

REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES COMMITTEE (25TH JUNE 2007)

REPORT ON: REPLACEMENT OF BROWN STREET KENNELS

REPORT BY: HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & TRADING STANDARDS

REPORT NO: 253-2007

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise on the impact on dog control and related matters following the emergency closure and demolition of Brown Street Kennels.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that a new kennels facility be constructed on the footprint of the existing kennels in Brown Street.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the City Architectural Services Officer be authorised to carry out design work and negotiate an agreed maximum price with a suitable contractor to be submitted to a future committee for approval.
- 2.3 It is recommended that Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department be given a remit to investigate the possibility of eventually passing over the kennels operation to an appropriate animal charity.
- 2.4 It is recommended that discussions take place to consider the future possibility of sharing stray dog kennel accommodation with neighbouring local authorities.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As part of a planned refurbishment, the City Engineer initially recommended certain structural repairs. However, on further investigation the structural condition was discovered to be very dangerous, to the extent that he would not allow remedial works to be carried out, and immediately closed down the building.

The cost of demolition of the kennels will be met from the 2007/08 Economic Development Department capital budget.

The estimated cost of the construction of a new facility is £250,000, inclusive of professional fees.

It is anticipated that the construction of the new facility would be carried out as a Partnering Contract in order to maximise both time and monies available.

Expenditure of £87,000 can be met from the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Department's Capital Budget in 2007/08 leaving a balance of £163,000 to be funded. The annual running cost of the new facility is estimated to be £94,323 per annum (including loan charges). The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Department's existing 2007/08 Revenue Budget for the kennels is £93,096

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The building specification and construction will maximise recycled and sustainable materials and minimise waste. The building footprint and internal layout enables an improved operational use and together with the incorporation of new services and controls will provide for improved energy efficiencies and reduced running costs.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Brown Street Kennels was established following the relocation of the local authority dog pound to Brown Street during the 1970s. Since then the kennels has been at the centre of the Council's successful dog control policies.
- 6.2 In 1981 the Environmental Health Department of Dundee District Council assumed control of the kennels along with responsibility for tackling a stray dog problem which had beset the city. The following year 2,400 dogs were brought to Brown Street Kennels, over 1,800 of which had been rounded up as strays by newly appointed dog wardens.
- 6.3 The situation which saw a peak of 996 dogs destroyed in 1988 was unacceptable and the following year the Environmental Health Department embarked on a spaying/neutering campaign which promoted responsible dog ownership, particularly in the areas of the city with the greatest population density.
- 6.4 Brown Street Kennels was the key to the initiatives which proved so successful that by 2006 a greatly reduced number of 536 dogs were brought to the kennels, only 347 of which were strays. The others had been brought to the kennels voluntarily for responsible re-homing, usually following a change of family circumstances.
- 6.5 The number of strays collected by Animal Control Officers (formerly dog wardens) reduced by 89% but the most significant statistic is that the Council's policies had resulted in the number of dogs having to be destroyed plummeting to a low of 26 in 2006, a reduction of over 97% from the 1988 peak.

7.0 DANGEROUS DOG PROVISION

- 7.1 Following the introduction of dangerous dog legislation in 1989 and 1991, certain kennels in Brown Street were adapted to provide secure accommodation for those dogs seized and classed as dangerous under the new legislation.
- 7.2 Consequently the Council was able to tackle this issue in a positive fashion and the facility is still used regularly by the Police and Procurator Fiscal service to hold dogs pending the outcome of court cases.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE KENNEL ACCOMMODATION

8.1 The Council is bound by statute to make provision for stray dogs. This is a major issue for Dundee as there are no boarding kennels within the city's boundaries.

8.2 Eight boarding kennels in neighbouring Angus and Perth & Kinross and the SSPCA facility at Petterden were identified as possible alternative accommodation for Dundee's strays.

For a variety of reasons these kennels were unable to provide Dundee with a facility.

8.3 The facility used by Angus Council does not have the capacity to accommodate Dundee's strays.

8.4 The facility used by Perth & Kinross Council is a 72 mile round trip and, even allowing for available accommodation, this is considered unfeasible.

8.5 Further discussions with a private kennel facility in Angus Council resulted in ten kennels being made available on a short term basis by pre-booking to ensure accommodation for Dundee's strays. This was the arrangement which had been put into place as a contingency for the kennels closing for refurbishment. This arrangement was brought forward at short notice when the kennels building was deemed in a dangerous condition.

8.6 Although providing basic accommodation at present, the use of these kennels has highlighted certain issues.

- Limited opening times.
- No viewing provision.
- No administration/cash handling facility.
- Resource intensive for EHTS.
- Basically a one person operation, therefore vulnerable from a continuity aspect.
- Access issues for Tayside Police.

8.7 The Dogs Trust (formerly National Canine Defence League) was approached with a view to providing a stray dog facility within Dundee but, despite being sympathetic to the Council's plight, was unable to provide support.

9.0 THE SITUATION IN OTHER SCOTTISH AUTHORITIES.

9.1 Further investigation was carried out to look at the methods adopted by a number of other Scottish Local Authorities to address the issue of looking after stray dogs.

9.2 It was clear from enquiries that the methods used varied greatly from authority to authority. Consequently, gathering statistical information for comparative purposes was difficult.

9.3 The basis of most authorities' provision is historical and is rooted in the circumstances which prevailed at the time dog wardens were introduced, circa 1980. Dundee City Council finds itself with the legacy of the situation which existed at that time. Dundee District Council was probably unique in Scotland in

that it had, for some years prior to the introduction of dog wardens, operated stray dog kennels on behalf of the police. This situation allowed the local authority in Dundee to provide accommodation for the increased number of stray dogs. It also gave the Council an opportunity to take a firm grip of the stray dog problem and the policies introduced at that time resulted in major improvements to the local environment which had for some years blighted perimeter estates.

- 9.4 Other authorities, almost without exception, relied upon long established charity funded private facilities and this has continued through a host of different arrangements to this day.

10.0 SUPPORT FROM CHARITIES

- 10.1 In an attempt to seek an arrangement with an appropriate dog help charity, the service providers for both Angus Council (Arbroath) and Perth and Kinross Council (Fortevidot) were contacted but, although sympathetic, neither would entertain an arrangement to take stray and unwanted dogs from Dundee.

- 10.2 If stray dogs' fate was that they were put down immediately after the statutory 7-day period it is clear from the reaction to the closure of Brown Street Kennels that the public attitude would be one of revulsion and would reflect badly on the city council. Nevertheless such a situation might prompt the establishment of a local charity to look after stray dogs. Although desirable, the creation of such a facility within the city would only be cost effective to the local authority if it was totally "stand alone" with the council's and the police's only involvement being the depositing of stray and unwanted dogs at the charity's premises 24/7 for a fixed annual fee.

- 10.3 There are obvious drawbacks to a charity providing such an arrangement:

- (i) capital investment to ensure the premises would be in compliance with animal boarding legislation;
- (ii) a suitable location to reduce nuisance concerns;
- (iii) significant short term cost to the council until such facility was created.
- (iv) reliance on robust fund raising to ensure annual running costs are met.
- (v) any loss of business continuity or downturn in fundraising would inevitably result in the council being asked to step in and provide support in order to maintain its statutory requirements.

11.0 STAFFING ISSUES

- 11.1 Brown Street Kennels employs three full-time members of staff and one part-time member of staff.

12.0 LONG TERM IMPACT OF HAVING NO LOCAL KENNELS PROVISION

- The number of stray dogs will inevitably increase;
- No opportunity for public to hand dogs to kennels for rehoming;
- Reduction in opportunity to control spaying and neutering;
- Increased number of unwanted litters;
- Increase in dog diseases such as parvo virus because of reduction in vaccination opportunities. The local veterinarians are of the opinion that the

- An increase in fouling complaints through more stray dogs;
- Increase in number of dogs requiring to be destroyed with the inevitable outcry from animal activist groups;
- No out of hours facility for Tayside Police (Central Division);
- Increased carbon footprint through significantly more vehicle movements;
- Gradual erosion of improved environmental ambience enjoyed locally and developed through invoking successful dog related policies in recent years;
- Lack of city council provision for dangerous dogs.

13.1 Three options were initially considered for appraisal:

Option 2- Construction of new kennels on the existing site at a cost of £250,000, including demolition of the existing buildings.

Revenue costs of using private kennel facilities projected annual cost (based on level of existing expenditure estimated for 2007/08)

Staffing Costs	£36,472
Minimum kennelling charge at private kennels (10 x 52 weeks @ £875 per week	£45,500
Estimated increased no. of kennels as required (50%)	£22,750
Vet charges	£5,000
Disposal charges	£400
Extra fuel and vehicle costs	£2,950
Protective clothing	<u>£1,000</u>
	£114,072

Tayside Police	£5,000
Dog sales and Returned to Owner (RTO) fees	£10,000
	£15,000

Estimated net cost of private kennel accommodation	£99,072
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Revenue costs of operating new facility built on existing Brown Street footprint.

Staffing costs	£67,574
Other costs (utilities, food, vet fees, laundry, rates, phones, cleaning etc.	£35,481
	£103,055

<u>Income</u>	
Police	£5,000
Fines	£1,200
Donations	£500
Sales/RTO	<u>£20,000</u>
	<u>£26,700</u>

Loan charges £17,968

Estimated net cost of City Council operated kennel facility £94,323

13.4 The revenue expenditure and income for each option was reviewed.

13.5 The capital and revenue costs of each option were combined to produce cash flows for each year of the project and these were subjected to a Net Present Value (NPV) calculation, the purpose of which is to state future cash flows at today's value. The results were as follows:-

Option 1 - £2,564,986

Option 2 - £2,310,104

13.6 In purely financial terms, the option with the lowest net present cost would be recommended for approval. However, there are certain non-monetary costs and benefits that should be considered as well as the ability of each option to meet the objectives of the project. This is reflected in the following Impact Table.

	Option 1	Option 2
	Private Kennels	New Kennels
Objective:	Y	Y
Satisfy Statutory Requirements	N	Y
Provides Out of Hours Service	N	Y

13.7 After considering all of the relevant factors, option 2 is the option that best meets the objectives of the project and is recommended for approval.

14.0 CONSULTATIONS

14.1 The Chief Executive
Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)
Depute Chief Executive (Finance)
Director of Economic Development
City Architectural Services Officer

15.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None

Albert Oswald

Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards

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