

Animal Welfare Charters

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The role of the RSPCA

- direct animal care
- campaigns
- education
- enforcement

What is an animal welfare charter?

- Statement of how the local authority intends to approach its statutory duties
- Policy document demonstrating the Council's stance on various issues
- Guidance for staff, local businesses and members of the public

How is this achieved?

- Clear links with relevant council documents/policies, e.g. Enforcement Concordat, Agenda 21, best value, promotion of community well-being, health strategies
- Achievable, measurable outcomes
- Outcome-led rather than service-led
- Backed up by detailed project plans or work procedures

Scope

- Specific statutory powers
 - Enforcement of animal welfare legislation
 - provision of dog warden service
 - farm animal welfare
- Other powers
 - community health and well-being
 - management of housing stock and open spaces
 - protection of the environment

Example

- The Council believes that responsible pet ownership plays a vital role in promoting high standards of animal welfare and protecting and enhancing the local environment. Pet ownership also plays a important role in encouraging health and social well-being. The Council will therefore:
 - promote microchipping and neutering of dogs, cats and other suitable companion animals via a regular education campaign carried out by the local authority dog/animal warden.

- Provide targeted subsidised microchipping and neutering schemes for dogs and cats. This will be based on an annual assessment provided by the animal warden service and will be carried out in partnership with local animal welfare charities.

- Proactive responsible pet ownership policies for housing stock
- proactive and co-operative enforcement of licenced businesses and individuals
(Enforcement Concordat)
- support for small businesses - links with economic development strategies, training, local business initiatives etc

Where to start and questions to answer

- Quick audit (brainstorm!) of all possible council involvement in animal related issues
- Which are covered by specific animal-related legislation and which are covered by other legislation?
- What is the Council's view on the key issues? Why does the Council want or need a Charter?

- Legislative constraints/opportunities
- Are there existing policies/strategies in place? Are these acceptable or a good basis to build on? Where are the gaps?

Benefits

- Living document which provides guidance to staff, Members, the local community and local businesses - avoidance of doubt
- Draws together all the animal related issues that a local authority might be confronted with
- Demonstrates clear leadership on an issue of concern to local people