

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.0	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being
2.0	Date:	7 November 2011
3.0	Title:	Home Boarding Licence Conditions
4.0	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5.0 Summary

The Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 requires any person who keeps a boarding establishment for dogs to be licensed by the local authority – this includes people who look after other people’s dogs on a commercial basis within their own home.

This report proposes a set of licence conditions to be attached to all licences for the home boarding of dogs.

6. Recommendations

- **That Cabinet Member adopts the Licence Conditions for the Home Boarding Establishment for Dogs set out in Annex I which will be applied to all licences granted.**

7.0 Proposals and Details

The Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 requires any person who keeps a boarding establishment for dogs and / or cats to be licensed by the local authority. This law also applies to people who look after other people's dogs within their own home. Home boarding for dogs is the alternative to boarding dogs in kennels and is becoming more popular in recent years.

Licences that are issued for the boarding of dogs have a series of conditions attached to them. These conditions are based a model set published by the Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) in 1996. The aim of the licence conditions is to ensure high standards of animal care, health and safety and precautions against disease, and promote a consistent approach with regard to their licensing function.

The current licence conditions were adopted in Rotherham by the Environmental Health Committee on 28th March 1996 (minute number 3648).

Condition 3.2 of the licence conditions for home boarding states that: "Only dogs from the same household may be boarded at any one time. Dogs must not be boarded with any cat, unless they normally live together in the same household."

The condition is intended to protect the safety of the dogs and to protect the licensee from any claim from a dog attack, injury, etc. As dogs in home boarding situations have the freedom to move around, there are risks that are not present in boarding kennels. If dogs that are strangers to each other are left unattended, there is the potential for one dog to turn on another.

As home boarding has become more and more popular, an increasing number of Councils have chosen to relax condition 3.2 - provided the licensee is able to meet a number of additional requirements / licence conditions. This would allow dogs from more than one household to be boarded at the same time. Additional requirements include:

- Specific written consent of each household showing confirmation that they are content for their dogs to be boarded with others.
- A mandatory, trial (documented) familiarisation session for all dogs prior to stay.
- Separation of dogs from different households in secure areas when left unattended.
- Separate feeding of dogs to minimise the likelihood of dispute and aggression.

The overall number of dogs to be boarded and the number of dogs from different households to be boarded will be dependent on the size of the premises and outside areas. When determining the number of dogs allowed to be boarded consideration is also given to whether the premises are constructed to allow:

- Adequate space for dogs.

- Sufficient space available to be able to keep dogs separately if required.
- The separation of dogs showing signs of disease.

Several other parameters are considered such as disease control and spread of infection etc.

With this in mind, LACORS have published a further set of model conditions. These allow the mixing of dogs but require the consent of the owners and ensure trial sessions are undertaken prior to accepting the dogs. They also put in place other measures to protect the dogs.

This report proposes that these conditions (detailed in full in Annex I) be adopted in Rotherham. The conditions, if adopted, would be applied to every licence to keep Home Boarding Establishments for dogs.

8.0 Finance

This is contained within the existing budget. The licence fee for 2011/12 for Home Boarders was set at £155 and £222 for kennels and catteries per application. It is envisaged there will only be a one or two new applications each year.

9.0 Risks and Uncertainties

A set of model conditions enables officers to ensure each establishment is treated fairly and consistently. The conditions have been written to protect the welfare and conditions of premises in which the dogs are kept. If an applicant considers they have not been treated fairly they can appeal to the courts and the Authority could be involved in unnecessary appeals. If adequate conditions are not applied to the licence a dog boarder could try and claim compensation for not affording their dog suitable protection.

10.0 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Strategic Objective 5 states that 'We will ensure that Citizens are satisfied with their community as a place to live. The proposal of setting conditions to be applied to Home Boarding Establishments for dogs contributes to part of the review of the functions undertaken by Regulatory Services.

11.0 Background Papers and Consultation

[Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963](#)
[CIEH Model Licence Conditions for Dogs](#)
[Annex I](#)

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