

**Portfolio Holder decision – Portfolio holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder – 5 September 2025**

**Animal Welfare Licensing Policy**

Purpose	Portfolio Holder Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Animal Welfare Licensing Policy sets out how the Council carries out its functions under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.</p> <p>The policy was reviewed and revised as part of an audit of the animal welfare service and includes clarification of the arrangements to be taken to manage unannounced visits within the term of a licence.</p> <p>Unannounced visits will be determined by the officer and based on the risk and compliance history of the business.</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>That the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy (attached at Appendix 1) is approved and adopted by the Community, Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder.</b>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	The Animal Welfare Licensing Policy sets out the Council’s approach to the enforcement of animal welfare licensing legislation and requires approval following amendments made to the Policy.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole – Community, Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director of Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Joanne McClay            Environment and Regulation Service Manager            023 8028 5325  <a href="mailto:Joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk">Joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p>

	Ben Stockley Food and Safety Manager <a href="mailto:Ben.stockley@nfdc.gov.uk">Ben.stockley@nfdc.gov.uk</a>
--	---

## **Introduction**

1. The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force in October 2018. The Regulations update and replace several pieces of legislation which apply to establishments where animals are sold, bred, boarded or hired out.
2. The Council's responsibilities under animal welfare legislation are discharged via licences issued for various activities, and through the conditions applied to each individual licence.
3. The purpose of this report is to seek approval and adoption of a revised Animal Welfare Licensing Policy by Portfolio Holder decision with a revision to section 15.5, following an internal audit of the animal welfare service.

## **Background**

4. The Policy (Appendix 1) sets out the general principles that the Council will follow in relation to the enforcement of animal welfare legislation and describes the types of animal licensing matters that are likely to occur and how the Council will deal with them.
5. The policy covers licensable activities as set out in the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018, the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.
6. The licensable activities under the legislation and the number of licences currently issued by the Council, are as follows:
  - Sale of animals as pets - 10
  - Hiring of horses - 8
  - Commercial boarding of dogs and cats - 17
  - Breeding of dogs - 13
  - Home boarding of dogs - 66
  - Animals for exhibitions – 18
  - Zoo Licenses – 3

## **The Animal Welfare Licensing Policy**

7. The policy covers suitability of applicants, the application process, the determination of standards and star ratings, refusal of

applications, inspections and visits, licence fees and the powers of inspectors.

8. It was developed in line with legislation, best practice and statutory guidance and aims to aid applicants, Licence holders and decision makers in the understanding of the licensing requirements under the relevant legislation.
9. Unlike other licensing regimes, there is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to set a policy in relation to animal welfare licensing, however, the Council consider it best practice to demonstrate transparency, accountability and consistency in its approach to the regulation and enforcement of this legislation.

### **Revision to the Policy**

10. The policy has been reviewed and updated as part of an audit of the animal welfare service by Southern Internal Audit Partnership.
11. All licenced premises are subject to an unannounced visit during the term of the licence and section 15.5 of the policy has been updated to clarify that the decision to carry out unannounced visits are determined in order of risk, compliance history and the professional judgement of the officer.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

12. Theme: Prosperity
13. Corporate plan objective: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow.
14. Service objective: Implementation of the Environmental and Regulation Service Plans.

### **Consultation undertaken**

15. Consultation on the report and amended policy has taken place with Executive Management Team, the Portfolio Holder and Internal Audit.

### **Financial and resource implications**

16. There are no financial implications from adoption of policy with the amendment, although the costs of administration and execution of licences are recovered through charging the applicant a fee, agreed each year by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

## **Legal implications**

17. There is no statutory requirement to adopt a Licensing Policy however, it is best practice to do so, as the benefits bring transparency, accountability, consistency and the promotion of good standards in licensing.

## **Risk assessment**

18. A formal risk assessment is not required for the adoption of the proposed policy; however, risk assessments are in place for premises inspections by officers.

## **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

19. There are no direct climate implications.

## **Equalities implications**

20. The adoption of the policy brings transparency, accountability and consistency of approach ensuring that there is an equitable methodology in place.

## **Crime and disorder implications**

21. The Licensing Policy provides requirements to aid the prevention of crime and disorder.

## **Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications**

22. There are no direct implications. Licence applications are administered through the use of in-house IT systems.

## **Portfolio holder endorsement**

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report

Signed: Cllr Dan Poole

Dated: 5 September 2025

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Animal Welfare  
Licensing Policy v1.2

### **Background Papers:**

None.

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 5 September 2025

Last date for call in – 12 September 2025