, dog kennelling and pet shops.

4 POSSIBLE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

New statutory powers

- 4.1 Under provisions contained within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 all of our existing Dog Control Orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act will be repealed on 20 October 2017. The intention of this provision is to encourage local authorities and other partners to use the new anti-social behaviour powers available in respect of public spaces.

Public Spaces Protection Orders

- 4.2 The purpose of a Public Spaces Protection Order is to restrict persistent anti-social behaviour. These can be issued by Councils in a similar way to Dog Control Orders, to exclude dogs, require faeces to be picked up, require dogs to remain on leads, or restrict number of dogs walked by one person. The provision is non specific and can be used to tackle any form of anti-social behaviour that fulfils the following criteria:-

- have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and
- justifies the restrictions imposed:

- 4.3 Breach of the Order is a criminal offence; enforcement officers can issue a fixed penalty notice if appropriate. The local authority has discretion to set a fixed penalty of up to £100. There is a fine on conviction of up to £1000.

Community Protection Notice

- 4.4 Where the conduct of an individual is having a detrimental effect of a persistent or continuing nature on the quality of life of those in the locality and the conduct is unreasonable an authored officer is able to serve a Community Protection Notice.
- 4.5 Breach of a notice is a criminal offence, enforcement officers can issue a fixed penalty notice if appropriate. The local authority has discretion to set a fixed penalty of up to £100. There is a fine on conviction of up to £2500 for individuals, or £20,000 for businesses.

Opportunities from Redesign

- 4.6 Following implementation of the Redesign it is intended to place all of the resources dedicated to enforcement within the new Environmental Services Division. This provides an opportunity to skill up the Civil Enforcement Officers who currently deal with parking infringements with other officers to form a generic enforcement team.
- 4.7 It is considered that enforcement would be most effective immediately following a campaign. There may also be opportunities for deploying additional staff to work in this area, depending upon other priorities.

Joint Working opportunities

- 4.8 At present there are discussions with Southend BC over the merging of contracts for stray dogs in order to achieve improved value for money. Comparative costs obtained from neighbouring authorities indicated that there are unlikely to be any significant savings arising from this process.
- 4.9 There is also an opportunity for improved working arrangements with the Police, with the potential use of PCSOs and Social landlords.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There can be reputational risks associated with enforcement.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None arising from this report.
- 6.2 The contractor related costs are summarised as follows:-
- The emptying of dog bins is estimated at £13,859 for street scene and £10,000 for our open spaces.
 - The stray dogs contract costs £18,600 per annum; less approximately £2,000 which is re-covered in fees from owners.

- Out of hours drop off is free, essential medication is approximately £1,500 per year.

6.3 Officer time is committed to managing contractors, running promotional activities and occasional enforcement. The part-time post within the Open Spaces Team that had involvement with animal welfare is currently vacant.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to:-

- (1) Note the contents of the report.
- (2) Identify any issues on this topic for further consideration and discussion by the Committee.



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Background Papers:-

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

STRAY DOG NUMBERS FROM 1 April 2013 to 31st March 2014

LA	Collected		Returned Direct: Chip/Tag		Taken to Kennel		Fostered by Finder		Returned without Fee paid		Returned with Fee		Re-homed
		OOH		OOH		OOH		OOH		OOH		OOH	
Basildon	222	195	26		351		1		58		161		151
Braintree	191	46	129	0	91	N/R	0	N/R	215	N/R	N/R	N/R	55
Brentwood	89	N/S	0	N/S	89	N/S	0	N/S	0	N/S	26	N/S	61
Castle Point	133	N/S	N/R		N/R		N/R		N/R		77		N/R
Epping Forest	169	N/S	9	0	160	0	5	0	11	0	10	0	119
Harlow	143	N/S	36	N/S	103	N/S	3	N/S	0	N/S	36	N/S	66
Maldon	42	N/S	10	N/S	37	7	10	2	13	1	20	0	20
Rochford	63	N/S	9	N/S	54	N/S	0	N/S	0	N/S	33	N/S	18
Southend	253		N/R		135		0				135		72
Tendring	275	0	0	0	162	0	4	0	0	0	174	0	74
Uttlesford	36	23	46	20	34	23	0	1	46	20	15	15	28

N/R – not recorded

N/S – no service



APPENDIX 2

Essex Animal Welfare Forum Contacts and Cover for Stray Dogs December 2014



Authority	Contact No's for Strays	Cover details
Basildon	Mon – Fri; 9am – 5.30pm 01268 533333 Mon - Fri; 5.30pm – 10pm 01268 286622 Sat/Sun/Hols; 9am – 10pm 01268 286622	Mon – Fri Collection / Patrol LA Officer Sat/Sun/Hols & out of hours – collection only by contractor.
Braintree	01376 552525	Dog wardens collect 9-5 Mon - Fri Reception facilities, Mon, Tues, Wed, + Thurs 6:00 -23:00 Fri 06:00 – 03:00 Sunday.
Brentwood	01277 312504	Mon – Fri office hours only.
Chelmsford	Office hours – 01245 606606 OOH – 01245 606511	Office hours: Mon – Fri 08:45–16:00 collection service. 16:00 – 17:00 Office reception. OOH: Mon – Fri 17:00–23:00 reception point only. Sat/Sun/BHols: 09:00-23:00 rcptn point only.
Colchester	Office hours 01206 282581 OOH 01206 769779	Office hours – collection service & office reception. OOH – Mon - Fri reception service up to 20:00hrs. Weekends – 09:00-20:00 reception service.
Epping Forest	Mon – Fri: 9am – 4pm 01992 564077 No OOH service	Mon – Fri: 9am – 4pm (last collection 3pm) Animal Warden in house service & office reception. Weekday service only
Harlow	Collection Office hrs Mon to Fri 9am – 4.30pm - 01279 446111	Office hours only



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Authority	Contact No's for Strays	Cover details	
Havering	Monday – Friday: 9am - 5pm 01708 432777. Out of Hours: 01708 433999 (Call Centre)	24hrs, 7 days a week Telephone Call Centre. Details taken & passed to Dog Warden (Contractor) to contact finder and collect the dog from the premises. Will not collect from vets.	
Maldon	01621 854477 24/7	Mon – Fri In house collection (Street Scene) 8:30am – 5pm OOH – request that dogs taken to kennels.	
Rochford	Mon – Fri 8am – 5:30pm; 01702 318111 -“- 8am – 6pm. 01268 770402 OOH; 01268 527317	Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm – collection. OOH - reception centre via OOH call centre.	
Southend	Mon – Fri; 8:30am – 5:15pm - 01702 215005 OOH – 01702 215005 press no for emergency when prompted	24 hour; 7 days. Contractor in daytime. Reception point OOH, (local vet) via OOH call centre. Collected by Contractor next am.	
Tendring	Mon – Fri 8:45am – 5.15pm - 01255 686766 OOH – 01255 222022	Office Hours – Dog Warden Service (in house) OOH – Dog to be taken to Weeley Offices and met by OOH Officer, dog put into holding kennels until the dog warden can take the dog to the Kennels either same day or next am.	
Thurrock	Mon – Fri 8am – 5pm - 01375 652955 OOH – 01375 372468	24/7 contractor service	
Uttlesford	Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 4:30pm. Fri – 4pm 01799 510594 OOH local vet – 01799 522082	Animal warden collects contained dogs in office hours last collection 3.30pm. OOH reception point @ local vet. Collected next working day and taken to kennels.	

Examples of promotional activities

'Poo To Me' song to combat dog mess in Rochford

9 December 2014

A parody song and video urging owners to pick up their dogs' mess has been released.

"Poo To Me", a cover of You To Me Are Everything by The Real Thing, is the brainchild of Rochford District Council in Essex.

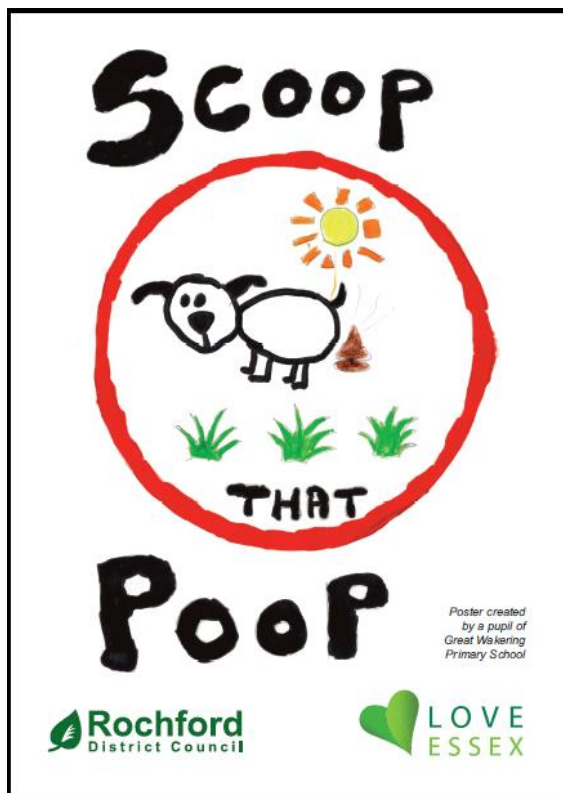
With dogs wearing "Scoop My Poop" neckerchiefs and the lyrics "To me it seems insanity when people put it in a tree", the video hopes to stamp out dog fouling for good.



We're Watching You November 2014



Dog Fouling School Poster Competition June 2014



Love Rochford 2013

