

London Borough of Lambeth

Animal Welfare Charter

Statement of Intent

1.0 This charter has been adopted by the London Borough of Lambeth to reflect the concerns of local people who care about animal welfare and any cruel treatment, abuse or neglect of animals.

1.1 The Council supports the view that all animals have a right to life free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering.

1.2 The Council recognises that animals are capable of feeling, capable of enjoying a state of wellbeing and equally capable of suffering. Therefore, the Council considers that the owners and keepers are responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of their animals are met.

These include the need:

- For a suitable environment (place to live)
- For a suitable diet
- To exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- To have appropriate company (be housed with, or apart from, other animals)
- To be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease

1.3 This charter does not cover every aspect of animal welfare, but it does aim to detail those areas the Council considers important and where it feels it can have some influence as a responsible and representative public body.

1.4 The Council supports all current animal welfare legislation.

1.5 The Council expects animal owners to respect the rights of other people, to clear up after their dogs, to observe restrictions such as dog free areas and prevent nuisance, alarm or damage to property or the environment generally.

1.6 The animal welfare charter will be reviewed regularly and if necessary revised from time to time to reflect changes in legislation and to address the needs of the local community.

Statutory Duties

2.0 Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a sole statutory responsibility for stray dogs. This means, as a minimum, providing a dog wardening service between Monday - Friday 8am – 4 pm and an out-of-hours reception service where practicable.

2.1 The Council will ensure that all strays found in the borough are treated humanely and are not subjected to any further pain or suffering, including stress.

2.3 The Council will have a clear policy for the treatment of injured or sick stray dogs found both during and outside of office hours.

2.4 All officers charged with dog wardening duties will be trained in basic dog handling and behaviour by a recognised organisation.

2.5 All advice and information on stray dog services in the borough will be both consistent and widely available.

2.6 All dogs will be thoroughly checked for identification and if possible, returned to their owner. Otherwise, if unclaimed after 7 days, strays will be transferred to reputable rescue centres, rehomed directly via the Animal Welfare Department or destroyed where necessary.

2.7 Advice and information on responsible dog ownership will be provided to owners of all dogs that are directly returned to the owner by the Council.

2.8 The Council also has a statutory duty to licence animal establishments within the Borough, these being:

- Pets Shops
- Dog Breeding Establishments
- Dog and Cat Boarding Establishments (including Home Boarding and Daycare)
- Riding Establishments
- Owners of Dangerous Wild Animals
- Owners of Primates
- Zoos
- Performing Animals

2.9 The Council will continue to work in partnership with City of London Corporation to ensure that all licensed animal establishments comply with the published guidance and model licence conditions. Regular inspections will be undertaken when licences are granted or renewed and unannounced visits made to ensure that the licence conditions are being adhered to and that animal welfare needs are met, as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 "Duty of care" (Section 9).

Council Policies

Domestic and Captive Animals

Responsible Pet Ownership

3.0 The Council strongly advises that anyone thinking of getting a pet should have good knowledge and / or take professional advice on the care of such animals before acquiring them. It is a licence condition of pet shops within the Council that pet care leaflets or other similar written instructions must be made available to customers free of charge before purchase and that proper advice on the care of the animal must be given. Where appropriate the pet should be identified with its owner e.g. microchipping. It is a legal requirement that all dogs wear a collar and tag with identifying name and address when out in a public area. Consideration should be given to neutering the animal to prevent unwanted pregnancies. There should be regular health checks, including vaccinations where required. Animal waste should be safely and hygienically disposed of. Pet owners are encouraged to control their animals properly to avoid the possibility of them causing annoyance or distress to members of the public or other animals.

Dogs

3.1 The Council liaises with other organisations to promote responsible dog ownership by:

- Arranging free of charge dog micro-chipping events, where properly trained officers are available. Microchipping is actively encouraged and promoted by the Council as it ensures quick return of the animal to its owner.
- Promoting low-cost neutering in conjunction with local veterinary practices and the RSPCA.
- Developing the Borough Action for Responsible K9's (BARK) project; a multi agency group which proactively encourages responsible dog ownership and tackles irresponsible dog owners.
- Promoting animal welfare by distributing animal welfare leaflets from Council reception areas and placing advice on the Council website, including information on statutory services such as stray dogs and licensing of animal establishments.

Dangerous Dogs

3.2 An increasing number of potentially dangerous dogs are kept illegally and in some cases are mistreated. The Council is working closely with The Metropolitan Police Service, Safer Neighbourhoods Team and the police Status Dogs Unit and will provide support to the investigation of incidents involving dangerous dogs used as "status symbols". The Council discourages anti-social behaviour linked to dogs including;

- Using dogs to intimidate others
- Using dogs as weapons
- Allowing dogs to attack other dogs
- Illegal dog fighting
- Damage to public property including trees

3.3 The Council believes that any dog, no matter what breed, can be dangerous if it is in the wrong hands. Any dog is regarded as being dangerously out of control if:

- It injures a person

Or

- It behaves in such a way that it worries a person and makes them think that it will injure them.

To allow a dog to be dangerously out of control is an offence under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Banned Dogs

3.4 In the UK, under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 Section 1, it is illegal to own a banned type of dogs (if it is not registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs Register). These five banned types of dogs are;

- Pit Bull Terrier type (other names include American Pit Bull Terrier, American Pit Bull, American Staffordshire Terriers, Irish Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Irish Blue or Red Nose).
- XL Bully type
- Dogo Argentino type (other names include Argentinean Mastiff)
- Japanese Tosa type (other names include Tosa Inu and Tosa Fighting Dog)
- Fila Brasileiro type (other names include Brazilian Mastiff)

Any dog that falls into the category of being a Pit Bull Terrier Type may be seized and the owner prosecuted.

Puppy Farming

3.5 The Council opposes puppy farming and supports the RSPCA in recommending that prospective dog owners purchase only puppies that are seen with their mothers. The Council would also encourage residents to consider re-homing a rescue dog rather than a puppy, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted dogs.

Cats

3.6 The Council encourages residents to be responsible cat owners and supports local animal welfare organisations in their efforts to educate and assist cat owners. Under The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, all cats over 20 weeks old in England must be microchipped and registered on a compliant database with the owners up-to-date contact details.

Giving Animals as prizes

3.7 It is Council policy that the conditions for hiring or letting any of the Councils' facilities – premises or land – shall include a clause specifically banning the provision of live creatures, animals or fish, as prizes. The Council opposes the giving of animals as prizes because:

- No preparation of animal housing, feeding or how the animal should be kept is available
- The prize winner may have little knowledge about the pet's husbandry requirements in question or how to be a responsible owner
- The prize may be accepted without proper consideration or thought to the animal in question

3.8 The Council encourages other private premises or landowners to follow this lead. It is against the law for unaccompanied under 16 year olds to be given animals as prizes under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Licensing officers will ensure that licensees are aware of their duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Horse, Pony and Donkey Rides

3.9 Anyone offering pony rides on Council land should be licensed under the Riding Establishments Act 1964 and 1970 and must meet strict conditions as stipulated by the Council. The Council encourages other landowners to apply similar strict conditions.

Animal Hoarding

3.10 An increasing number of cases are coming to light nationally where individuals, including some private animal sanctuaries, keep many animals in unsuitable conditions. Anyone keeping large numbers of animals needs to consider carefully whether they have adequate suitable facilities and sufficient knowledge and resources to care properly for all of the animals. Professional advice should be sought. People are encouraged to report any suspected instances of animal hoarding to the Council or the RSPCA.

Pets in Council Accommodation

3.11 The Council allows tenants to have pets in permanent Council accommodation, providing that written permission is granted from the housing office. The Council will promote and actively encourage responsible pet ownership to such tenants. If a tenant owns a pet animal when they need to move into temporary accommodation, the Council will attempt to place them with a housing provider that allows pets in their properties. However, tenants who are currently in temporary accommodation shall not acquire a pet (or replace one that has died) as this may prevent them from moving to permanent accommodation, as some landlords and housing associations do not allow pets in their properties.

3.12 The Council will work with other social housing providers to try to develop and harmonise lettings policies, including tenancy agreements that are enforceable and enforced regarding pets. The aim of this is to address issues of hoarding, indiscriminate breeding and selling of animals, and other anti-social and irresponsible ownership issues, while at the same time protecting the responsible pet owning majority.

Pets in Sheltered Housing Schemes

3.13 Scheme managers and tenants of communal sheltered accommodation are not allowed to keep pets without prior written approval by the Council. Such approval will be at the discretion of the Council and each application will be considered on its individual merits, having regard in particular to the suitability of the accommodation, the nature and size of the pet and the interests of any other tenants.

Pet Sitting Services

3.14 The Council encourages responsible pet ownership and recommends that pet owners use only licensed boarding establishments or, if using pet sitting services, dog sitters should be licensed under the The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018. Cat sitting is not recommended.

Horses

3.15 The Council supports the EU Horse Passport Registration in microchipping of all foals born after 1st July 2009 and all other horses applying for first passport. The Council also supports EU Registration in the requirement that all horses and ponies (and other forms of Equidae) need to have a passport identifying the animal. If the horse is not accompanied by a valid passport it is an offence for an owner to:

- move a horse to the premises of a new keeper
- use a horse for the purposes of competitions
- present for slaughter for human consumption
- use a horse for breeding purposes

- export a horse
- sell a horse

3.16 The Council supports the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and discourages tethering of horses and ponies as a method of keeping equines on a permanent basis when there is no regular daily exercise, in an open environment, on any land owned or managed by the Council. If tethering is temporary or regular daily exercise is provided then the Code of Practice for tethering horses and ponies should be followed. In line with the RSPCA, the Council does not oppose an animal being tethered for short periods, e.g. for grooming or having a short break in a journey or working period.

Dangerous Wild Animals

4.0 The Council recommends that if people are selling or keeping animals listed on the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and other dangerous and /or exotic animals, they should have specialist knowledge and/or seek professional advice on the care of these animals. Some of these animals can grow very large, live for a long time and can be a threat to life. The Council encourages the government to increase the number of animals listed on the schedule of Dangerous Wild Animals and supports the rigorous enforcement of current legislation.

Wildlife

5.0 The Council supports measures to conserve wildlife and in particular draws attention to the following:

The control of animals released into the wild

5.1 The Council is concerned at the potential threat to British wildlife, pets and people by the release of non-native animals into the wild. Expert advice should always be sought.

Traps and Snares

5.2 The Council is generally opposed to the use of traps and snares and these are not permitted to be used on council owned parks and open spaces. Where there is no alternative the Council will do all it can to reduce the suffering of the target species and avoid the capture of non-target species. The Council encourages the government to strengthen legislation in this regard.

Bats

5.3 The Council supports legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Squirrels

5.4 Where squirrels are causing damage to property they should be poisoned or trapped. If trapped they should not be released but should be humanely destroyed. Expert advice should be sought.

Bees

5.5 Bees perform a vital function in pollination and should not be destroyed except in very exceptional circumstances. The Council's Pest Control Service will provide advice and wherever possible will arrange for bees to be removed by a beekeeper rather than destroyed. Anyone wishing to keep bees should contact the Bee Keepers Association for advice.

Wasps

5.6 Wasps nest are often sited where they cause nuisance and present a significant risk if disturbed or aggravated. The Council accepts that wasps nests will often need to be destroyed but advises that professional advice should always be sought.

Angling

5.7 The Council recommends that anglers follow the code of practice based on the recommendations of the Medway report. The key recommendations being:

1. The use of double and treble hooks should be kept to a minimum. These should be avoided entirely when the intention is to return the catch alive to the water.
2. Fish intended for food should be killed humanely.
3. Unhooking a fish humanely and safely is one of the most important skills for an angler to learn. All anglers should be equipped with disgorgers and unhooking mats and be properly trained in their use.
4. Employment of the pike-gag should take fully into account the size of the fish for which it is used.
5. Barbless hooks should be favoured.
6. Holding periods in keep-nets should be as brief as possible.

5.8 The Council considers it essential that fishing tackle is safely disposed of to prevent injury to both domestic and wild animals and that all fish, regardless of size, shall be returned to the water as quickly as possible.

5.9 All anglers are encouraged to ensure that they comply with national and regional byelaws relating to angling. Details of these byelaws can be found by visiting the Environment Agency Website.

5.10 The Environment Agency has produced a useful free leaflet 'Golden Rules – Angling and Wildlife' which can be obtained by contacting 08459 333 111. Alternatively pages from this leaflet can be viewed on the Environment Agency Website.

Pest Control

6.0 The Council promotes and supports only the use of safe and humane methods of pest control.

6.1 The Council encourages householders to seek professional advice on pest control, rather than over the counter preparations so as to prevent harm to non-target species, humans and the environment. It provides a chargeable rat control service to householders to ensure that a professional and safe treatment is readily available.

6.2 The Council discourages the use of sticky board glue traps for controlling rodents as they can cause pain and suffering to both those animals and other animals e.g. kittens if they get caught on them.

Pigeons

7.0 Overpopulations of feral pigeons in built up areas can cause health and safety problems.

The Council discourages the feeding of feral pigeons as it:

1. **Affects their health.** The food that pigeons receive from people may lack nutrients which are essential for the bird's wellbeing.
2. **Attracts vermin and is a risk to human health.** Leftover food attracts mice and rats. Pigeons carry a number of potentially infectious diseases that can be passed onto humans. The presence of their droppings, especially when wet, can cause accidents.
3. **Damages buildings.** Not only are pigeon droppings unsightly but their acid content also causes long term damage to buildings. Their droppings and feathers block gutters and pipes causing water damage.
4. **Makes them dependent on people for food.** Pigeons are wild birds and they are perfectly capable of feeding themselves.
5. **Deprives other birds of food.** Smaller birds can be frightened away by pigeons. Also, feral pigeons carry viruses that can be spread to other birds.

7.1 The Council encourages the safe and hygienic disposal of all waste, especially fast-food waste products so as not to provide a source of food for pigeons, foxes or vermin.

7.2 Where the pigeon population must be controlled, only humane methods will be used.

Foxes

8.0 The Council does not control the population of foxes and discourages the killing of foxes. Advice and information about foxes is available on the Council's website and leaflets are also available.

Planning

9.0 Through the delivery of the planning process, the Council is committed to using the mechanism in the planning system to ensure that animals, plants and their habitats are afforded the appropriate level of protection in accordance with their protected status.

Parks / Open Spaces

10.0 The Council makes minimum use of pesticides in all Council controlled public open spaces and encourages the introduction of wildlife and fauna into these areas by sympathetic management and the display of notices explaining this type of management to visitors. Weed control is by approved methods only. The expansion of such areas within the Council is an ongoing project.

Pesticides

11.0 The Council encourages householders to use only authorised pesticides that will do no harm to the flora and fauna. Members of the public should check for an up-to-date list of authorised pesticides before using them.

11.1 The Council is fully opposed to the use of pesticides that fall within the group of pesticides classed as Organochlorines; the use of these will not be permitted in any council owned property because of their potential carcinogenic effects.

Litter

12.0 Litter is not only unsightly, but much of it, such as tin cans and plastic bags can cause harm to both domestic and wild animals, therefore, the Council expects that all litter is disposed of safely in the facilities that it provides for this purpose throughout the Council.

Guns

13.0 The Council does not permit guns on any Council owned public open space, woodlands, parks or country parks.

Experiments on Living Animals

14.0 The Council advocates methods of research that do not involve animals. The Council also recognises that it is irresponsible and not in the interests of the animal for laboratory animals to be released into the wild where they may not be able to fend for themselves.

Higher Welfare Farming

15.0 The Council regrets the use of intensive farming methods and would seek that a higher welfare approach to farming be adopted and requests that Members of Parliament support any legislation that will improve animal welfare conditions. The Council encourages consumers to check food labelling very carefully and to seek assistance from store managers if they are unsure of their meaning in an effort to encourage a more ethical approach to farming.

Transport of Food Animals

16.0 The Council believes that the live export of food animals is not necessary and that the slaughter of animals should take place as close to where they are reared as possible.

16.1 The Council supports the role of Trading Standards in enforcing roadside checks of livestock in transit to ensure compliance with legislation designed to protect animal welfare.

16.2 The Council supports Police action with regards to the enforcing of speed restrictions and the condition of vehicles transporting live animals and requests that enforcement be more rigorously applied.

Animal Cruelty

17.0 Agencies dealing with children or vulnerable adults, who have suffered physical and/or mental abuse, recognise that there is a link between animal and 'people' cruelty. Indeed, a protocol exists between social services staff and the RSPCA in some local authority areas, whereby there is an exchange of information. The Council will consider adopting such a protocol.

17.1 The Council supports that every effort should be made to prevent animal cruelty wherever it might arise.

17.2 The Council encourages the Government to support all research by other agencies on the link between animal/child and vulnerable adult abuse in an effort to reduce both animal cruelty and serious crime.

17.3 The Animal Welfare Act 2006 stipulates that owners and keepers of animals are responsible for ensuring that the welfare needs of the animals are met.

Council Purchasing/Education

• Meals

18.0 It is the personal choice of a person to eat meat or not. The Council will aim to use higher welfare produce at all Council run functions or where it has an influence. Particular attention will be paid to labelling to ensure that, for example, Halal meat is

clearly identified. In addition to this, at least one vegetarian alternative will appear on all menus and vegan food will be made available on request.

- **Fireworks**

18.1 Many animals are frightened by fireworks. The Council supports the introduction and enforcement of legislation such as the Licensing of shops selling fireworks and the limit of hours that fireworks are permitted to be used.

The council supports and promotes organised public firework displays.

- **Publicity**

18.2 The Council will regularly update the information it provides to promote animal welfare by maintaining pages on the Council's Website.

Specific Policies

Blood Sports

19.0 It is Council Policy that hunting is not allowed on Council owned land.

Circuses, Performances, Exhibitions and Displays of Animals

20.0 Having regard to the Council's premises and land, either owned or managed, it is unlikely that they would be suitable for circuses, performances, exhibitions or displays of animals. However, it is Council policy that all applications to hold circuses, performances, exhibitions or displays of animals on any Council land or premises will be considered individually and the decision to grant or refuse such applications will be based on a wide range of considerations, including animal welfare. When considering the application on Council owned or maintained land, the following will be taken into account:

- The type of animals used, i.e. domestic animals or wild species
- Whether the five welfare needs have been observed during the animal's life