

GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday, 19th May 2026 at 14:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors David Bennett, Anne Clarke, Mary Dooley, Will Fletcher, Lisa Powell, Jeanne Raspin and Rita Turner.

Officers:- Stephen Oliver (Legal Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Charmaine Terry (Environmental Health Team Manager (Licensing)) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, was Councillor Cathy Jeffery.

GLC1-25/26 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor David Bennett
RESOLVED that Councillor Mary Dooley be elected as Chair for the meeting.

GLC2-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Amanda Davis and Emma Stevenson.

GLC3-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

GLC4-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

GLC5-25/26 MINUTES - 13TH FEBRUARY 2025

Moved by Councillor Rita Turner and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on 13th February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

GLC6-25/26 MINUTES - 13TH MARCH 2025

Moved by Councillor David Bennett and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on 13th March 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

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GLC7-25/26 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING POLICY

The Environmental Health Team Manager presented the report to the Committee.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 had created an overarching welfare obligation on those who were responsible for animals. The 5 'needs' of animals identified were:

- The need for a suitable environment;
- The need for a suitable diet;
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and,
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

The Council was responsible for the licensing and regulation of animal related activities (and safeguarding animal welfare) within the District under 4 separate pieces of legislation:

- Animal Activity Licences issued under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018;
- Primate Licences issued under the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Dangerous Wild Animal Licences issued under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976; and,
- Zoo Licences issued under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981.

Following the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, the Council had adopted its current Animal Welfare Licensing Policy (the 'Policy'), which was adopted 16th September 2019 – the Policy had remained unchanged since adoption and was attached at Appendix 1.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Committee was responsible for all licensing matters not covered by the Licensing Act 2003 or the Gambling Act 2005, while the responsibility for the final determination of policies was reserved for the Council.

The Joint Environmental Health Service had undertaken an extensive review of the Policy, resulting in a complete and substantive rewrite – the draft revised Policy was attached at Appendix 2. The draft proposals sought to:

- Modify the format of the Policy to ensure it is comprehensive and cohesive;
- Ensure the Policy is consistent with legislation and statutory guidance;
- Ensure the Council's processes are transparent;
- Ensure the Council promotes the highest animal welfare standards; and,
- Ensure the Policy adequately safeguards the public.

An equality impact assessment had additionally been carried out – a draft copy was attached at Appendix 3.

Table 1 and Graph 1 of the report showed how animal activity had changed across the District since the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 and the Council's current Policy – the number of

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animal licences had almost doubled since 2021, while service requests relating to animal welfare had increased between 2023 and 2025 before reducing to earlier levels.

The increase in animal licences and complaints was likely a consequence of greater awareness of the animal licensing regime amongst operators and the public. Recurring themes included:

- Requests for advice to start or expand a business;
- Requests for advice on what activities required a licence;
- Requests to verify information on current licences / licensing registers;
- Reports of unlicensed activity;
- Concerns about animal welfare; and,
- Nuisance linked to animal activities.

Overall the Council had seen growth in animal activity and further growth was expected. Data suggested the Council could benefit from enhancing the provision of information to operators and the public through a more detailed and comprehensive Policy.

Following approval by the Committee, a 12-week public / stakeholder consultation would be carried out. During this time the revised Policy would be presented to the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee for comment.

The results of the consultation would be presented back to the Committee for consideration before a final draft was recommended to Council for adoption.

Clarity was sought on the responsibilities of certain animal handlers / trainers with regards the need to protect animals from pain, suffering, injury, and disease as well as safeguarding duties (e.g., with regards children).

The Committee was informed on and discussed the statutory responsibilities expected of individuals / businesses in law by the UK Government. It was noted the Council's responsibilities were ultimately limited in comparison, but that with regards animal abuse the Council could encourage contacting the RSPCA if such actions were witnessed / known of.

It was additionally noted there were differing standards regarding 'pain'. It was reiterated the Council was limited in what it could achieve / mandate / control. However, it remained good practice to have such a Policy and promote reporting to the applicable responsible bodies / authorities when necessary.

A Member informed of saving a dog previously used for breeding, an example of the animal abuse possible. The dog's extremely poor condition was relayed (as was its fear towards men) and the Committee was further informed this abuse had taken place outside the District.

The Chair noted the Policy brought together numerous documents into one and it was right that the Council had such a comprehensive, single and up to date Policy.

A Member thanked the Environmental Health Team Manager for the considerable and excellent hard work in the drafting of the Policy. The Chair echoed the Committee's thanks to the Environmental Health Team Manager.

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Moved by Councillor Rita Turner and seconded by Councillor Anne Clarke

RESOLVED that: 1) the Committee approves the revised draft Animal Welfare Licensing Policy for public consultation;

- 2) the Committee requires the Assistant Director of Communities & Environmental Health to present the draft Animal Welfare Licensing Policy to the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration; and,
- 3) the Committee requires the Assistant Director of Communities & Environmental Health to conduct a 12 week public and stakeholder consultation in line with best practice guidance and report the findings back to the Committee for consideration at a later date.

The meeting concluded at 14:29 hours.